

SHAKESPEARE'S COUNTRY

top of the hill the traveller will keep along the road to the right, having on that side of him a long narrow plantation of trees, set there in the middle of the last century, which rather annoyingly interrupts the view of the valley until an inn is reached, provided with an mock-ancient tower, widely known as Ratley Roundhouse. Here is an excellent place from which to study the battle-field, for which purpose either the garden or, preferably, the top of the tower, may be selected. The tower, according to tradition, occupies the spot on which the King's banner was pitched on the day of the conflict. Beneath the eminence on which it is situated, the Vale of Red Horse lies extended to the view. This vale derives its name from the figure of a horse formerly cut in the red loam of the hill side, in the Tysoe district, and near the Sun-Rising of which more anon. "This memorial was," says Beesley, "said to have been originally cut in commemoration of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who at the battle of Touton, which was fought on Palm Sunday in 1461, plunged his sword in the breast of his horse when he found the army in eminent danger, and vowed to share that danger with the meanest of his soldiers. The battle was won, and the event was long afterwards commemorated at Edgehill by cleaning out the figure of the horse annually on Palm Sunday, some lands in the lordship of Tysoe being at one period held by this service. In allusion to the circumstance of the battle of Edgehill being fought in the Vale of Red Horse,