modern Stratford Rother Market retains its place as the busiest centre at the annual fairs, during one of which it is still customary to roast an ox in the open street, often amidst a good deal of popular excitement and convivial uproar.

The cross ways going from Rother Street to the river side, which cut the central liue, dividing it into three sections, are Ely Street and Sheep Street in a continuous line, and Scholar’s Lane and Chapel Lane in another line. They ran parallel with the head line of Bridge and Wood Streets, and like them traverse from east to west the northern shaft of the cross that constituted the ground plan of the town. Starting down this line from the market house at the top, the first division, the High Street, is now, as it was in Shake­speare’s day, the busiest part for shops and shopping, the solid building at the further corner to the left being the Corn Exchange. At the first corner of the second division, called Chapel Street, stands the town-hall, while at the further corner are the site and railed in gardens of New Place, the large mansion purchased by Shakespeare in 1597. Opposite New Place, at the corner of the third and last division, known as Church Street, is the grey mass of Gothic buildings belonging to the guild of the Holy Cross, and consisting of the chapel, the hall, the grammar school, and the almshouses of the ancient guild. Turning to the left at the bottom of Church Street, you enter upon what was in Shakespeare’s day a well-wooded suburb, with a few good houses scattered among the ancient elms, and surrounded by ornamental gardens and extensive private grounds. In one of these houses, with a sunny expanse of lawn and shrubbery, lived in the early years of the 17th century Shakespeare’s eldest daughter Susanna with her husband, Dr John Hall, and here in spring mornings and summer afternoons the great poet must have often strolled, either alone or accom­panied by his favourite daughter, realizing to the full the quiet enjoyment of the sylvan scene and its social surroundings. This pleasant suburb, called then as now Old Town, leads directly to the church of the Holy Trinity, near the river side. The church, a fine specimen of Decorated and Perpendicular Gothic with a lofty spire, is approached on the northern side through an avenue of limes, and sheltered on the east and south by an irregular but massive group of elms towering above the churchway path between the transepts, the chancel, and the river. Below the church, on the margin of the river, were the mill, the mill-bridge, and the weir, half hidden by grey willows, green alders, and tall beds of rustling sedge. And, beyond the church, the college, and the line of streets already described, the suburbs stretched away into gardens, orchards, meadows, and cultivated fields, divided by rustic lanes with mossy banks, flowering hedgerows, and luminous vistas of bewildering beauty. These cross and country roads were dotted at intervals with cottage homesteads, isolated farms, and the small groups of both which constituted the villages and hamlets included within the wide sweep of old Stratford parish. Amongst these were the villages and hamlets of Welcombe, Ingon, Drayton, Shottery, Luddington, Little Wilmcote, and Bishopston. The town was thus girdled in the spring by daisied meadows and blos­soming orchards, and enriched during the later months by the orange and gold of harvest fields and autumn foliage, mingled with the coral and purple clusters of elder, hawthorn, and moun­tain ash, and, around the farms and cottages, with the glow of ripening fruit for the winter’s store.

But perhaps the most characteristic feature of the scenery in the neighbourhood of Stratford is to be found in the union of this rich and varied cultivation with picturesque survivals of the primeval forest territory. The low hills that rise at intervals above the well-turned soil still carry on their serrated crests the lingering glories of the ancient woodland. Though the once mighty forest of Arden has disappeared, the after-glow of its sylvan beauty rests on the neighbouring heights formerly enclosed within its ample margin. These traces of the forest wildness and freedom were of course far more striking and abundant in Shakespeare’s day than now. At that time many of the farms had only recently been reclaimed from the forest, and most of them still had their bosky acres “ of tooth’d briars, sharp furzes, pricking goss and thorns,” their broom groves, hazel copses, and outlying patches of unshrubbed down. And the hills that rose above the chief villages of the neighbourhood were still clothed and crowned with the green and mystic mantle of the leafy Arden. But, though much of the ancient woodland has disappeared since Shakespeare’s day, many traces of it still remain. Any of the roads out of Stratford will soon bring the pedestrian to some of these picturesque sur­vivals of the old forest wilderness. On the Warwick

