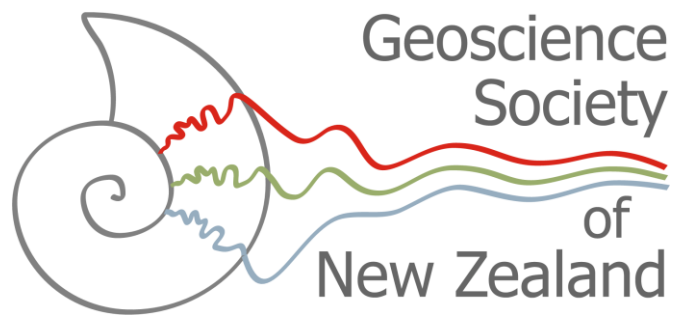


# Letters from James Farmer to James Hector, 1876-1891

Esme Mildenhall & Simon Nathan



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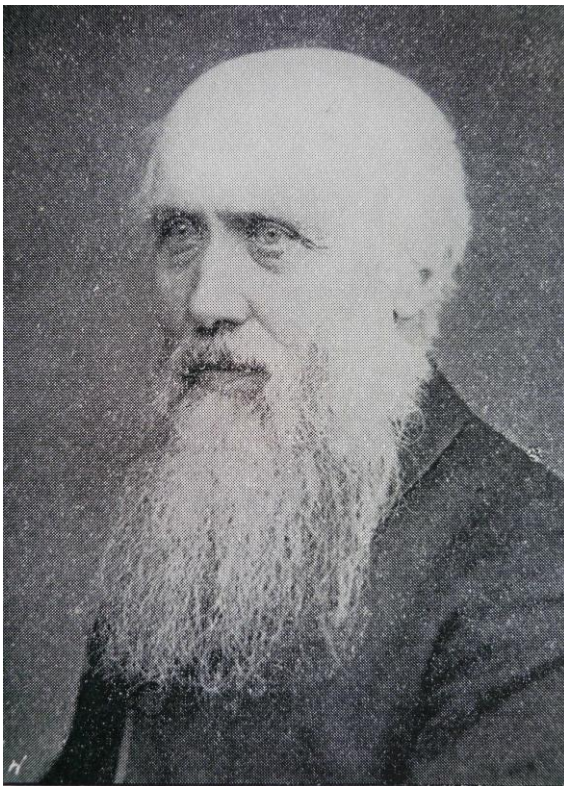
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# Letters from James Farmer to James Hector, 1976-1991

## Contents

Introduction	3
Who was James Farmer?	
Relationship between James Hector and James Farmer	
Nature of the correspondence	
Acknowledgements	
Transcriptions of the letters	7



**James Farmer**

*Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Auckland  
Provincial District, 1902*



**James Hector**

*Alexander Turnbull Library, F-8197-1/2  
Photograph taken about 1875*

No  
 Received the 9th July 1877  
 of Dr. J. Hector (per Mr. Farmer)  
 Fifty ~~Six~~ Pounds being the Sum in Lieu  
 of Annual Contributions to the Royal  
 Society  
 For W. Spottiswoode Treas.  
 L<sup>60</sup> 5/6  
 £ 4/6 in Note  
 Walter White Asst. Sec. R.S.

[MS-443-3/16/77]  
 JAMES HECTOR, M.D.  
 SEP 11 1877  
 INLAND REVENUE  
 ONE PENNY

7/16/77  
JAMES HECTOR, M.D.  
SEP  
11  
1877

MS-443-3/16/6]

No. 45.

RECEIVED *July 9<sup>th</sup> 1877* of *James Hector*  
(*by cheque*)  
the Sum of *thirty pounds*

being the Amount of his ~~Admission Fee and~~ Composition in lieu of  
Annual Payments as a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London.

£ 30/-

for *J. Gwyn Jeffreys*  
Treasurer.  
*Richard Kippist*

JAMES HECTOR. M.D.  
SEP 1877

SEP 11 1871  
JAMES HECTOR. M.D.  
James Hector

Frontispiece: Receipts for two typical payments made by James Farmer in 1877 on behalf of James Hector



# Letters from James Farmer to James Hector, 1876-1891

## Introduction

James Farmer acted as agent for James Hector in the United Kingdom from 1876 to the early 1890s, and they corresponded regularly throughout this period. Unfortunately the letters written by Hector have not survived, but Farmer's letters were saved by Hector among his personal correspondence, and they are now held in the Hocken Collections, University of Otago (collection ARC-0008, MS-04443-3, folders 15-28). The complete set of 111 letters written by Farmer has been transcribed, and is here presented in chronological order.

We undertook this project to fill in details about the life of James Hector, but we hope that the letters may also be of interest to historians studying late 19<sup>th</sup> century life in New Zealand and relationships between colonists and their home country.

### Who was James Farmer<sup>1</sup>?

James Farmer was born on 17 January 1822 in Fife, Scotland. We know little of his early life, but he was clearly well educated, and had gained experience in commercial matters. He emigrated to New Zealand on the *Louisa Campbell*, arriving in Auckland on 1 April 1847. For many years he was employed as manager of the One Tree Hill estate near Onehunga for the firm of Brown Campbell & Co, but also had other commercial and political interests. He invested heavily in the Caledonian Mine at Thames, and made a fortune when it turned into a bonanza in the early 1870s. He also purchased land in and around the growing town of Auckland.

Soon after his arrival Farmer showed an interest in politics. He stood unsuccessfully for both the Auckland Provincial Council and the House of Representatives in 1855. In 1859 he was elected for the newly created rural Auckland seat of Marsden, but defeated in the following general election when he stood for the Town of Onehunga. He returned to parliament as member for Raglan in a by-election in 1867, but did not stand in the 1870 election. A few months later he was appointed to the Legislative Council, continuing as a member until he resigned three years later. He was also elected to the Auckland Provincial Council for different districts in 1861-63, 1867-69 and 1871-72.

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<sup>1</sup> Schofield's 'Dictionary of New Zealand Biography' (1940) gives a summary of Farmer's life which is the source of many subsequent references, but unfortunately many of the details (including the dates of his birth and death) are incorrect.

On 6 June 1859 James Farmer married Julia Horne in Taranaki, and they were to have seven children:

Alexander Frederick Farmer (b.1861)  
Frederika Elizabeth Farmer (b. 1862)  
James Herbert Farmer (b. 9 1863)  
Julia Edith Farmer (b. 23 1865)  
Alfred Douglas Farmer (b. 1868)  
Cecily Hilda Farmer (b. 1871)  
Malcolm Stuart Farmer (b. 1873)

James Farmer made sufficient money from the sale of his Caledonian Mine shares and other investments that he could afford to give up day-to-day business affairs and live as a gentleman. After retiring from politics in his early 50s, he took his family back to the UK where he purchased a large London property at 6 Porchester Gate, Hyde Park. His sons were educated at University College School, Harrow and Eton. The daughters had private tuition, and two of them studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Farmer later purchased a farm, *Brownhills*, near St Andrews in Scotland which the family visited in summer, and was eventually managed by his oldest son, Alexander.

Farmer kept a close interest in New Zealand affairs through correspondence and the newspapers. He returned to New Zealand for extended periods in 1882, 1888-89 and 1894, largely to check on his investments and attend to business matters.

When James Farmer died on 24 December 1908, he left an estate valued at £79,756<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to \$NZ12.7 million in 2013.

