

middle of Scotland, against the fierce Gwyddyl Ffichti or Picts of the north and the heathen swarming from beyond the sea, were sung all the way down into Wales and Devon, and across the Channel among the vales of Brittany, whence, becoming with every generation more mystical and marvellous, they grew into favourite themes of the romantic poetry of Europe.

The Roman occupation affected chiefly the lowlands of England and Scotland where the more recent geological formations extend in broad plains or plateaux. Numerous towns were built there, between which splendid roads extended across the country. The British inhabitants of these lowlands were not extirpated, but continued to live on the lands which they had tilled of old, more or less affected by the Roman civilisation with which, for some four centuries or more, they were brought in contact. But the regions occupied by the more ancient rocks, rising into rugged forest-covered mountains, offered an effective barrier to the march of the Roman legions, and afforded a shelter within which the natives could preserve their ancient manners and language with but little change. The Romans occupied the broad central lowland region of Scotland which is formed by the Old Red Sandstone and Carboniferous strata, extending up to the base of the Highlands. But though they inflicted severe defeats upon the wild barbarians who issued from the dark glens, and though they seem to have been led by Severus round by the Aberdeenshire low grounds to the shores of the Moray Firth, and to have returned through the heart of the Highlands, they were never able permanently to bring any part of the mountainous area of crystalline rocks under their rule.

The same geological influences which guided the pro-