

HOLY WILLIES PRAYER

Argument.

Holy Willie was a rather oldish batchelor Elder in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tipping. Orthodoxy, and for that Spiritualized Bawdry which refines to Liqueurish Devotion. —In a Sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline, a Mr Gavin Hamilton, Holy Willie, and his priest, father Auld, after full hearing in the Presbytry of Ayr, cam off but second best; owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr Robt Aiken, Mr Hamilton's Counsel; but chiefly to Mr Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. —On losing his Process, the Muse overheard him at his devotions as follows

— O THOU that in the heavens does dwell! Wha, as it pleases best thysel,
Sends ane to heaven and ten to h-ll,
A' for thy glory! And no for ony gude or ill
They've done before thee.— I bless and praise thy matchless might,
When thousands thou has left in night,
That I am here before thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.— What was I, or my generation,
That I should get such exaltation?
I, wha deserv'd most just damnation, For broken laws
Sax thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause!
When from my mother's womb I fell, Thou might hae plunged me deep in hell,
To gnash my gooms, and weep, and wail
In burning lakes,
Where damned devils roar and yell
Chain'd to their stakes.— Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To shew thy grace is great and ample:
I'm here, a pillar o' thy temple Strong as a rock,
A guide, a ruler and example
To a' thy flock.— [O L—d thou kens what zeal I bear, When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there, and dancin' here, Wi' great an' sma'; For I am keepet by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.—]
But yet—O L—d—confess I must—At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshy lust; And sometimes too, in wardly
trust
Vile Self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd wi' sin.— O L—d—yestreen—thou kens—wi' Meg—Thy pardon I sincerely beg! O may 't
ne'er be a living plague, To my dishonor!
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg Again upon her. — Besides, I farther maun avow,
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times—I trow—But L—d, that Friday I was fou When I cam near her;
Or else, thou kens, they servant true
Wad never steer her. — Maybe thou lets this fleshy thorn
Buffet thy servant e'en and morn, Lest he o'er proud and high should turn, That he's sae gifted; If sae,
thy hand maun e'en be borne Until thou lift it. — L—d bless they Chosen in this place, For here thou
has a chosen race:
But G—d, confound their stubborn face, And blast their name,
Wha bring thy rulers to disgrace
And open shame. — L—d mind Gaun Hamilton's deserts! He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony taking arts
Wi' Great and Sma', Frae G—d's ain priest the people's hearts He steals awa. — And when we chasten'd
him therefore, Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
And set the world in a roar
O' laughin at us: Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes. — L—d hear my earnest cry and prayer Against that Presbytry of Ayr!
Thy strong right hand, L—d, make it bare Upon their heads!

L—d visit them, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds!

O L—d my G—d, that glib-tongu'd Aiken!
My very heart and flesh are quaking
To think how I sat, sweating, shaking,
And p—ss'd wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hingin lip gaed sneaking
And hid his head!

L—d, in thy day o' vengeance try him!
L—d visit him that did employ him!
And pass not in thy mercy
by them,
Nor hear their prayer;
But for thy people's sake destroy them,
And dinna spare!

But L—d, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine!
That I for grace and gear may
shine,
Excell'd by name!
And a' the glory shall be thine!
AMEN! AMEN!
END