

TRANSCRIPTION

Duncan Williamson tells a personal anecdote: “God’s helped me now!”

ScottishVoicesProj.0414

[This recording was made in October, 1986, at a rented house outside Ithaca, New York. Present were Williamson, John Niles, and Niles’s wife, Carole Newlands.]

JN: You told Holly [Tannen], Duncan, about a minister who wouldn’t sell hay to you. Does that mean anything to you?

DW: Oh, aye, yeah, true. That’s a good story, yeah.

JN: Would you tell me about that too?

DW: I stayed up at a place called Kennaway, an it was the wintertime, and Ah had a pony. Now this farmer, he was a holy man. A real holy man. An he used tae go about to the church, kneeled in the church. And most of his time — he had a man runnin the farrum for him, and most of the time he would go round handin out holy tracts and things tae people, ye know? Very religious kind o soul.

So I was at a place called Kennaway, if you took a shortcut through the old road and through the field, you came into his farrum. And I was needin some hay for my horse, an I went up to the farrum, I walked across the field. There was snow on the ground. And I walked up tae the farrum and I asked him, I said, “Would you sell me a bale of hay for my horse?” Now, a bale of hay was cheap at that time, maybe a pound for a bale, half pound for a bale.

“Oh no, laddie,” he said, “I’m sorry,” he said, “I cannae sell ye any hay for your horse.” And he says, “Wait and I’ll get you something, though, that’ll help ye.” And he goes oot and brings oot two holy tracts to me, you know — these holy leaflets. He said, “You take that and read that,” he says. “Maybe God will help you.”

JN: *[Laughs, along with CN.]*

DW: Ah said, “Ah’ll take the leaflets.” Ah said, “God’ll help me tonight — when it gets dark!” (I said to mysel). “When it gets dark tonight, God will help me!” *[Laughs.]* He says, “OK, now, mind ye read that, then be good and believe in God, and everything will turn out for ye.” I says back to mysel, “OK, that’s fine. Wait till it gets dark tonight and God’ll help me, all right.”

JN: *[More laughter.]*

DW: I waited till about ten o’clock, until the lights in the farm went oot, and I walked up to the shed and got a bale on my back. Carried it away. Ah said, “God’s helped me now. Goodnight!”

JN: *[More laughter.]*

DW: That's a true story. I said, "God's helped. . . ." — and he never missed it. He never missed it.

CN: Why would he not sell it, do you think?

DW: He wouldnae sell it because he was too mean, he wanted it all for his own cattle. He thought it was breakin his heart to sell me a bale for my horse, and the poor horse standin without a bite. There was nae grass, because it was wintertime. Oh, God helped me all right that night!

JN = John Niles

DW = Duncan Williamson

CN = Carole Newlands