road, at the distance of about a mile from the town, there are on the left the Welcombe Woods, and just beyond the woods the well-known Dingles, a belt of straggling ash and hawthorn winding irregularly through blue-bell depths and briery hollows from the pathway below to the crest of the hill above, while immediately around rise the Welcombe Hills, from the top of which is obtained the finest local view of Stratford and the adjacent country. Looking south-west and facing the central line of the town, you see below you, above the mass of roofs, the square tower of the guild chapel, the graceful spire of the more distant church, the sweep of the winding river, and beyond the river the undulating valley of the Red Horse shut in by the blue range of the Cotswold Hills. A couple of miles to the east of the Welcombe Hills is the village of Snitterfield, where Shakespeare’s grandfather, Richard Shakespeare, lived and cultivated to the end of his days the acres around his rustic dwelling. Beyond the village on its western side there is an upland reach of wilderness in the shape of a hill, covered with shrub and copsewood, and known as the Snitterfield Bushes. Here Shakespeare as a boy must have often rambled, enjoying the freedom of the unfenced downs, and enlarging his knowledge of nature’s exuberant vitality. On the opposite side of the town, about a mile on the Evesham road, or rather between the Evesham and Alcester roads, lies the hamlet of Shottery, half concealed by ancestral elms and nestling amongst its homestead fruits and flowers. From one of these homesteads Shakespeare obtained his bride Anne Hathaway. A mile or two on the central road, passing out of the town through Henley Street, is the village of Bearley, and above the village another sweep of wooded upland known as Bearley Bushes. And at various more distant points between these roads the marl and sandstone heights, fringed with woods or covered with wilding growths, still bear eloquent testimony to the time when Guy of Warwick and his tutor in chivalry, Heraud of Arden, still roamed the forest in search of the wild ox and savage boar that frayed the infrequent travellers and devastated at intervals the slender cultivation of the district. The subtle power of this order of scenery, arising from the union of all that is rich and careful in cultivation with all that is wild and free in natural beauty, is exactly of the kind best fitted to attract and delight imaginative and emotional minds. It possesses the peculiar charm that in character arises from the union of refined culture with the bright and exhilarating spontaneity of a free and generous nature.

On its moral side such scenery has an expanding illuminating power which links it to the wider and deeper interests of humanity as a whole. Nature seems to put forth her vital energies expressly for the relief of man’s estate, appearing as his friend and helper and consoler. Instead of being absorbed in her own inaccessible grandeurs and solitary sublimities, she exerts her benign influences expressly as it were for his good, to cheer and brighten his evanescent days, and beautify his temporary home. Bolder and more rugged landscapes, gloomy glens, and thunder-scarred peaks may excite more passionate feelings, may rouse and strengthen by reaction the individualistic elements of mind and character, and thus produce the hardy, daring type of mountaineer, the intense self-centred and defiant local patriot or hero, the chieftain and his clansmen, *contra mundum.* No doubt it is also true that the vaster and loftier mountain ranges have a unique power of exciting in susceptible minds the emotions of awe, wonder, and sublimity. But the very power and permanence of these mighty solitudes, the grandeur and immobility of their measureless strength and imperial repose, dwarf by comparison all merely human interests ; and to the meditative mind swept by the spirit of such immensities the moments of our mortal life seem to melt as dew-drops into the silence of their eternal years. The feelings thus excited, being in themselves of the essence of poetry, may indeed find expression in verse and in verse of a noble kind, but the poetry will be lyrical and reflective, not dramatic, or if dramatic in form it will be lyrical in substance. As Mr Ruskin has pointed out, the overmastering effect of mountain scenery tends to absorb and preoccupy the