

Penicuik ,Feb 21st 1894

Dear Mr Gray,

I wish I could come, but it's fair on possible. 'Deed, I hae to be nae better than the auld pictur' o' Giant Pagan in my auld Pilgrim, sitting in my den, an' growlin' "NO!" when onybody asks me a ceevil question.

The way o't is this! I hae the Kirk – it's gotten a gye handlin'. I hae mair leeterary wark o' yae kind an' anither than I daur own to mysel. Juist like a bankrupt that darena face his debts. An I canna tak' on ony-thing that I am no juist in a mainer obleegit to do. Sae nae wonder I am loosin' a' my freen's. But, od man, I can nae better. I hae to rise a great while before day (to my work) as it is to manage, an' even ae mornin' is precious an' been stampit.

An' thank ye kindly for your kind words, very tender and refreshing and comin' frae yin wha's judgment I hae aye had a great respect for, Dod, d'ye ken I' fell fond o' Leeb McLurg mysel' – but dinna tell the wife.

P.S. I note your dates are in March. I aim to be with Dr Nicoll all that month in London and thereabouts.

Ever trutly,

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