the ancient Normans line, and the very seate itselfe of pleasantnesse. There have yee a shady little wood, cleere and cristall springs, mossy bottomes and caves, medowes alwaies fresh and greene, the river rumbling here and there among the stones with his stream making a milde noise and gentle whispering, and besides all this, solitary and still quietnesse, things most grateful to the Muses.” But the whole of the circuit was richly wooded, the towns, as the names indicate, being forest towns,—Henley- in-Arden, Hampton-in-Arden,—while the castles and secularized religious houses were paled off within their own parks and bounds from the sylvan wilderness around them. Some, like the celebrated castle of the Mountfords, called from its pleasant situation amongst the woods Beaudesert, having been dismantled during the Wars of the Roses were already abandoned, and had in Shake­speare’s day relapsed from the stately revelry that once filled their halls into the silence of the surrounding woods. At every point of the journey, indeed, as the poet’s eager and meditative eye embraced new vistas, it might be said, “Towers and battlements it sees

Bosomed high in tufted trees. ”

On the southern margin of the Arden division, towards the Avon, small farms were indeed already numerous, and cultivation had become tolerably general. But the region as a whole still retained its distinctive character as the Arden or wooded division of the county. Even now, indeed, it includes probably more woods and parks than are to be found over the same area in any other English shire.

While parts of the Arden district were in this way under cultivation, it must not be supposed that the champaign or open country to the south of the Avon, the Feldon division of the county, was destitute of wood; on the contrary its extensive pastures were not only well watered by local streams overshadowed by willow and alder, but well wooded at intervals by groups of more stately trees. The numerous flocks and herds that grazed throughout the valley of the Red Horse found welcome shelter from the noonday heat and the driving wind under the green roofs and leafy screens that lined and dotted their bounds of feed. And, although even the grazing farms were comparatively small, almost every homestead had its group of protecting elms, its outlying patch of hanging beech and ash, or straggling copse of oak and hazel. This is still reflected in such local names as Wood Park, Shrub Lands, Ockley Wood, Furze Hill, Oakham, Ashborne, Alcott Wood, Berecote Wood, and Radland Gorse. These features gave interest and variety to the Feldon district, and justified the characteristic epithet which for centuries was popularly applied to the county as a whole, that of “ woody Warwickshire.” And Shakespeare, in passing out of the county on his London journeys, would quickly feel the difference, as beyond its borders he came upon stretches of less clothed and cultivated scenery. As his stout gelding mounted Edgehill, and he turned in the saddle to take a parting look at the familiar landscape he was leaving, he would behold what Speed, in his enthusiasm, calls “another Eden, as Lot the plain of Jordan.” While the general aspect would be that of green pastures and grassy levels, there would be at the same time the picturesque intermingling of wood and water, of mill and grange and manor house, which gives light and shade, colour and movement, interest and animation, to the plainer

sweeps and more monotonous objects of pastoral scenery.

On the historical side Warwickshire has points of interest as striking and distinctive as its physical features. During the Roman occupation of the country it was, as we have seen, the site of several central Roman stations, of which, besides those already noticed, the fortified camps of

Tripontium and Præsidium on the line of the Avon were the most important. A Roman road crossed the Avon at Stratford, and radiating north and south soon reached some of the larger Roman towns of the west, such as Uriconium and Corinium. Between these towns were country villas or mansions, many of them being, like that at Woodchester, “magnificent palaces covering as much ground as a whole town.” The entire district must in this way have been powerfully affected by the higher forms of social life and material splendour which the wealthier provincials had introduced. The immediate effect of this Roman influence on the native populations was, as we know, to divide them into opposed groups whose conflicts helped directly to produce the disastrous results which followed the withdrawal of the Romans from the island. But the more permanent and more important effect is probably to be traced in the far less obstinate resistance offered by the Celtic tribes of Mid Britain to the invading Angles from the north and Saxons from the south, by whom themselves and their district were eventually absorbed. Instead of the fierce conflicts and wrathful withdrawal or extermination of the conquered Britons which prevailed further east, and for a time perhaps further west also, the intervening tribes appear to have accepted the overlordship of their Teutonic neighbours and united with them in the cultivation and defence of their common territory. The fact that no record of any early Angle conquest remains seems to indicate that, after at most a brief resistance, there was a gradual coalescence of the invading with the native tribes rather than any fierce or memorable struggle between them. Even the more independent and warlike tribes about the Severn repeatedly joined the Saxon Hwiccas, whose northern frontier was the forest of Arden, in resisting the advance of Wessex from the south. And for more than a hundred years after the establishment of the central kingdom of the Angles, the neighbouring Welsh princes are found acting in friendly alliance with the Mercian rulers. It was thus the very district where from an early period the two race elements that have gone to the making of the nation were most nearly balanced and most completely blended. The union of a strong Celtic element with the dominant Angles is still reflected in the local nomenclature, not only in the names of the chief natural features, such as rivers and heights, —Arden and Avon, Lickey, Alne, and Thame,—but in the numerous *combes* and *cotes* or *cots,* as in the reduplica­tive Cotswold, in the *duns, dons,* and *dens,* and in such distinctively Celtic elements as *man, pol, try,* in names of places scattered through the district. The *cotes* are, it is true, ambiguous, being in a majority of cases perhaps Saxon rather than Celtic, but in a forest country near the old Welsh marches many must still represent the Celtic *coet* or *coed,* and in some cases this is clear from the word itself, as in Kingscot, a variation of Kingswood, and even Charlecote exists in the alternative form of Charlewood. This union of the two races, combined with the stirring conditions of life in a wild and picturesque border country, gave a vigorous impulse and distinctive character to the population, the influence of which may be clearly traced in the subsequent literary as well as in the political history of the country. As early as the 9th century, when the ravages of the Danes had desolated the homes and scattered the representatives of learning in Wessex, it was to western Mercia that King Alfred sent for scholars and churchmen to unite with him in helping to restore the fallen fortunes of religion and letters. And after the long blank in the native literature produced by the Norman Conquest the authentic signs of its indestructible vitality first appeared on the banks of the Severn. Layamon’s spirited poem dealing with the legendary history of Britain, and written