

were all, I take it, animated by the spirit of the farmer of the poem :

"Hosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaay?

Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em say."

Of all the passengers on the Horncastle road that day I alone was intent, not on the value of horses, but on the charms of poetry and of poetic associations.

The road to Somersby is extremely rural;—rural in a thoroughly English sense. It winds and turns and twists between the bordering hawthorn hedges,—some trim and neat, some wild and shaggy. At every bend of the road the landscape varies. Here a cosy cottage; there a picturesque windmill: here a wide stretch of pasture covered with thick-fleeced sheep; there a distant hill wrapt in blue-grey mist: here a group of laborers cutting the ripe corn; there a quiet woodland-slope where grow the poet's trees in rich variety, the ash, the elm, the lime, the oak.

The many curves and turns in the road make it very difficult for the stranger to keep the right course. The finger-posts to be seen at every corner and cross-way are indispensable. I was forcibly struck with the fact that Somersby is a very insignificant place when at one cross-way I found the finger-boards filled with names, but could find no Somersby there. In my perplexity I sat down and copied out the curious names on the boards which pointed in four directions :

	Belchford.	Fulleby.	
Tointon			Salmesby
Horncastle			Tetford
	Spilsby	Greetham	

I decided to follow the Tetford road

which after a little distance bent almost backwards towards Horncastle, but which ultimately proved to be the right route for Somersby.

What a silent land I found as I approached the end of my journey! In the last three miles I saw only two persons. The only creatures in sight were hundreds on hundreds of sheep and cattle.

Now Somersby is near at hand. The road turns down a steep incline and passes through a shady arbor. The branches of the trees that skirt the narrow way meet overhead and cast their tremulous shadows at your feet. All is quiet but the faint rustling of the leaves, or the distant clamor of the daws and rooks. You feel that you have reached an actual *lotus-land*,—an enchanted realm. No longer does it seem strange that Tennyson composed while walking along this Lincolnshire road the loveliest of his sea-lyrics, "Break, break, break."

But it is no surge of the sea that is now heard in the distance. There is no mistaking that musical tinkling. Yonder is the bridge under which flows the brook with its haunting song of rippling waters that "come from haunts of coot and fern." The witchery of the brook's refrain, I hear it still :

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I glisten, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever."

There is not such another brook in the world as "Somersby Beck." Had it not found its way into the poetry of words its inimitable voice would still arrest the attention of the traveller, but the magic melody of the poet's words have hallowed the sweet beck and heightened its attractiveness, and though men may come