

LITERARY BY-PATHS

such a youth might have been expected to yield something of interest. Beyond the bare fact, however, that he was sent to school in this building, practically nothing is known of his sojourn in Twyford village. Although the house has been transformed into labourers' cottages, the large central doorway is still unaltered, and it is not difficult to imagine the appearance of the building as it was in the poet's boyhood. Probably the fact that he was a weakly child accounts for his having been sent so far into the country away from his London home, and it is not idle to suppose that his acquaintance with rural life at such an impressionable age contributed not a little to the early ripening of the pastoral side of his muse. Unconsciously, perhaps, yet none the less effectively, his sojourn in this lovely village stored his mind with the simple yet attractive images which go to make up his picture of "The Quiet Life," a masterly poem to be placed to the credit of a boy of twelve, and thus written four years after his Twyford days. Here, if anywhere in the whole of England, might it be truly said,

"Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground."