

The Cousins

Drowned accidentally in the Whitadder at Ellemford on Sunday morning the 30th September 1883 and found six days later in a deep pool known as “Hell’s Cradle”

“Guid guide ye safely to the toon!
Black hings the lift, I ween,
For wilds the spate and dreichs the gale,
But ye’ll won there ere e’en.”

“Tak Tilda’s hand and tent ye weel
The pass o’ Ellem brig.
An angry black is gathering fast;
The spate rins red and big.”

“Ay, mither, we’ll be guided richt –
Ye needna grieve sae lorn.
We’ll won the toon ere it is nicht,
And I’ll be back the morn.”

The drivin’ blast creeps ower the craigs,
An’ swirls the drookin’ drift;
The clouds hing black on the tempest’s track
Athwart the stormy lift.
The wind coughs through the quackin’ woods,
The dark flood rowes beneath,
And a wandering soond gaes shuddering roond
Like the warning voice of Death.

The dark day passed, and darkness fell
On the moonless midnight doon,
But Tilda fair, and bonnie Bell
Ne’er reached the distant toon.

Next day, far doon below the ford,
A’ crumpled, soiled and torn,
The Miller’s man in passin’ faun
The bonnet Bell had worn.
Rapidly rowes the bluid-red tide,
And the doolfu’ days glee by,
But they seek in vain for the maidens twain,
And they watna where they lie.

They sought in vain till a week gaid by.

They sought in sleepless dool
“The Goblin’s Creel” and the “Witch’s Weal”
And the “Dungeon’s dismal pool.
The haury halds o’ the foamin’ “Loup”,
And the darksome “Devil’s Dene”,
By the hoolet Crag and the Corbie Quags
They sought frae dawn till e’en.
Oh! Weary an’ wae the hearts that mourn
In yon Hamlet on the moor.
Oh! mony a sigh is upward borne
In the midnight eerie ‘oor.
The waukrife mither listens lang
For the fit that never cam’,
While she scans the moor frae the sheilin’ door
Tae look for her lassie hame.

They hae brought them up frae yon drumly den
In the grasp o’ the grapplin’ gouds
O Hell’s Cradle’s weedy shroud;
And they’ve laid oot on yon foggy bank,
Far doon in the rimy dell,
But cauld, cauld noo is the bluidless broo
‘Neath the raven locks o’ Bell.
Oh, calm and still wee Tilda sleeps
On the rushy bank sae green,
But the heart is dead an’ the licht has fled
Frae the star o’ her sweet blue een.

There’s aye a relief for the sairest grief,
An’ it’s sweet to hope that they
May be side by side whaur the angels bide,
In a bonnier warld the day.

**Thos. Watts,
Broomhouse, Dunse
October 10th 1883**

Interred together in one grave in Edrom Churchyard.

(Communicated by John Turner, Elder at Duns Old & Boston, and sometime Beadle at Edrom, to the Revd. Hugh Mackay, Duns, 1970)

Brian A Turner (Grandson of the late John Turner) – November 2008