### **Relationship between James Hector and James Farmer**

Hector would have known Farmer as a parliamentarian in the late 1860s and early 1870s. . James and Georgiana Hector were part of the social elite in Wellington, and would have mixed with members when parliament was in session. Farmer had a long-standing interest in natural history, and the Colonial Museum, where Hector worked, was directly behind Parliament buildings

There is evidence that Farmer accompanied Hector in the field in Coromandel. In a letter of 22 March 1887 he reminisces:

“I can well remember our trip along the beach from Hastings to Shortland<sup>3</sup>, when we had to dodge the rising tide by climbing up steep cliffs, and getting down again on the other side, to get round little headlands. At that time it was all easy travelling to you, while your more bulky and older companions were more or less in the greatest state of fatigue”.

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<sup>2</sup> Evening Post, 2 April 1909

<sup>3</sup> Farmer is not referring to the present town of Hastings, but the locality on the Firth of Thames now known as Tapu; Shortland is now part of the town of Thames

It is possible that Hector advised Farmer on the gold-mining prospects at Thames.

In 1874 Hector was granted a year's leave while the Museum was undergoing extensive alterations, and in February 1875 he and Georgiana set off for an extended visit to the United Kingdom. They stayed with the Farmers at their Porchester Gate residence in November 1875, and Hector wrote to Walter Mantell on 15 November 1875, "Mrs Farmer takes all care of Mrs Hector off my hands which leaves me quite free."

The Hectors' visit was important to Farmer because James Hector introduced him to a number of people in the London scientific world with whom he continued to meet and socialise. He refers to this often in his letters, and was able to pass on snippets of gossip about mutual acquaintances. For example, on 20 June 1878 he was able to tell Hector about meeting Lady Hooker, the recently married second wife of Sir Joseph Hooker, and record that, "She is one of the most charming women, and she is most enthusiastic about her husband's scientific work".

It was during Hector's time in London that an agreement was struck that Farmer would act as Hector's agent in the UK, and manage his business affairs there. It was an arrangement that suited both men. Farmer did not have enough to do, and was happy to do whatever Hector asked – in later years a recurring complaint was that Hector did not have enough requests or business to keep him busy. It also was a good way for Farmer to keep in touch with a friend he valued because they exchanged letters on a monthly basis for more than 20 years. Hector had an agent who was painstaking and trustworthy, and who was happy to follow up issues such as unpaid debts and missing parcels without wanting to be paid for his time.

The arrangement lasted until 1887 when the requests from Hector petered out, and letters became less regular. The last letter from Farmer is dated January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1891. It is likely that the two men met when Farmer visited New Zealand in 1892.

### **Nature of the correspondence**

James Farmer was business-like and thorough in his correspondence. His letters usually start by detailing everything that he had done for Hector in the preceding month as well as listing issues that needed clarification. He often enclosed receipts for bills that he had paid as well as annual accounts of expenditure<sup>4</sup>.

The second part of the letters lists the activities of James Farmer and his family over the preceding month. For someone who had previously had a busy life, it soon becomes clear that Farmer did not really have enough to occupy him living as a gentleman in London. He was a man of routine, regularly attending lectures at the Royal Institution and popular music concerts as well as keeping an eye on his children's education – and regretting that the boys did not work harder at school. Mrs Farmer's health problems are discussed with surprising frankness, presumably because he knew that he was writing to a doctor. Every

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<sup>4</sup> We have not reproduced the receipts with the transcribed letters except for two samples in the Frontispiece (p. 2), but the annual accounts are attached at the end of the letters which refer to them.

summer the family went away on holiday, but James Farmer stayed behind for a week at 6 Porchester Gate to ensure that the house was properly cleaned.

Having been involved in different levels of New Zealand politics for a long time, Farmer kept a close eye on parliamentary events through the newspapers, and often commented to Hector about individuals they both knew. He particularly disliked Sir George Grey and what he termed his “communistic tendencies”. Although political parties were not clearly defined in the 1870s and 1880s, Farmer can be categorised as a conservative capitalist, with a strong belief that the country should be governed by those who controlled its wealth. He deplored the passing of a law in 1889 that took away the right for men owning property to cast more than one vote, and in his last letter (January 23 1891) he comments:

“You have had an election on the “One man one vote” system, and so far as I have heard the result has not been satisfactory. “King Mob” will now rule New Zealand, and the result will be no immigration of working men. It never seems to occur to working men, that with immigration on a plentiful scale, they would rapidly become employers of labour themselves. Advance New Zealand is no part of their Programme”

Interspersed through the news of the Farmer family are snippets relating to Hector and his family, including information that is not available elsewhere, including:

- Notes on the activities of Mrs David Hector (James Hector’s aunt) and his unmarried sister Margaret (Miss Hector);
- Sympathy when Hector was incapacitated, including suffering from typhoid in 1877 and an accident in 1886;
- Hector’s concerns that his job might disappear in 1880, and that he might have to “take to doctoring”;
- Varied purchases, including a telephone and microphone in 1878, a boudoir grand Broadwood piano in 1881, and a magic lantern in 1884
- Discussion about the purchase of a portable camera that could be used during field work in 1882-83

## **Acknowledgements**

All the letters from James Farmer are held in the Hocken Collections, University of Otago. We are most grateful to Anna Blackman, Kate Guthrie and Richard Munro for arranging for the letters to be scanned and answering our queries. Antony Wood is thanked for his helpful advice on Farmer’s political career.



## Transcripts of the letters

### 1. Farmer to Hector, 24-4-1876

Hocken MS-443-3/15/8

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1876

My dear Hector

I inclose a letter to you which I received some ten days ago, but somehow it had got amongst other papers and out of sight, and I am sorry to say that I forgot all about it - I trust that the contents did not require immediate answering.

I am very sorry that the N.Z. models did not reach you - the neglect lies entirely with some one at the Agent General's Office. The models were delivered there on the Saturday morning by 11 a.m. and as the maps &... (which you named) were only sent from Stanfords on the following Monday afternoon, the models ought to have reached you in good time. After receiving your letter I called at the Agent General's Office, but all I could find out was that some one had neglected to do something, and that somebody had rushed off with the models at the last moment to "Pickfords" in the hope that they might be delivered in time. However, they did not reach you, and I am very sorry. It is most disappointing to you, after all your trouble.

Freda was charmed with your letter, and it was so kind of you to write to her - she is going to hold you to your offer to become a regular correspondent.

You will be glad to hear that Alex<sup>r</sup> is again perfectly well, and Julia is to return to London today. Julia thinks that Alex<sup>r</sup> has had a slight attack of Scarlatina. Although there was no rash, he has all peeled since he has been getting better. She did not like to consult the Doctor at Eastbourne in case the people in the Hotel might have been alarmed at the idea of a scarlet fever patient being there. Had we suspected anything of the sort when he was so ill, a different treatment might have been advisable, and we should not run the risk of spreading the malady elsewhere. As Alex<sup>r</sup> has got so rapidly well and strong, it looks as if he had caught some infectious disease, and of course better for him than if it had been constitutional weakness.

I have sent Mrs D. Hector your address. She had forgotten to get it from you. We expect her to stay with us for a while about the end of next month.

