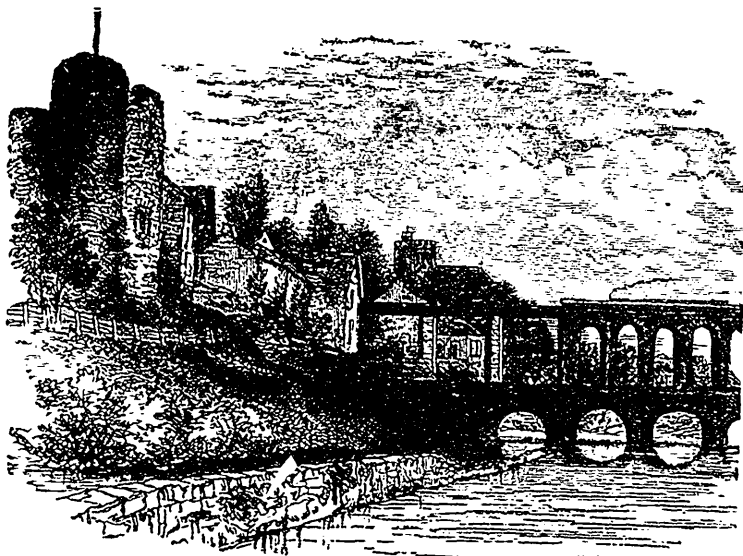


Gloucester, however, is not only a cathedral town, but also a port carrying on a large foreign trade, especially with the Baltic. Up to 1827 it had no other means of access by water than the Severn, which at this point—where, by the way, the famous “bore,” the phenomenal tidal wave, reaches its limit—is narrow.

Brecon, or Brecknock, is situated in a very fine position on the northern side of the Usk river, protected on all sides by lofty hills. It is an important market town, and the place of assize for the county. The castle, which is now in ruins, standing in the grounds of the Castle Hotel on a considerable mound, overlooking the River Honddŷ, was built in the reign of William Rufus by Bernard Newmarch. Its ivy-mantled walls look very picturesque.



BRECON CASTLE AND VIADUCT.

A short ride through Bedford, where is shown near the church a large old-fashioned house, said to be the Falcon Inn, a favourite resort of Shakespeare, which he has commemorated in verse, and we arrive at Stratford-on-Avon, having had the Avon to our right for some distance. This is a substantial and thriving market town in Warwickshire, near the Gloucestershire border, situated in the lovely valley of the Avon, and resting peacefully in the midst of beautiful rural scenery. For itself it could not fail to be an attractive spot, but that which draws so many tourists to it is the fact that it was Shakespeare's birthplace, and that there are so many memorials of the poet to be seen.

“Here his first infant lays sweet Shakespeare sung,
Here his last accents faltered on his tongue.”