

gifts. Generally speaking, according to Mr. Speight, the west side of the Nidd valley from Bewerley (opposite Pateley Bridge) north to its headwaters belonged, with a few reservations, to Byland, while Fountains¹ held the lands east of the river in its upper course and those on both sides of it for some distance below Pateley Bridge. To Byland, therefore, belonged, as has already been quoted from Mr. Walbran, the township of Stonebeck Down, in which the Goldthwaite home is situated. As the family spread, however, they removed and took up other residences, becoming some of them tenants of Fountains, and it is of these that we have evidence through the researches of the distinguished investigator of that Abbey's records, Mr. Walbran, as well as from their mention in the tax lists and from the wills found of some of their number.

The importance during the middle ages of the great monastic institutions, of which Fountains and Byland are examples in England, is too well known to be argued here. Possessed of large wealth gained from various sources, and to a great extent independent of the secular power, since their allegiance was first of all due to the pope, their abbots, many of whom had seats in the House of Lords, held positions of worldly, as well as spiritual, power and dignity, and were regarded as on the same social level as the chief feudal nobles. Part of their revenue came from the lands with which they had been endowed, which were divided into larger or smaller farms, where granges and farm-houses were built by the monks, and the whole leased at a reasonable yearly rent to tenants who regarded themselves as a species of proprietors, handing down the property by will

¹ Fountains Abbey is considerably nearer than Byland to the Nidd and the region of our immediate interest — in a direct line it is less than ten miles east of the early Goldthwaite home. Its remains are not only the most picturesque, but the most extensive and well preserved of the monastic ruins of England, and for that reason are much visited by travelers. They lie three miles southwest from Ripon, the cathedral town of that region, one thousand years old in 1886, and from it they are conveniently reached. Other monasteries of the same early time in the region, with interesting remains, are Bolton Abbey, about ten miles south of Gowthwaite on the River Wharfe, and Kirkstall Abbey, three and a half miles northwest of Leeds, second only to Fountains in the extent and preservation of its ruins.