I called on Dr Hocken a few days ago regarding information for Mr. J. Richmond. Dr Hocken says that everything that can properly be done in the way of introducing plants, trees and grapes is being tried in Algiers and that Mr Richmond could get better information on the spot than could be given at Kew. The British Consul to Algiers, Col. Playfair is a well known botanist, and would be delighted to give all information regarding what has been successful and what has failed.

I remain my dear Hector  
Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer.

Dr. Hector C.M.G., F.R.S.

**2. Farmer to Hector, 11-01-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/2

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1877

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of Nov 16<sup>th</sup> informing me that you had sent a cheque for £200 to Dr Campbell to my credit, in repayment of loans. Dr Campbell mentioned having received your cheque on my account. I trust that you did not send the cheque until it was perfectly convenient to yourself to do so. I hope you have got the "Blue Books" which I ordered for you from Stanford. Also the case of surgical instruments which was packed in the case of books. I ascertained that the case had been forwarded to 7 Westminster Chambers, addressed to you in the usual way.

We are all getting along in our "jog trot" way - Education being the chief object of our daily occupation. Alex<sup>r</sup> And Spencer still go to University College School and the latter continues to excel in all his classes. Herbert has passed successfully into Harrow and will go there on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. Douglas will take Herbert's place at "The Rookery". Freda and Edith are now students at the Royal Academy of Music, and we have a German governess for them. Mrs Aspinall teaches them in the evening as when you were here. I seem to be the only idle and useless member of the household. I am sorry to say that Julia has been very poorly indeed for the last 6 weeks. She is now very much better, but she does not regain her former strength as fast as I should like.

The weather has been so dreadfully wet lately, that it is impossible for Julia to get a drive in the open air, or I am sure she would have been so much better. Driving in a shut up carriage does not do much good.

We frequently see some of your friends, and who, through your introduction, have become our friends. It seems but yesterday since you were here, and I am sure that if we added to the pleasure of the visit of yourself and Mrs Hector to this country, the pleasant winter spent and associations left with us have added to our happiness. Our children are all eager to acquire knowledge since you were here.

Wishing you all a happy new year, in which we all join

Ever yours sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr. Hector

**3. Farmer to Hector, 24-06-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/5

Caledonian Hotel, Inverness  
June 24<sup>th</sup> 1877

My dear Hector

The N.Z. mail arrived just as Julia and I were preparing to start for a trip around the Highlands, and as we are now making the most of our time sight seeing, I shall only write you a few lines to acknowledge receipt of drafts for £150, £32, & £5-10/- - total £187-10/-. We intend returning to London by the middle of next week, and I shall then attend to all your instructions. Tell Mrs Hector that Julia will have the greatest pleasure in executing all her commissions as early as possible.

Professor Maskelyne hoped to have the crystal models & Goniometer packed for shipment in a very few days.

Hardwicke of Piccadilly is getting the books for you. Dr Gunther advises me to go there, and he wrote a Memorandum to Hardwicke about getting it quickly. However, when I left London it had not arrived, and I left instructions to have the package sent to the Agent General, to be posted to you. Vogel promised to look after it. Dr Gunther told me that the work is not yet complete, and he fears that it may never be completed. Dr Gunther asked me to inclose you a Memo of a description of a specimen of fish which he would like you to send him (on loan) for comparison.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Hector

Dr Hector C.M.G., F.R.S.  
Wellington, N.Z.

**4. Farmer to Hector, 25-07-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/8

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1877

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of 1st June, and will attend to the commissions therein given within the next few days. I was unable to do so in time for this mail. The things sent for previous mail have all been got, and I believe are now shipped. I have had them shipped and insured through Agent General's Office. I inclose all the amounts, except Whiteleys, (about £35-) and the cost of shipping and Insurance. I have called several times at Whiteley's to get their account but they have not yet sent it. Mrs Farmer saw all the things after they were ready, and the box was to be sent on board ship on Monday. I only trust that you may get everything in a satisfactory condition.

The things got at Swan & Wills, are packed in the Civil Services store boxes. There is no receipt for the Crystal models but I send you the Invoice and the price - £12-3-6. I paid to Prof. Maskelyne.

I inclose all other receipts. The Royal Society deducted your last subscription but Linnean would not do so as their Rules are like "the Laws of the Medes and Persians", unalterable. You will have to send a special order to Stanfords to receive your Journals and Transactions from the various Societies, as they will not deliver them without such order.

Mrs Farmer, the girls and Malcolm are at Eastbourne (yesterday only). Douglas and Herbert will follow when they return from school, next week. Alex<sup>r</sup> and Spencer will go to Fife for the holidays. They are all quite well, and perhaps, what will...

*[Letter unfinished; page missing]*

**5. Farmer to Hector, 22-08-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/10

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1877

My dear Hector

We are all so grieved to hear that you had been so seriously ill. Typhoid is such a difficult thing to get completely rid of. I sincerely hope that your natural strong constitution may have enabled you to overcome all the bad effects of the fever, and that you had returned to Wellington all right.

I inclose your Bills of Lading for the three cases of goods shipped per “*Crownthorpe*” for Wellington. The case with the Crystal models, and the Goniometer has also been shipped by same vessel.

The brass tubing and wire was sent to Agent General’s Office some time ago, and will be sent by this mail, but I doubt if Troughton & Sims will have the telescope ready for this mail. I shall see them again before closing this letter. There is such a demand for those glasses, that they can only supply them to order as made. Admiral Sir G. N. Richards had got one made for the Marchioness of Normanby, which was sent out by last Brindisi Mail. The one being made for you is to be the same as it. The price will be £10. I intend to order one for myself.

I sent you all the accounts which I had paid to date of last mail, and I now inclose your Whiteleys account £38-16-6. You may have some difficulty in arranging all the different articles and the prices to be charged against each, but I hope that you will find that every article charged for has been packed in one or other of the cases.

In writing again for goods you should only write on one side of the paper, and have different slips for each description of goods. Both at the Stores and at Whiteley’s they like to paste all such orders, (for shipping,) into a book kept for the purpose.

You say that you are afraid you are giving me a great deal of trouble. I presume that if I agree with you, you will be satisfied!! However I may add, that if you can find me another half dozen Dr Hector’s I shall be delighted to take an equal amount of trouble for each of them. I only hope that all your orders may turn out satisfactorily. I have the greatest pleasure in attending to them.

You gave no particulars about the prisms. All you say is this “I want you to look in at Brownings, Strand the first time you are that way, and get me the inclosed orders. The prisms can be sent without the fluid in them as we can fill them here. This will allow the whole lot to be sent by Post parcel via Suez”. This was all you said about them. No order being inclosed. I called at Brownings, and they had not heard from you. I found that the prisms will cost 15/- each. How many do you require? Brownings people would recommend you to have them filled here. They having every appliance for doing so, and you would find it a matter of great difficulty.

I have been to Troughton & Sims and I believe that they have sold the glass intended for you. At all costs, I was told today that they could not tell me when it would be ready, while a week ago they said it would be ready today. Besides, I was told today, that they had “been trying everywhere to get one for you”. All this looked so suspicious to me that I told them not to execute the orders. This will give you time to see the glass sent for the Marchioness of Normanby, and I can see no chance at present of getting one within any reasonable time. The tourist season is the cause of the present demand. I cannot conceive why they should have been “trying everywhere to get a glass for you”. I thought it better to wait till they have a supply on hand.

