

16th April

Address c/o Messrs Monroe

7 Rue to Scribe

Paris

And on top left corner of envelope put when replying 'From Peebles' which should reach us sooner.

Travelling in Spain. Figuenas the name of place.

My dear John and Marion,

You will be surprised at this letter, but I thought of you to help us – immediately I got my boy's letter. Philip is now 18 1/2, a strong, fine fellow, earnest, straightforward, truthful, and wanting to work. He has no desire for the University and Latin and Greek are not in his line. He wants to learn sheep farming seriously, and of course if you could take him it would be a great and never to be forgotten favour. I would expect to pay for his board and keep generally, and also a sum which we would agree upon afterwards for your teaching him the business. You will find him most serious and trustworthy – really anxious and determined to learn and he would be content with the smallest room in the house – not the 'doon the hoose.' He would be one of yourselves and you would grow to love him I feel sure. By and by you two might go into partnership or take another farm. I would just be as glad if he stayed in this country and though the life of a Galloway sheep farmer is a hard and some ways uncertain one, as you know, it is free and happy. But first of all he has to learn the business. Marion, I know would love to have him. He is a great friend of all and sundry about the Peebles farms, but they are too drouthy a lot to please me. Besides, I should like him to be at first with those who love me – so take him if you can, and we will arrange all in the summer. I have a cottage at Auchencairn now, and shall take possession in August. So I shall be able to run up often to Newton Stewart if you can meet me, at the Station or at the House o' the Hill or the Road end.

Philip is anxious to get away to the hills as soon as possible and into working time. He is thoroughly weary of books - I mean of Latin and Greek – and if you can give him a start, well you write to him friend: -

Mr Philip Crockett, Torwood, Peebles.

I fancy Mrs Crockett agrees with this, but anyway he is a fellow who means to work and who knows his own mind, if you can help by taking him he will be a happiness to your house as he has always been at home. He has only one fault – he smokes, but he can do that in the kitchen or outside. He is, though I say it, of your own honourable spirit, truthful, manly, upright, affectionate. And by Gods opening up of our way he may be of greater use to Marion and you in the future.

I have little doubt of your reply, and I send my true affection to Marion as of old and to you, my best and truest Galloway friend – in asking you both to be father and mother to my eldest boy. I am busy with work here, overwhelmed with it indeed. Times have been hard for authors. Elections have knocked us all wrong. Philip is a great Tariff Reformer and will talk a lot but his views will soften with time. You will find him in all other respects like his father, and you are to give him plenty of work and make him

get up in the morning along with you - hew wood and draw water, be a 'herd' and a real one with some responsibility this is what he will revel in, when you can trust him with something. His clothes, boots etc won't be strong enough but (if you can take him) will you get anything necessary in the town and at my coming we will arrange. My true affection to both of you. Please write to Philip in any case. Remember he is to work and till he knows all you can teach him and has some year or so of experience I aim to pay what we will agree upon when I see you. I don't know if it is clear how you are to write to me, so I enclose an envelope which you can copy and use. I get my letters through the Bank when travelling
Ever your auld friend to baith the twa
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