

THE GOLDTHWAITE FAMILY IN ENGLAND

Every person bearing one of the surnames, comparatively infrequent in America, which end in *thwaite*, carries in the name itself evidence, not only of the English origin of his family, but of the part of England from which they first came, this termination being confined to a particular region embracing the northwestern counties, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northern Lancashire, and parts of Yorkshire. Thwaite comes from the Anglo-Saxon verb *thweotan*, to cut down, and is defined as an open space cleared in a forest, or reclaimed land; land once covered with wood brought into pasture or tillage. Added to its various prefixes it formed to begin with, always a place name, but by being applied to its owner or inhabitant, distinguishing him from others around as "of" such thwaite, it came, when second names began to be used, to be applied without the preposition to his family and was transmitted to his descendants as their family name. Every such surname implies, therefore, a corresponding locality which may be assumed to have been once the home of a remote ancestor. Some of these localities can still be identified; in a much larger number of cases, however, the family name is all that has survived, while in the lapse of centuries the name of the home it once signified has either entirely passed out of existence or become so corrupted in spelling as to be now unrecognizable.¹

¹ The following such names of places are found on a map of the Lake Region (Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Northern Lancashire) in Baedeker's Guide Book for Great Britain: — *Appletthwaite, Bassentthwaite, Birkerthwaite, Burnthwaite, Burthwaite, Braithwaite, Caltwaite, Crosby Thwaite, Crosthwaite, Douthwaite, Es-thwaite, Littlethwaite, Lowthwaite, Ormathwaite, Rosthwaite, Seathwaite, Smaithwaite, Southwaite, Stonethwaite, Stythwaite, Thackthwaite, Thornthwaite, Thornythwaite, Tylberthwaite, Wantthwaite*. The following are from that part of the West