

England, and the arrival in the stores of pirated rabbit and squirrel dolls made in Germany, she printed an argument in favour of protection, and drew hand-coloured posters illustrating her point of view.² After marriage, Miss Potter the authoress was heard of less as she gained increasing satisfaction from the life she enjoyed for another thirty years as Mrs Heelis, farmer.

Although Beatrix Potter's reply to Louisa's initial letter was no doubt influenced by the standing and personal connections of her parents the news of her death in August 1910 aged eight elicited an immediate and unmistakably warm response. In October the following year a copy of *Peter Rabbit's Painting Book* was sent, inscribed 'For Mrs Ferguson from B.P. with kind remembrance'.

The letters (MS Papers 461) are transcribed below, with the one illustrated letter reproduced on page 99.

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Nov 21st 1907

With best wishes for the New Year to little Louisa Ferguson from Beatrix Potter.

This is a portrait of the real old original Mr Benjamin Bunny!
Many thanks to Mrs Ferguson for her kind appreciative letter.

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On Frederick Warne letterhead:

Feb. 26 1908

Dear little Louisa,

It is a dear little bag and a dear little photograph! When I saw the bag I said "This is for Peter Rabbit to carry his pocket handkerchief in!" But when I looked at it carefully I said—it is a great deal too nice for Peter, and he would bite holes in it, as it seems to be made of flax or grass.

So I shall keep it for myself, & hang it up on a little brass hook in my parlour, it will look very pretty against the dark wood. I have got a bellows hanging up and a pen wiper and a kettle holder, and some other photographs of little girls that I have never seen!

When they send me photographs, I send back a photograph of Peter or Benjamin—I don't write letters to all of them; but you look such a little dear and your Mamma has sent me such a nice present, I am quite pleased.

I hope that you are very well and I remain with love yrs aff

Beatrix Potter.

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