I inclose your account to date. There are now no liabilities except the Insurance on your goods. Shipped from "*Crownthorpe*" which will probably be 25/- per case on £105 - say 28/-. The Crystal models and goniometers can have been drawn at Government cost.



**6. Farmer to Hector, 23-08-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/11

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> 1877

My dear Hector,

I must trouble you with another letter. On my return now from the City I found the inclosed Memorandum from Troughton & Sims, with an a/c for £10-0-0. Now, this is either the glass which was made for you, and what was told me yesterday all fudge - or, it may be one of inferior quality. I shall go tomorrow to the Agent General's Office and if I find it has been sent off by the mail, I shall pay for it - but if I find it was delivered too late to be sent, I shall only pay for it on approval, after testing it - I hope it may be all right and sent off. Try it with the Marchioness of Normanby's.

I suspected yesterday that the glass made for you had been sold. It may have been sold upon condition that I was willing to wait for yours - the whole thing is unsatisfactory.

I must now run to the Post.

Yours  
James Farmer

Dr. Hector

**7. Farmer to Hector, 20-09-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/14

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 1877

My dear Hector

I have received a slight injury to the palm of my right hand, and have some difficulty in holding a pen. You must therefore be content with a very few lines.

Regarding the telescope, it was sent to Agent General's Office too late for the mail, and Mr McKellar told me that they had instructions from Wellington not to send such parcels by the mail.

Admiral Richards examined the telescope and certified that it was equal to the one which he selected for the Marchioness of Normanby. I refused to take delivery of the telescope until this had been done. The box (with telescope) has now been sent by one of the N.Z. Shipping Cos. vessels for Wellington.

We are so grieved to hear that you still suffer from the effects of fever.

With our best regards to you all

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr. Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

**8. Farmer to Hector, 14-11-1877**

Hocken MS-443-3/16/16

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> 1877

My dear Hector

I duly received your September letter, and we were very grieved to hear that you still suffered from the effects of typhoid. What a horrible disease it appears to be. I hope that change and rest may have restored your health. It seems to be out of the natural course of things for you to be ill.

I paid Stanford's account £6-15-0 and three years subscription for the Zoological Society's publications £3-3-0. This added to £23-15-8, balance of accounts forwarded some three months ago makes £33-13-8 on my favour. I think everything has now been paid which you have asked me to pay.

There is now such a difference in our household since you were here. We have only the three girls and Malcolm at home. Alex<sup>e</sup> and Spencer are at Cheseaux, a place near Lausanne, Herbert is at Harrow, and Douglas is at "The Rookery". I am in hopes that all the boys are making satisfactory progress. Herbert is far advanced for his age. Dr Bulten (Head Master at Harrow) wrote to congratulate me on the excellent place he had taken last vacation examination.

Julia is now stronger and in better health than she has ever been. To give you some idea of her size she weighs eleven stone four pounds!! About last Christmas I was quite alarmed at the rate she was losing flesh - the change is most wonderful in this time.

I was amazed to hear of a Ministry composed of Sir G. Grey<sup>5</sup>, Macandrews, Sheehan & Co. I remember the time when Sir G. Grey declined a banquet at Otago, because he would have to sit at the same table with Macandrews as Superintendent. Can you account for the change? What has become of Stafford and his party? The Governor will not sleep on a bed of roses with Sir G. Grey as Prime Minister.

I should like to take a trip to N.Z. but Mrs Farmer will not listen to any such proposal, seeing that all my business matters are satisfactorily managed by Dr. Campbell.

Julia will write to Mrs Hector.

I trust that you will get the telescope all right. It was shipped in the “*Hurunui*”. I insured it for £10/-/- but it is in charge of the Captain.

*[Letter incomplete; last page not on file]*

### **9. Farmer to Hector, 2-01-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/1

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I have seen Browning about the Prisms, but he has no order from you regarding them, and as you have sent me no definite instruction, I am unable to do anything in the matter. Browning says that it would be highly dangerous to send prisms out filled, and the person who I saw on a previous occasion (in Brownings shop) told me that they ought to be filled before sending as you would be unable to do so satisfactorily in New Zealand. I should think that “Greek-fire” would not be safe to carry in a glass bottle on board ship. If you have all the appliances I can see no difficulty in the matter. The prisms cannot be sent by post, as the Agent General has instructions from Wellington to send no glass articles by the mail.

I am very sorry at this further delay, which may cause you some inconvenience. However, I shall attend to your order without a moments delay, if you write exactly what you require, and I shall see that the package is sent by first vessel for Wellington.

I hope that you are quite well again, and we wish you all a happy New Year. Alex<sup>r</sup> and

---

<sup>5</sup> The Grey Ministry (15 October 1877 to 8 October 1879)

Spence are still in Switzerland and will not return till Easter. Spencer has grown a big tall fellow. He is 6 feet in his stockings, and broad in proportion. Alex<sup>r</sup> is 5 feet 10 inches, and slighter build. Freda and Edith are spending their holidays at the Isle of Wight with one of my sisters who has gone there for the winter. Our house seems so quiet and empty with only the little ones at home. Herbert continues to take an excellent place at Harrow, and has got a "Remove" each term. Douglas continues at The Rookery and getting on very well indeed.

You will be glad to hear that Mrs Farmer keeps strong and well - we, with Herbert & Douglas are now attending Professor Tyndall's lectures for juveniles, on "Heat". We now attend all the Royal Institute Lectures, and find them a great source of pleasure and instruction. I think we place "Saturday Popular Concerts" first, and R.I. lectures second, in our enjoyable entertainment.

We have just discovered that the mail leaves a week earlier than usual, owing to a new postal arrangement. Mrs Farmer had intended to write to Mrs Hector, but will now be unable to do so by this mail, and she will write a long one by next mail.

We are in hopes of seeing you here as N.Z. Commissioner to the Paris Exhibition<sup>6</sup>. It may be driving you about the world faster than you would care to go, to be thus sent away so soon after your return, but the more frequently one rubs against the bright intellects of the world the better.

Julia joins me in most affectionate regards to you and Mrs Hector.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr. Hector  
Wellington  
N.Z.

P.S. I wrote to you last month that I have not been receiving the transactions of the New Zealand Institute. I now write to say that I got Vol. 9 yesterday, but Vol. 8 has never been delivered. As I value these works very highly, I should like you to send Vol. 8 if you can spare it. J.F.

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<sup>6</sup> After considerable discussion the New Zealand government decided not to participate in the Paris exhibition.

**10. Farmer to Hector, 30-01-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/2

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
January 30<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I received your letter of 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. on Monday last, inclosing a draft for £30 - with best thanks. I have also to thank you for the Statistics and Geological Reports, with excellent Maps. I took Mr Hamilton's Statistical Copy to him, and he will no doubt acknowledge receipt of it.

I am so glad that all the boxes had been delivered safely, and the contents of all so satisfactory. You would receive the telescope by the "*Hurunui*", which I see has arrived at Wellington. The only order now unfulfilled are the Prisms, which you did not fully describe. In another month or so I hope to have full instructions regarding them.

I paid Stanford's account £6-15-0, on the 19<sup>th</sup> October and sent you his receipt. I presume that was all that was owing by you at the time or they would have mentioned any further claim. I think it better that Stanford should send his accounts to you in the first instance and I shall only pay them on receipt of advice from you.

We are so glad to hear that you are so much better, and again able to attend to all your work.

