

**Letter by William Fraser Tytler to his wife, written whilst holding a court in  
Alvie Church, 1832  
(GB0232/D766/5/2/8)**

Aviemore, Sunday Mg, 8 o'clock

My Dearest Wifie,

As Mactavish goes down to Inverness today with the intention of being up again for the court here tomorrow, I get an opportunity of sending a few lines by him, as he goes in half an hour, I must be brief.

We are getting on very slowly – yesterday I only discussed about a dozen claims altho' the court sat from 11 till 7 and I had been previously at work on the same claims from 6 in the morning for I went to Kingussie & back again (26 miles) before breakfast to inspect the houses & property claimed on – my counsel & agents are getting very sick of the work I keep them to. Yesterday morning I got up at 5 & could not find a soul awake either in house or stables. My applications to the bell were totally inoperative, & I was obliged to grope my way to the kitchen and maids garret above it, before I could obtain the least indication of animal life. Macqueen who understands Gaelic heard two of the maids afterwards alledged that the Sheriff was troubled with an evil spirit.

But what occupied so much time yesterday was the knotty point of Grantown. It was most ably discussed – Macqueen spoke for two hours and a half – Macneil who is now the counsel in attendance for Macleod, for about an hour and a half. This brought us to 7 o'clock. As it is a matter required deep attention on my part I adjourned till Monday at one o'clock, to give time for making up my mind upon it.

I shall notwithstanding go to church today – we have been desecrating the Church of Alvie by making a court house of it for two days and are bound to show our acknowledgment of its higher purposes today.

It got so cold towards evening in the Church yesterday that we adjourned, for the debate on Grantown, to the Minister's drawing room which would have afforded an admirable sketch for the pencil of Cruikshank, titled A Registration. We were obliged very much to limit the audience, but it was of a very miscellaneous description. The sofa was occupied by Mrs Macneill, Miss Grant Ballindalloch, the Parson a well fed & comely Priest and an old thin & wizened mother-in-law, insufferably active, & impossible to restrain from constantly snuffing the candles or trying to start up for some less important service. Macqueen and his assisting agents had one table from which he thundered away – and Macneill with his attendant spirits another. The portly figure of Ballindalloch with his whole nether man enveloped in a tartan plaid occupied one side of the fireplace – a table for me was placed at the other. The floor was strewd with maps & plans, & two little spoilt gurlies of the parsons squatted or sprawled at my feet – imagine all this, & place the Sherriff in his shooting jacket &

grey trousers, standing in the midst, & listening with the keenest attention to the debate – and a more amusing scene scarcely entered the fancy of poor Sir Walter.

I forgot that you must put bottles, glasses & sandwiches on my table.

I shall not now see you till Wedy – nor can I get to Ravock. I have another day Tuesday in Inverness – and it may even be longer. I have not time for a word more.

God bless you my Darling.