

indeed that was the beginning of it—for without that inquiry I don't suppose we should have done more than exchange two letters; but she wrote so pleasantly about you that I thought I would like to see her and send a message to New Zealand. It does seem so strange that when we were talking about Louisa, it was all over. I was very much shocked when I heard from Mrs Hadfield last night. She had evidently had the paper by the same mail, my copy came this morning forwarded from the publishers' office. I had the child's nice little letter and the photographs last August, I had been intending to answer when I got back to London, & could send her a doll & a new book. And now it is too late. I think I have little friends all over the world, I am glad if my books have given her pleasure. Her little grass bag is hanging up in the house-place here, my house-keeper (the farmer's wife) was so sorry when I told her—we have a handful of children in this house—but not one to spare; and to think that you have lost your one little ewe lamb is dreadful. I hope she did not suffer much. With sincere sympathy for you and your husband believe me yours sincerely

Beatrix Potter.

REFERENCES

- 1 Letter, 16 November 1930, William Ferguson to Johannes Andersen. ATL Correspondence files.
- 2 Margaret Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter: A Biography*, revised edition (London, 1968).
- 3 William Ferguson was Engineer, Secretary and Treasurer of the Wellington Harbour Board, and later Managing Director of the Wellington Gas Company, and Chairman of the National Efficiency Board. Mary Louisa, his wife, was the daughter of William Sefton Moorhouse, who had been Superintendent of Canterbury and Mayor of Wellington.