Sir George Grey seems to take great delight in worrying the Governor. He is now having his revenge for his supposed slight by the Colonial Office, in not appointing him to a superior Governorship. I have always believed that this privilege was one of Grey's reasons for taking office.

It is a sad misfortune for N.Z. to see such a misuse of power. "The N.Z. Mail" which you kindly sent me, contains a full account of the worrying press.

Sir T. Gore Browne is going to dine with us this evening, and I shall show him the correspondence between Grey and the Governor. Grey did all he could do to get Gore Browne into trouble after he left New Zealand.

Julia has written a long letter to Mrs Hector, and will have given all domestic news.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G

**11. Farmer to Hector, 27-02-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/3

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
February 27<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of January 4<sup>th</sup>, and I have since been attending to your commissions. Stanford is collecting your Societies publications, and has got delivery of the books from the British Museum. They will all be forwarded to you in the usual manner. "Huxley's Invertebrate Anatomy" has been posted to you. Stanford sent your receipt to the British Museum on delivery of the books. I left your memo regarding the missing copies of the "Palliser Papers, and Stanford will make inquiries about them. They seem to have all been sent to you. I shall call again in a few days, and may find that some mistake has been made in packing.

In regard to payment of Stanford's account, it will be sent to you for approval, and I shall pay it on advice from you to do so. This will be perfectly satisfactory to Stanford.

I see that Sir G. Grey had been making grand promises to "King Mob". In fact, doing all he can to rouse the lower passions of the working classes against those who hold landed property. If Grey's policy does not drive capital away from New Zealand, it will certainly have the effect of preventing fresh importations. No one would object to a tax on realized wealth, if fairly collected, but it becomes a very different matter if it takes the form of an annual fine, or penalty for holding any particular description of property, while all other forms of realized wealth escapes such fines, or penalties, although it may be yielding a larger amount of profit.

If Julia has time to write a few lines to Mrs Hector I shall inclose it in this.

Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington



**12. Farmer to Hector, 22-05-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/5

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

It seems an age since I have heard from you, and I now write more for the sake of reminding you that your letters are highly prized at 6 Porchester Gate, than that I have anything particular to write about. I have had no commissions to execute for you lately. I asked Stanford to send me a list of the books & & which they had collected for you, but they have not done so. They promised to have the books shipped through the Agent General's Office in the usual way.

I think I wrote to you that Stanford would prefer to send his account to you for approval, and that I should pay him on advice from you.

Sir G. Grey seems to be having everything his own way in New Zealand. I consider him a most dangerous man to have such power. The communistic doctrines which he advocates may tend to measures most disastrous to the Colony. The doctrine that it is a crime to be rich may be very popular with "King Mob", but I fear the prosperity of New Zealand will not be advanced thereby.

We go on very much the same as when you were here. Lectures and concerts being our chief attractions. The Royal Institution's lectures are most instructive. The Saturday Popular Concerts came to an end at Easter, as usual. We still have the same seats. We have now three seats at the Albert Hall. We don't go very often to the Opera or to Theatre. The blaze of gas, and late hours does not suit Mrs Farmer. She is always "used up" for some days after being at the Theatre.

We are all in the best of health, and the children all working hard. I am the only one in the household without special occupation.

I hope that you have long ere now got rid of your serious attack of fever. Give my best regards to Mrs Hector.

Ever sincerely yours  
James farmer

**13. Farmer to Hector, 20-06-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/6

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
June 20<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, with Colonial Museum Report and also "The New Zealand Times", for which accept my best thanks. From the latter I am glad to see that the pernicious influence of Sir G. Grey is on the decline. It will take years to obliterate the communist doctrines which Grey has been instilling into the minds of the working classes in New Zealand. It will be a sad misfortune if he succeeds in establishing anything in the shape of class legislation.

We had a short visit from Dr Dunckley, but as he had put no address on his card, and we neglected to ask him where he is to be found, I fear we may be unable to see anything more of him.

I have seen Stanfords people about the Maps, but they dont seem to know very much about them. They had sent your order in the usual way, and believed it had been properly executed. They will send you by this mail 4 copies of the Maps, if they can be obtained. I only hope that they will be all right this time.

We frequently meet some of your friends, and they all have something kindly to say of you. Many of our most valued friends have become so through your introduction. I inclose you our last dinner party plan. You would have enjoyed being one of them. You have never met Lady Hooker. She is one of the most charming women, and she is most enthusiastic over her husbands scientific work.

We move along much in the same grooves as when you were here. I went to Eastbourne yesterday and engaged holiday apartments. This will be our fifth season there. It is a charming sea-side place, and being so near London makes it convenient to move a large family.

Julia has written to Mrs Hector, and will have given all domestic news. Give her my kindest regards.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer.

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**14. Farmer to Hector, 18-07-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/8

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
July 18<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of May 25<sup>th</sup>, and the newspapers you kindly sent me. I am sorry to see that the communistic doctrines of Sir G. Grey are so highly approved of by the large majority of the electors. It may be that Grey's supporters are more zealous over their cause, but the result of recent elections seem generally in favour of Grey.

Hardwicke and Bogue have sent you two more parts (15 & 16) of the "Osteographie de Cetaces", which I have paid for - 30/-. Did you get the first 14 parts? You have never said so. They were sent through the Agent General's Office. The parts will be forwarded to you as published.

Your letter contains nothing requiring special attention, and I have no orders from you at the present time.

You say nothing about your health, and I am in hopes that you are again quite well. We also hope that Mrs Hector and the bairns are all quite well. Education will now be added to your other duties.

We are again going to Eastbourne for the holidays, and go there on 1<sup>st</sup> August. We are having a very warm summer. The spring was cold and wet. And it looked very gloomy for the harvest, but since the middle of June the weather has been as favourable as could be desired, but harvest will be 10 days late.

Julia sends her love to you all.

Ever yours sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

**15. Farmer to Hector, 13-08-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/9

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
August 13<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

Julia and the children are all at Eastbourne for the holidays, and I also spend the greater part of my time there, but generally come to London for a day or two each week to look after the house cleaning & &. Unless I did so, very little work would be done. A London house requires a thorough cleaning down each year, and a good deal of white washing and fresh papering to keep it in good condition.

I duly received your letter of June 21<sup>st</sup>. Also a lot of newspapers for which accept my best thanks. Sir G. Grey seems to be having everything his own way, and he will “bully” any person who may oppose him, - the Governor not excepted. Grey has had a curious cancer in the Colonies. He has never been trusted, and yet he has always had a powerful following of people to do the work for him. They all know that he (Grey) mainly looks upon them as “things” to be used, and yet they submit to his tutelage. Whitmore is a perfect type of that sort of man. Grey finds Whitmore useful, and manages somehow to keep him under control, but I cannot conceive anything more ludicrous than Whitmore in the present Ministry, with all its surroundings. It must be “gall and bitterness” to him.

I fear that I have neglected to look after the dispatch of your books. I was apprised at Stanfords that they would be sent off at the time I wrote to you, but I find that they will hold over for a larger package. I cannot find out what has actually been sent, but I have received the inclosed letter from Stanfords as to what are now being forwarded. Will you let me know what are really missing. Some of the Societies publications are sent to the Agent Generals Office direct, while others must be called for. The latter Stanfords undertakes to collect, and forward to you.

