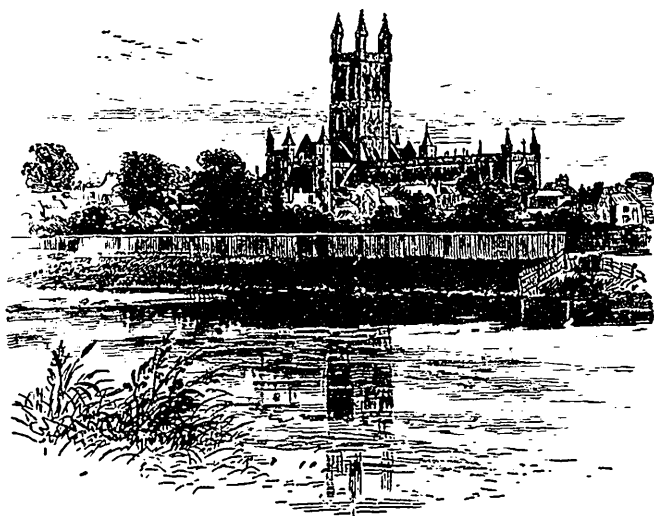


I found lodgings at the Red Horse Inn, and slept in a great bed of state, with a huge four-post canopy that might have come down from Shakespeare's time. Strolling along the banks of the gentle Avon, I thought: "Here the boy Shakespeare chased the butterfly, and plucked the buttercups, and hunted thrushes' nests, and sported in the crystal stream; and across those meadows the love-sick swain sped to the cottage of sweet Anne Hathaway; beneath those trees they held their tryst, and on their beechen bark he carved her name." I next visited the old Grammar School, of Edward the Sixth's time, where the immortal bard learned the mysteries of that English tongue which he has rendered classic



GLOUCESTER.

forever. I then proceeded to the house in which the future poet first saw the light. It is a quaint two-storied timbered house, which has successively been used as a butcher's shop and as an inn. The front door is cut in two, so that the lower part might be kept closed—to shut out the dogs, I was told. The stone floor has also been badly broken by the chopping on the butcher's blocks. Passing up a winding wooden stair, we enter the room in which the wondrous babe's first cry was heard. Across this rough floor he crawled on his first voyage of discovery, and through this lead lattice he caught his first glimpse of the great world-drama, whose thousand varied scenes he has so marvellously painted for all time.

Here is his desk from the Grammar School, notched all over with his school-boy jack-knife. Here is his signet ring, and the