

windows casts upon the arched ceilings, browned with age, a reflection of sombre light which fills us with a sort of pleasing thoughtfulness, as we reverently tread the gray stone slabs covering the remains of departed persons, and in deep meditation we stand before the grave of Shakespeare. The chancel railing keeps the visitor without the continuous line of blue grey slab stones, under which lie the family of the poet. To the extreme left, close to the wall, lies Shakespeare's wife, next to her the poet himself, and inscribed on the stone over his grave are the well known words which are apt to fill the mind of the visitor with a kind of horror mingled with superstition.

"Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear,  
To digg the dust enclosed hear,  
Blese be ye may yt spares thes stones  
Ane curst be he yt moves my bones."

On the left wall near what is known as the "American Window," rests a bust of Shakespeare, cut by one Girard Johnson, native of Amsterdam, supposed to be copied from a mask of the features taken after death. I spent an hour in the church exploring its several nooks and corners, often times sitting down in one of the straight backed pews, lost in revery by the solemnity of my surroundings. With regret I turned my face to the door, glancing as I passed at the little stone font and the register which marks to the world its first authentic knowledge of the life of William Shakespeare. Again I slowly walked down the avenue of tombstones, passed through the gate to the church yard into the street. The peaceful Avon is only a few rods distant flowing on to the Severn. There is almost a deathlike stillness everywhere, and it is only now and then that the traveler may meet any of the residents of Stratford in this solemn and revered spot.

A short distance from the intersection of High and Bridge streets which marks the center of the village, on Henry street stands the house in which Shakespeare was born; a little two story cottage built of hewn timber

and plaster. The windows are small and on the outside walls of the house are narrow handed strips running vertically and horizontally. Its general appearance has changed more or less from that of its early days as it was necessary to repair it from time to time, being used for different purposes by its many owners, as their poverty required. It was built probably about the time of William the Conqueror, and was occupied by Shakespeare's father in 1555 until 1601, when it became the property of the poet by descent.

From the street one steps directly into a room with a flag stone floor and a low ceiling. To the right is a large open fire-place with a small stone seat on either side, on which no doubt many a winter evening Shakespeare sat and dreamed, and built pleasant visions of fancy as the flames rolled up the wide chimney from the fire at his feet. From this room I passed up an old stairway almost worn through and stood on a wooden floor in which the heads of the nails glistened like silver. The plastering on the ceiling, which I could easily reach with my hand, was entirely covered with names of persons who had in former times visited the place. A portion of the wall which had threatened to fall in had been covered with a lace work of laths. In the middle of the west wall facing the street was the original window, and on its little square panes of white glass were scratched many names. One I noticed in particular was "W. Scott," written by Sir Walter Scott when on his visit to the home of Shakespeare. Edmund Kean had written his name on a portion of the chimney piece. The name of Thackeray appeared on the ceiling close beside that of Helen Faucet. So also are to be seen the names of Charles Dickens, Lord Byron and a host of others who had come to do homage to so illustrious a man. In one corner of the room stands an old chair and on a table to the right of the door as you enter is a marble bust of Shakespeare. Here it is said Shakespeare was born. In another room are shown many