I shall pay Stanfords when you send me his account, and at the end of the year will make up your account to date and send it to you. Unless I had something of this sort to do, I fear that I should drop out of N.Z. correspondence altogether. I value your letters most highly. You see that being your correspondent gets me the title of D<sup>r</sup> I presume that Stanford considers that you would not condescend to correspond with anyone of less degree.

Our three eldest boys swim from the Eastbourne pier every morning. Freda and Edith can also swim, but they do so from a bathing machine. Cecily can swim a little. Malcolm has not the courage but he has been having lessons, and can float if some one is by him to give him “pluck”. I have looked upon swimming as part of the children’s education.

You are only beginning educational troubles. I often wonder if we are in the right “groove” to make useful men and women. Money will not do so.

Julia may be writing to Mrs Hector from Eastbourne.

With best love  
Yours ever sincerely  
James farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**16. Farmer to Hector, 11-09-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/11

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
September 11<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of July 19<sup>th</sup> and I shall have much pleasure in attending to your orders in the course of the next few days. We have all been at Eastbourne for the school holidays, and I have come up to London with Herbert, as he returns to Harrow this afternoon. Julia and the others will return tomorrow. They are all in excellent health, and have enjoyed the sea bathing. The five eldest are excellent swimmers, and Cecily can do about a dozen strokes pretty well. Malcolm can do about two. The spending the holidays at the sea side does them all good, and they then begin work with renewed health and strength. You would be surprised to see what a big stout woman Julia has become. Of course I mean stout for her build. She will never be a big fat woman! However, I am very glad to tell you that she is immensely improved in health since you left England.

My sister, Mrs Cunningham, (John's Mother) is going out in the *Ferrylea* and she will sail for Wellington in about three weeks. John is in Canterbury and I shall feel greatly obliged if you can assist my sister in getting herself and luggage transhipped to Canterbury by the first steamer after she arrives in Wellington. She will be very glad of your advice and assistance.

If Professor Maskelyne is in town I shall consult him about the instruments you require, and I shall have them forwarded to you with as little delay as possible. If I find a Phonograph is not very expensive I shall send you one. It is the most wonderful invention of the lot. I should have said discovery. I think Patti may sing one of her beautiful arias

in a phonograph and send it to any part of the world to delight an audience with her wonderful voice, or it may be bottled up for an indefinite period.

If Julia has time she will write to Mrs Hector, and will no doubt give all domestic news. I have to thank you for the papers you sent me. Political news seems very conflicting, and by this time the whole aspect of matters may be changed. There does not seem to be any "coming men" and that is where Sir G. Grey's strength lies. There seems to be no formidable opposition probable.

I seldom get to page 4 with a letter.

With best love to your family circle  
Ever sincerely yours  
James farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**17. Farmer to Hector, 4-10-1878**

Hocken MS-443-3/17/12

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
October 4<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I have got you a Telephone and Microphone, and my sister, Mrs Cunningham, has them in charge, on board the "*Ferrylea*". You ought to have them by Christmas. I find that a Phonograph would cost twentyfive guineas. The price is far too high for an article which need not cost more than £2 or £3, and Browning told me that the price would shortly be reduced to a half or one third of the present price. I therefore thought it better to wait till I heard from you.

The "works on Forestry" will be sent to you via the Agent General's Office, as soon as Stanfords can procure them. I think that all your orders to hand are thus disposed of. I had no letter from you by last mail. I have to thank you for a number of Wellington newspapers. I see that the New Zealand government have gone in for a Land Tax - "the thin end of the wedge". A property and home tax is a fair and reasonable way of taxation, but why 500 acres of land at the Hutt, worth say £1000 a year should be exempt, while say 600 acres at Papakura not worth as many shillings should be taxed, is, in my opinion



an unfair method of Taxation. Why should a store worth £500 a year, or a mortgage producing a like amount go free, while another description of property (Land,) is subject to a special tax if above a certain limit. I think it will prove to be a bad policy in the end. People with money do not go to the Colonies to lend money. They go, (as a rule) to buy land, and any special burden, and which may be incurred to an indefinite extent, if the principle gets into the Statute Book, will deter people of fortune from going to the Colonies. People do not dread taxation when all are liable, but most will object to the being liable to be specially taxed to make good any deficiency.

I propose going to Scotland next week for some shooting, the seeing my sister off having delayed my going last month. I have told Mrs Cunningham that you will see that she gets into the “right groove” in Wellington, and that she gets off to Christchurch by the earliest opportunity. She has gone via Wellington on account of Captain Frazer being a connection by marriage, and who will look well after her on the voyage.

We move along in the same groove as when you were here. The only difference being that the children are rapidly becoming men and women. Alex<sup>r</sup> is now in the Office of Mess<sup>rs</sup> Sinclair Hamilton & Sons. Freda is going to play the accompaniment for the Orchestra at the Royal Academy of Music, for the first time next week.

Julia is going to write to Mrs Hector, and I shall leave all domestic news for her.

With affectionate regards  
Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**18. Farmer to Hector, 5-12-1878**  
Hocken MS-443-3/17/14

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
December 5<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I am in hopes that I have now executed all the commissions which you have intrusted me with to date. I have just returned from Stanfords, and he has got a copy of “Sowerbys Mineral Technology”, which will be sent to you by first fast steamer via Melbourne. Cost

is about £16 net, but I presume that you were aware of this, and as you wanted it sent without delay, I did not like to wait till I had communicated with you on the subject. You mention that you thought you had written to me to send the above on a former occasion, but this is the first time you have written about it.

I left a small parcel at the Agent General's Office this morning, for you, containing the Geological Specimens and Labels from Wheeler. I only got the parcel late last night, and I took it to the Agent General's Office in the hopes that they would have sent it in the mail bag, but they have instructions from Wellington, to send no parcel via San Francisco, and only via Suez upon payment of the postage. Your parcel will be sent off in about a week or ten days, in a box of other things which they are sending from the Agent General's Office. I should like you to mention, in future, how you want anything forwarded.

Nothing can be forwarded by "Parcel Post", without a declaration that it contains 'Trade Samples Only'.

A great many packages lie in the "Dead Letter Office", in consequence of peoples ignorance of this requirement.

I ought to mention that all the Geological specimens you marked are sent except "Granite, Isle of Mull, Scotland", which Wheeler had not got.

I have paid Stanford's account, £8.11.2, corrected, as the inclosed receipt and Memorandum will explain.

I hope that Mrs Cunningham will soon arrive with the Telephone. The "*Ferrylea*" should now be within three weeks of New Zealand.

I have to thank you for a lot of N.Z. Papers, containing all political news. Sir G. Grey & Co are still having it all their own way. So much the worse for N.Z. The move with communism takes deep root and will flourish.

Kind love to all your belongings.

Ever yours sincerely

James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

Wellington

N.Z.

**19. Farmer to Hector, 30-12-1878**

Hocken MS-44-3-/17/17

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
December 30<sup>th</sup> 1878

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> November, inclosing two drafts on the Union Bank of Australia for £50 and £44 - Total £94. This will probably be reduced to a very small amount in the course of the next ten days. Julia intends to get rid of it as quickly as possible, after our New Years troubles are over. We are going to "dance the old year out, and the New Year in", beginning tomorrow evening at eight o'clock.

I inclose your account to the end of the Year, showing a balance in your favour of £97-11-2. I offered to pay Stanfords for "Sowerbys's Mineral Conchology", but he preferred to wait for your approval as before arranged.

