

The first years of her life were spent in a district closely resembling that described by Lord Tennyson—himself a Lincolnshire man—in the Song of the “Dying Swan,” where grew the

“Creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among.”

Her parents at the time of her birth were comparative strangers in the fenland village, having resided there only about a year when that event took place.

Her father, Thomas Tilly, was a native of the village of Forton, in the parish of Alverstoke, in Hampshire, overlooking the Solent.

In the beginning of the “Hungry Forties” he had gone to London—in pursuit of his calling—where he married Miss Elizabeth Phillips, who was a decided Christian. Soon after the birth of their first-born—a son—in 1842, the Tillys removed to Friskney, a distance of a hundred and thirty miles north-east of the metropolis; and settled near the then famous Cranberry Fens.

The Tillys while residing in the fen-country had three children born to them, one son and two daughters.

Elizabeth Phillips, who was named after her mother, was the eldest of the three.

The family remained in Lincolnshire until