17th Greene says, in notes which still exist, “My cosen Shakespear comyng yesterdy to town, I went to see him how he did. He told me that they assured him they ment to inclose no further than to Gospell Bush, and so upp straight (leavyng out part of the Dyngles to the ffield) to the gate in Clopton hedg, and take in Salis- buryes peece ; and that they mean in Aprill to survey the land, and then to gyve satisfaction, and not before ; and he and Mr Hall say they think ther will be nothyng done at all.” This proves that the agents of the scheme had seen Shakespeare on the subject, that he had gone care­fully into the details of their plan, consulted his son-in- law Dr John Hall about them, and arrived at the conclu­sion that for the present they need take no decided action in the matter. There is evidently on Shakespeare’s part a strong feeling against the proposed enclosure, and the agents of the scheme had clearly done their best to remove his objections, promising amongst other things that if it went forward he should suffer no pecuniary loss, a pro­mise already confirmed by a legal instrument. But nine months later, when the local proprietors seemed bent on pushing the scheme, Shakespeare takes a more decided stand, and pronounces strongly against the whole business. We have a notice, dated September 1, 1615, to the effect that Mr Shakespeare had on that day told the agent of the corporation “that he was not able to bear the enclosing of Welcombe.” As his proprietary rights and pecuniary interests were not to be affected by the pro­posed enclosure, this strong expression of feeling must refer to the public advantages of the Welcombe common fields, and especially to what in Scotland would be called their “ amenity,” the element of value arising from their freedom and beauty, their local history and associations. Welcombe, as we have seen, was the most picturesque suburb of Stratford. The hills divided by the leafy Dingles afforded the finest panoramic view of the whole neighbourhood. On their eastern slope they led to Ful- broke Park, the probable scene of the deer-stealing adven­ture, and towards the north-west to the village of Snitter- field with its wooded sweep of upland “ bushes.” Every acre of the ground was associated with the happiest days of Shakespeare’s youth. In his boyish holidays he had repeatedly crossed and recrossed the unfenced fields at the foot of the Welcombe Hills on his ways to the rustic scenes and occupations of his uncle Henry’s farm in the outlying forest village. He knew by heart every boundary tree and stone and bank, every pond and sheep-pool, every barn and cattle-shed, throughout the whole well- frequented circuit. And in his later years, when after the turmoil and excitement of his London life he came to reside at Stratford, and could visit at leisure the scenes of his youth, it was perfectly natural that he should shrink from the prospect of having these scenes partially destroyed and their associations broken up by the rash hand of needless innovation. In his own emphatic language, “he could not bear the enclosing of Welcombe,” and the only authoritative fragment of his conversation preserved to us thus brings vividly out one of the best known and most distinctive features of his personal character and history—his deep and life-long attachment to his native place. Another illustration of the same feeling, common both to Scott and Shakespeare, is supplied by the prudence and foresight they both displayed in husbanding their early gains in order to provide, amidst the scenery they loved, a permanent home for themselves and their families. Shakespeare, the more careful and sharp-sighted of the two, ran no such risks and experienced no such reverses of fortune as those which saddened Scott’s later days. Both, however, spent the last years of their lives in the home which their energy and affection had provided, and both

sleep their last sleep under the changing skies and amidst the fields and streams that gave light and music to their earliest years. Hence, of all great authors, they are the two most habitually thought of in connexion with their native haunts and homesteads. Even to his contempo­raries Shakespeare was known as the Swan of Avon. The two spots on British ground most completely identified with the noblest energies of genius, consecrated by life­long associations, and hallowed by sacred dust are the banks of the Tweed from Abbotsford to Dryburgh Abbey, and the sweep of the Avon from Charlecote Park to Strat­ford church. To all lovers of literature, to all whose spirits have been touched to finer issues by its regenerating influence, these spots, and above all the abbey grave and the chancel tomb, are holy ground,— national shrines visited by pilgrims from every land, who breathe with pride and gratitude and affection the household names of Shakespeare and of Scott.

The name Shakespeare is found in the Midland counties two centuries before the birth of the poet, scattered so widely that it is not easy at first sight to fix the locality of its rise or trace the lines of its progress. Several facts, however, would seem to indicate that those who first bore it entered Warwickshire from the north and west, and may therefore have migrated in early times from the neighbour­ing marches. The name itself is of course thoroughly English, and it is given by Camden and Verstegan as an illustration of the way in which surnames were fabricated when first introduced into England in the 13th century. But it is by no means improbable that some hardy borderers who had fought successfully in the English ranks may have received or assumed a significant and sounding designation that would help to perpetuate the memory of their martial prowess. We have indeed a distinct and authoritative assertion that some of Shake­speare’s ancestors had served their country in this way. However this may be, families bearing the name are found during the 15th and 16th centuries in the Arden district, especially at Wroxhall and Rowington,—some being connected with the priory of Wroxhall, while during the 15th century the names of more than twenty are enumerated as belonging to the guild of St Ann, at Knoll near Rowington. In the roll of this guild or college are also found the representatives of some of the best families in the county, such as the Ferrerses of Tamworth and the Clintons of Coleshill. Among the members of the guild the poet’s ancestors are to be looked for, and it is not improbable, as Mr French suggests, that John and Joan Shakespeare, entered on the Knoll register in 1527, may have been the parents of Richard Shakespeare of Snitterfield, whose sons gave each to his children the favourite family names. Richard Shakespeare, the poet’s grand father, occupied a substantial dwelling and culti­vated a forest farm at Snitterfield, between 3 and 4 miles from Stratford. He was the tenant of Robert Arden of Wilmcote, “a gentleman of worship,” who farmed his own estate, situated a few miles to the west of Snitterfield. Richard Shakespeare was settled at the latter hamlet and doing well as early as 1543, Thomas Atwood of Stratford having in that year bequeathed to him four oxen which were then in his keeping ; and he continued to reside there certainly till 1560, and probably till his death. He appears to have had two sons, John and Henry, of whom John, the eldest, early broke through the contracted circle of rustic life at Snitterfield, made his way to Stratford, and established himself as a trader in one of the leading thoroughfares of the town. This movement to the town probably took place in 1551, as in 1552 John Shakespeare is described in an official document as residing in Henley Street, where the poet was subsequently born. As to the