I am in hopes that you will have the Telephone by this time. The "*Ferrylea*" is generally under 80 days to New Zealand and she is now 81 days from Plymouth. Last voyage she was 74 days to Napier.

I doubt if the Agent Generals's Office is a satisfactory way of sending you anything. Stanford says that it is most unsatisfactory. Do you find it so? They have now instructions from Wellington to send no parcels whatever via San Francisco, and only via Suez upon payment of the full letter postage. This, of course, amounts to a prohibition for anything beyond a few ounces in weight. I fear that parcels lie in the office till a sufficient quantity is collected to fill a large case. Do you get the Societies Publications in a reasonable time, and in good condition? I hope that you may get the Geological Specimens all right. Mr McKellar promised to send the parcel in a case which would be sent off in a week from date of my last letter.

I see that you have been adding to your responsibilities. If you go on at this rate you will soon outnumber ours. I hope that Mrs Hector and the little fellow are as well as you can wish, and also all the others.

Julia has written to Mrs Hector, and will have written all domestic news, but she may not have mentioned that our girls have each had to play the piano part in the Orchestra at the Royal Academy, and both got through their parts very well indeed. It was only a private rehearsal, but as there were some 300 people present, it was public enough to make the girls nervous during a first performance with other instruments.

I have to thank you for the newspapers you kindly sent me. I wonder when the people of New Zealand will discover that Grey is a d--d humbug, a petty obstructionist, and full of nought but the gratification of private revenge, and will employ the lowest type of human

nature to serve his purpose. Is it that there is no one to fill Grey's place in the Assembly? Grey seems to be as firmly fixed in power as ever. So much the worse for New Zealand.

Wishing you all a happy new year.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

Dr Hector, Wellington New Zealand, in ap with James Farmer

1877				1878			
Aug. 21	Balance brought forward	12	12	8	Jan. 28	By Bank draft	£ 30 - -
" "	Insurance on goods	1	3	-	Oct 29	" do	30 - -
29	Freight on & charges of telegraphs	10	-	-	Dec. 24	" do	50 - -
Oct 29	Stanford's books &c.	6	15	-	" "	do	44 - -
" "	3 years subscription Zoological Society publications	3	3	-			
July 13	Handwritten & Rogers's books	1	10	-			
Sept. 30	Banning's of telegraph &c.	6	8	-			
Nov. 20	Stanford's of books &c.	8	11	2			
Dec. 9	E. Whelan's of geological specimens	5	5	-			
" "	Zoological Society 1879	1	1	-			
31	Balance carried forward	97	11	2			
	£	154	-	-			£ 154 - -

## 20. Farmer to Hector, 29-01-1879

Hocken MS-443-3/18/1

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
January 29<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I had hoped by this time to have had all the things ordered, shipped, and the accounts "rendered", so that I could have sent you the particulars of contents and cost by this mail. The Articles supplied by Lewis & Allenby have been shipped, and those from the Store

will be sent off today, or tomorrow. The goods will be shipped via "*Western Belle*". I hope that everything will be satisfactory. The whole will be insured for full value.

There has been some difficulty in procuring shooting boots for Mr Munro, and I am not now sure if they can be got. Everything else is packed.

We are having a very severe winter. There has been more skating this winter, than all the others put together since our arrival in England. While this has been pleasant for younger and idle people, it has been very hard upon those who had to work out-of-doors for their daily bread.

I have seen that the "*Ferrylea*" arrived at Nelson on the 6<sup>th</sup> instant, and I hope that you have got the Telephone and Microphone "safe and sound". I shall wait for your further instructions before sending a Phonograph.

My wife will have written all domestic news to Mrs Hector.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

P.S. Mr Autar Young (son of Lady F---. Young who you may have met at our house) a young barrister, is now in Australia, and intends going to New Zealand. His Mother has asked me for introductions to friends in N.Z., and I now write to ask you to find him out, and give him advice, if he is ever in your part of the world. His father was Governor of South Australia, and afterwards of Tasmania, so that he ought to have many friends in the Australian Colonies. I am not aware whether Mr Young intends to settle in N.Z. or, if he is merely going to see about a sheep run which the family have an interest in, in Otago.  
J.F.

January 30

P.S. No 2. I received the Invoice from the Store last night, and inclose copies. The cases were sent to the Docks yesterday. The shirts etc. from Capper & Waters, and seeds from Carter are inclosed in case from Store. Lewis & Allenby sent the box to Docks last week, but have not yet sent their account. I think it will amount to about £36. Julia will have explained all particulars to Mrs Hector. I shall insure for £120.  
J.F.

**21. Farmer to Hector, 26-02-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/4

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
February 26<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of 5<sup>th</sup> Jany. giving a short account of your journey through the "King Country". I am delighted to hear that you have been the first to perform such a feat alone, requiring such an amount of tact and courage that very few others possess. You must have been charmed with your trip.

We are all delighted to hear that you are again perfectly well.

I inclose your Bill of Lading and reminder of accounts. You will see that my wife has exceeded the authorised amounts, but I presume that she has given a satisfactory reason for doing so, to Mrs Hector. "Bargains" are always costly things to indulge in. I hope that the "*Western Belle*" may have a speedy passage out.

I hope to hear by next mail that the Telephone and Microphone were delivered in good condition. We had a letter from Mrs Cunningham from Nelson. She was quite well, and looking forward to the pleasure of being with her son. John is "getting on" very well in the Bank.

We have had a very severe winter, and are now in the midst of snow. The wind has been easterly since the end of November, with the exception of a few days, now and again, and the weather has been always unusually warm for the season. The thermometer in Hyde Park showed a difference of 33 degrees between one day and the next. The result has been most serious for the aged and all with delicate chests. Julia and all our children have never been in better health than they have been throughout the present winter. I am glad to say that I have got over my attacks of jaundice. There has been no return for the last two months, and I am perfectly well. About the year 1858 I had a similar attack of jaundice and it returned at short intervals for some months, and I have been quite free from any recurrence ever since, till last November.

You have always taken an interest in our childrens doings, and you will be pleased to hear that I have a most excellent "Report" of Herbert, yesterday. He was 1<sup>st</sup> in his holiday task, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Classics, 1<sup>st</sup> in Mathematics, and 5<sup>th</sup> in Modern Languages for the past month. This is the best "report" he has ever had, and his Mathematics Master told Mr Holms (Herbert's house Master) that he had never given a boy a better "Report". Douglas does not "shine" at The Rookery" but he has, all the time he has been there, been with boys older than he is.

I have to thank you for several newspapers. I fear that the great depression in trade in



Europe is now about to be felt in the Colonies. The low prices of wool and what will be a matter of serious importance to all who are engaged in the production of these articles, and especially as to those who have money borrowed at high interest.

A long time ago I wrote to you that I had not got Vol. VIII Transactions of N.Z. Institute and I asked you to send me a copy if you had one to spare. It has never been forwarded, and as you have never alluded to my request, I presume it has been overlooked. I am not quite sure that you did not carry the missing volume away!!!

Yours very sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

**22. Farmer to Hector, 23-04-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/5

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I have received your letters of the end of February, but there is nothing requiring special reply. I had hoped to hear that the Books from Stanford had been delivered. They were to be sent by steamer via Melbourne. The Microscopic specimens were sent through Agent General's Office. I had left the parcel there before arranging with Stanford about sending the books. I hope to hear in due time that all has been satisfactorily delivered.

