mind, and thus to disturb the impartial view, the universal vision of nature and human nature as a complex whole, or rather of nature as the theatre and scene of human life, which the dramatist must preserve in order to secure success in his higher work. Mountain scenery is, however, not only rare and exacting in the range and intensity of feeling it excites, but locally remote in its separation from the interests and occupations of men. It is thus removed from the vital element in which the dramatist works, if not in its higher influence antagonistic to that element. Mr Hamerton, who discusses the question on a wider basis of knowledge and experience than perhaps any living authority except Mr Ruskin, supports this view. “As a general rule,” he says, “I should say there is an antagonism between the love of mountains and the knowledge of mankind, that the lover of mountains will often be satisfied with their appearances of power and passion, their splendour and gloom, their seeming cheerfulness or melancholy, when a mind indifferent to this class of scenery might study the analogous phases of human character.” Where, indeed, the influence of nature is overpowering, as in the East, wonder, —the wonder excited by mere physical vastness, power, and infinitude,—takes the place of intelligent interest in individual life and character.

But the dramatic poet has to deal primarily with human power and passion; and not for him therefore is the life of lonely raptures and awful delights realized by the moun­tain wanderer or the Alp-inspired bard. His work lies nearer the homes and ways of men, and his choicest scenery will be found in the forms of natural beauty most directly associated with their habitual activities, most completely blended with their more vivid emotional experiences. A wooded undulating country, watered by memorable streams, its ruder features relieved by the graces of cultivation, and its whole circuit rich in histori­cal remains and associations, is outside the domain of cities, the natural stage and theatre of the dramatist and story-teller. This was the kind of scenery that fascinated Scott’s imagination, amidst which he fixed his chosen home, and where he sleeps his last sleep. It is a border country of grey waving hills, divided by streams renowned in song, and enriched by the monuments of the piety, splendour, and martial power of the leaders whose fierce raids and patriotic conflicts filled with romantic tale and minstrelsy the whole district from the Lammermoors to the Cheviots, and from the Leader and the Tweed to the Solway Firth. In earlier times Shakespeare’s own dis­trict had been virtually a border country also. The mediaeval tide of intermittent but savage warfare, between the unsubdued Welsh and the Anglo-Normans under the feudal lords of the marches, ebbed and flowed across the Severn, inundating at times the whole of Powis-land, and sweeping on to the very verge of Warwickshire. In the 12th and 13th centuries the policy of intermarriage between their own families and the Welsh princes was tried by the English monarchs, and King John, on betroth­ing his daughter Joan to the Welsh prince Llewelyn, gave the manor of Bidford, six miles from Stratford-on-Avon, as part of her dower. The fact of this English princess being thus identified with South Warwickshire may help to explain the prevalence of the name Joan in the county, but the early impulse towards the giving of this royal name would no doubt be strengthened by the knowledge that John of Gaunt’s daughter, the mother of the great earl of Warwick, had also borne the favourite local name. Shakespeare himself it will be remembered had two sisters of this name, the elder Joan, born some time before him, the firstborn of the family indeed, who died in infancy, and the younger Joan, who survived him. But the local popularity of a name, familiarly associated with the kitchen and the scullery rather than with the court or the palace, is no doubt due to one of the more striking incidents of the long conflict between the English and the Welsh on the western border. As we have seen, during the Barons’ War and the Wars of the Roses the western border was the scene of active conflict, each party seeking Welsh support, and each being able in turn to rally a

power of hardy marchmen to its banner. And that the insurgent Welsh were not idle during the interval between these civil conflicts we have the emphatic testimony of Glendower :—

“ Three times hath Henry Bolingbrooke made head Against my power : thrice from the banks of Wye And sedgy-bottomed Severn have I sent him Bootless home, and weather-beaten back.”

The Hotspur and Mortimer revolt against Henry IV. well illustrates, indeed, the kind of support which English disaffection found for centuries in the Welsh marches. A rich heritage of stirring border life and heroic martial story was thus transmitted from the stormy ages of faith and feudalism to the more settled Tudor times. Apart from the border warfare there were also the multiplied associations connected with the struggles between the nobles and the crown, and the rise of the Commons as a distinctive power in the country. The whole local record of great names and signal deeds was in Shakespeare’s day so far withdrawn into the past and mellowed by secular distance as to be capable of exerting its full enchantment over the feelings and the imagination. The historical associations thus connected with the hills and streams, the abbeys and castles, of Warwickshire added elements of striking moral interest to the natural beauty of the scenery. To the penetrating imagination of poetic natures these elements reflected the continuity of national life as well as the greatness and splendour of the per­sonalities and achievements by which it was developed from age to age. They also helped to kindle within them a genuine enthusiasm for the fortunes and the fame of their native land. And scenery beautiful in itself acquired a tenfold charm from the power it thus possessed of bring­ing vividly before the mind the wide and moving panorama of the heroic past. The facts sufficiently prove that scenery endowed with this multiplied charm takes, if a calmer, still a deeper and firmer hold of the affections than any isolated and remote natural features, however beautiful and sublime, have power to do. This general truth is illustrated with even exceptional force in the lives of Scott and Shakespeare. Both were passionately attached to their native district, and the memorable scenes amidst which their early years were passed. So intense was Scott’s feeling that he told Washington Irving that if he did not see the grey hills and the heather once a year he thought he should die. And one of the few traditions preserved of Shakespeare is that even in the most active period of his London career he always visited Stratford at least once every year. We know indeed from other sources that during his absence Shakespeare continued to take the liveliest interest in the affairs of his native place, and that, although London was for some years his profes­sional residence, he never ceased to regard Stratford as his home.

Amongst other illustrations of this strong feeling of local attachment that might be given there is one that has recently excited a good deal of attention and is worth noticing in some detail. Mr Hallam, in a well-known passage, has stated that “no letter of Shakespeare’s writ­ing, no record of his conversation, has been preserved.” But we certainly have at least one conversation reported at first hand, and it turns directly on the point in question. It relates to a proposal made in 1614 by some of the local proprietors for the enclosure of certain common lands at Welcombe and Old Stratford. The corporation of Strat­ford strongly opposed the project on the ground that it would be a hardship to the poorer members of the com­munity, and their clerk Mr Thomas Greene, who was related to Shakespeare, was in London about the business in November of the same year. Under date November