

and waterfalls? But it is hard to say; he might have been all he is and more.*

In the midst of this enchanted ground, or, to describe the locale of my little story more particularly, at the foot of Cross-Fell, stands the small village of Melmerby. It consists, to begin with its most prominent feature, of a church peeping from its "Ivy-green" and surrounded by about a score of white and glistening cottages, the clean windows of which, together with the neat little gardens around them, fenced in with a hawthorn hedge, cut with the nicest precision, tell, as plainly as such outward signs can speak, of quiet and domestic comfort and simple competency within their humble and unpretending walls. If anything should be thought wanting in the grandeur of the structures of those lowly dwellings, or in the architectural ornaments of their little church, an ample compensation is found in the majestic sycamores and the old elm trees which hide all but the beauties of both from the view. And if they did not, would they be any more than the ivy-mantled tower of the village church, without their long and living history? They have been peopled time out of mind with a countless multitude of rooks and daws and owls. And among them, throughout their generations, there have been wars and rumours of wars; besides petty incursions and forays from enemies with which they could not cope; still they gathered and grew, and extended their noisy colony and settled upon every new branch as it shot out from the parent stem. The rooks did, while the daws and owls remained the same. I do not know how they disposed of their surplus population. Perhaps they sent them off to some distant colony.

There is another feature in the landscape still more striking than any yet mentioned, and that is the river, the little river or "beck," one of the numerous tributaries of the beautiful Eden, which winds its devious way through woods and rocks around the outskirts of the hamlet, with a rich level Holme on one side, and the spur of Cross-Fell, on which the village stands, upon the other, forming a bend of an extensive radius till it gets fairly past the last of the straggling cottages, when it is suddenly turned to the westward by a huge fragment of a rock evidently rolled down from the mountain side into its otherwise quiet bed. This rock seems to have formed such an obstruction to its course as to have split off from it a small stream at a point where it is about to descend eight or ten feet into a long and narrow valley. On this little fall stands the village mill, and close by it the miller's house, not otherwise of any consequence than that in it lived the miller's daughter.

* This was written long before the death of Sir Walter Scott.

who has something, although very little, to do with my story. It must not from this be inferred, however, that it did not constitute, with the little mill beside it, a very prominent and picturesque feature in the landscape.

The cottages composing this little hamlet were all of solid masonry, rubble built, with quoins and window and door-frames of cut stone, and covered like all the houses in that section of the country, with blue slate. They were all, with two exceptions, cottages, in the strictest acceptance of the term, and nothing more, being only of one story with attics lighted by dormant windows. I love to be particular. These two exceptions were called, *par excellence*, "The Houses," and were occupied by families of a class superior to the cottagers. Those being land-owners, while these were only tenants-at-will.

Just below the mill, the river in its wayward wanderings takes a turn off to the westward towards the Eden, away from the foot of the mountain to which it had clung so closely for miles, and leaves an extensive field of that rich debris soil, called in that district, "Holme-land." At the foot of this field, which constitutes the glebe, stands the village church, a large old gothic building, with a chancel almost as big as the body of the church. It is ornamented with a square battlemented tower, with heavy buttresses, and covered almost entirely with the "Ivy-green," which at a distance makes it look something like one of the huge sycamores that surround it. It was distant from the village about a quarter of a mile. The little enclosure around it constituted the last peaceful resting place of the villagers for many generations and there was no habitation of the living near it. It was indeed a lovely, a sequestered and romantic spot, apparently held sacred even by the noisy rooks, who had seized as their own every other tree in the vicinity.

The cottages, and "houses" in this little hamlet are occupied at this day, by the descendants of their tenants some centuries ago. And they have scarcely, in a single instance, changed either the names or the habits of their earliest ancestors. I allude, however, to a state of things at the commencement of the present century. Since that period wonderful changes have taken place in almost every hamlet in that part of the country, in consequence of the numberless emigrations to America.

When one of the inhabitants of this very village, about the period I have adverted to, had determined to seek a home and better his fortunes in this far-off land, he advertised his property for sale, and described it as a house, one of "the houses," and some five or six score acres of freehold land, with the appurtenances and pri-