



FARNE

Folk Archive Resource North East



A Tragedy of the Fells

Now Grains o' Beck is know so well,
By Lune it stands and near the fell,
Oft mantled with the snow,
The people too are widely known
Remembered for their kindness shown
To travellers high and low.

October 'Twas the thirteenth day,
When three young men did make their way
To gather home their sheep,
That one of those who then did leave,
Not one then left did e'er conceive,
Ere night in death would sleep.

The morn was fair and warm indeed,
Light clothes were chosen to make speed,
Their purpose to attain:
The days were short, so well they knew
That darkness soon would blind their view,
And make their efforts vain.

So they sped on as time flew by,
But oh, how altered grew the sky
From that of early morn:
The spreading clouds they darker grew,
The howling winds they fiercer blew,
So rose the fatal storm.

O'er Crockley's bleak and dreary fell,
For hours the blast did sweep and swell
Till near the close of day:
The sheep were gathered then 'tis true,
But drenched the men and tired too,
And home was far away.

So cutting blew the shot-like hail,
The sheep could hardly face the gale
And reeling turned oft round:
The cold it's tale was telling fast,
their limbs were numbing with the blast
Each step along the ground.



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Earth man his own sad tale new best,
And so, could tell unto the rest,
But this was done too late:
When strength, and nearly life were gone,
This awful secret was made known,
That one was near his fate.

Two miles or more they were away,
When John Dent did so sadly say
“My strength is at an end”:
As there he stood, or rather reeled,
The others promptly, for too shield
From falling, aid did lend.

With arms united fast as one,
This mortal three did struggle on,
To reach fain friends and home:
But how they reeled, how oft they fell,
Amid the darkness on that fell,
Alike, is wrapt in gloom.

Then to the wall by the Hurth end,
John’s mortal, mournful march did end,
On earth no more to roam:
From thence another escort then
(But ‘twas not human not of men)
Was to convey him home.

Beneath the wall, upon a stone,
It was for Bowman cold and lone-
To nurse his dying friend:
The younger brother foundering fast,
Ere Arngill House was reached at last
To ask their aid to lend.

As each to each the tale did tell,
How John was dying on the fell,
To help would shirk no pains:
But ere three men did reach the scene,
They only found of what had been,
The cold and dead remains.



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Some time ere this 'tis said he ceased
To shiver, speak or move the least.
All then was still and drear:
Thus half a mile from his own fire,
In the cold blast he did expire.
That friend and brother dear.

John Bayles by dint of strength amain,
His body bore in grief and pain
To his now mournful home.
Awhile to stay, until the day
They took his corpse again away,
And laid it in the tomb.

We will say this and then we're done.
A finer spirit, the great sun
Did never shine upon:
Earth's noise and show he did forego,
Yet heaven his worth did know,
And there the crown is won.