We were very grieved to hear of the death of your little boy<sup>7</sup>, and that your little Douglas has been so very ill. I sincerely hope that the dear little fellow is again quite well. I fear that the drainage of Wellington is very bad. There seems to be a great deal of sickness amongst children in all the New Zealand towns. No doubt a great deal of it is occasioned by the bad drainage. Otherwise, the climate is all that can be desired.

We had a short visit from Miss Hector a day or two ago, and we were very sorry to see her looking very much aged since end of last summer. No doubt the late severe winter has been most trying to her. A little change and warm weather will do her much good. Mrs David Hector was to leave for Moffat on Monday last. She has been very poorly all the

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<sup>7</sup> Philip Landale Hector (1878-79) who died in infancy.

winter but she seems to overtax her strength in working for others. Her strength is unequal to her energy.

The boys are now home for the Easter holidays, and Herbert came home in great glee from Harrow. He had 1<sup>st</sup> prize for his Christmas holiday task. A prize (£4 worth of books) for singing, and a cup (2nd prize) for Racquets. He has been 1<sup>st</sup> all the last term in his form, and has taken 3<sup>rd</sup> place for term work all round. This is most satisfactory for us all. Douglas does not shine in any of his classes, but we hope that he will do so some day. He has always been in the same form with much older boys, through his going to school when unusually young. The girls have been to Clifton for their holidays and they are again at work. Freda will soon be “grown up”. She is 17, and Edith is 14 today. They now look such a “big lot” round the table. I hope that the best is being done for them. Alex<sup>r</sup> is now with Sinclair, Hamilton etc. He likes his work, and he appears to be giving satisfaction. Herbert is as yet undecided what he is to be.

Your turn in educating your boys will soon arrive. Time moves on!

You were at the Thames the other day. What do you think of the Mining interest. It is sad to see the poor yield of Gold from the various mines. It seems wonderful how such a large population remain at the Thames. There appears to be some 10,000 or 12,000 people there.

Julia asks me to send her best love to Mrs Hector, and to say that she will not write by this mail. She hopes to do so next month. With love to your family circle.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**23. Farmer to Hector, 18-06-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/6

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
June 18<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of April 26<sup>th</sup>, also Vol VIII N.Z. Institute Transactions, for which accept my very best thanks. I have not yet had Vol. X but Campbells will no doubt send it. I value these books very highly, and some day they will be more highly prized than now.

Your goods per "*Western Belle*" will no doubt have been delivered long ere now and I only hope that they are all satisfactory. Although the goods bought at the store are cheap I don't believe that they send the actual goods chosen. The goods are packed somewhere, and I fancy that the selected articles are merely regarded as samples. Unsuitable articles may thus, in the hurry of packing, be sent.

I hope that Mrs Hector and you are all the better of your trip through the country. I hope that you are now as robust as ever.

How do you like the new Governor<sup>8</sup>? Grey will have a new man to deal with and try his irritating power on. We shall soon hear how the Grey Ministry are standing. I shall be glad to hear that they are turned out. This hope of land revenue must cause considerable embarrassment and no doubt the land tax has something to do with it. Who are to succeed the present Ministry? I fear that there is a considerable monetary squeeze throughout all the Australian Colonies. The low price of wool must be a loss of several millions to the wool producers, and probably nearly a million to New Zealand. I should say that the fall in the value of wool is about £5 per bale. If so, 200,000 bales shows a loss of a million sterling. This is a very serious matter for the Colony to face, and there is no prospect of better prices at the present time.

I see that Julia has written a long letter to Mrs Hector, so I need not write any domestic news. We move along in our usual "jog trot" ways.

You give me no commissions in your last letter, and I need not say how pleased I am when you give me a "job".

With most affectionate regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

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<sup>8</sup> Sir Hercules Robinson (Governor from April 1878 to September 1880).

**24. Farmer to Hector, 17-07-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/7

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
July 17<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of May 24<sup>th</sup> dated at Napier. How you are driven about! It is all very well when on your own proper work, but I don't see why you should be troubled with people who poison their wives. What a horrible case that seem to have been, and there appears to be no doubt about the husbands guilt.

I am glad that you have got the Microscopic Specimens, and that you are pleased with them. I hope to hear next mail that the "*Western Belle*" has arrived, and that all the things there may be equally satisfactory.

Julia has gone on a visit to friends in the Isle of Thanet, and Mrs Hector will have to go without a letter from her by this mail. I am in hopes that I may have photographs of the children in their fancy dress to send in this letter. They have not been delivered yet, but were promised for certain, in time for the mail. If not in time, Julia will send them next mail.

We are going to the Bridge of Allan for the summer holidays. I shall probably stay here till the workmen are done with the house cleaning. If left with servants, it seems hopeless to get them out of the house.

I have to thank you for newspapers. The low price of wool is causing great depression throughout the Colonies, and coming so soon after such an experienced speculation in land, in New Zealand, it is felt thus with double force. There is no immediate prospect of a rise in the value of any Colonial produce. I fear that there will be a great falling off in the N.Z. revenue and that further taxations will be the result. An income and property tax seems more than probable under the circumstances. If fairly levied, it is a proper tax, but there is a communistic tendency in the Colonies in the levying of taxes. Tho many have no objection to dip their hands into the pockets of the few. If you begin with property or income at £500 a year, the burden will fall on comparatively few people. The many will be pleased to be relieved of the burden.

We move along in our usual "jog trot" way. I have added to my "do nothing" sort of life lately, by getting myself elected to a London (Paddington) Vestry. It is a sort of provincial Council, and comprised of about 80 members. There is a Baronet, a Long---- at Law, several 2.6's, and a Barrister, going downwards in the scale about as far as it can reach, so that the number is a -----.

The Photographs have just arrived, and I send you this time. You will recognise the Red Indian dress. It has been immensely admired, and I think justly so.

You have sent me no commissions lately.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, N.Z.

**25. Farmer to Hector, 13-08-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/9

6, Porchester gate  
Hyde Park, London  
August 13<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> June, inclosing a Bank draft for £30, with best thanks. I have also to thank you for Vols VIII and XI of the N.Z. Institute Transactions. This is a second copy of Vol. 8, which you have sent, and I have thought it may have been meant for some one else. Kindly say so if it is. I have all the volumes now except X, which Dr Campbell has not yet sent from Auckland. He generally waits till a case is filled with odds and ends, and this leads to forgetfulness as to what should be packed in the case. It would be better to have the books sent from Wellington direct, and Campbell could pay my subscription in Auckland as now. I shall write to Campbell suggesting this.

I have paid Stanford, and inclose his (duplicate) account. I also inclose a letter regarding the terms upon which he would collect and send out all Societies or other books and papers which he may be authorized to do. Stanford will undertake such duties for any one giving him authority, and the necessary supply of funds. If you could find some one in Wellington who would act as Stanford's Agent, to collect subscriptions, and distribute the papers in Wellington, he (Stanford) would carefully pack and send off a package as discussed. This would be a better arrangement than could be made with Pitt & Scott, who will only dispatch goods sent to them.

Your friends must understand that Stanford must be supplied with funds, as well as with authority to collect the various Societies papers. Of course, you understand that I shall continue to pay everything for you as I do now, but you say that others would like some such arrangement as Stanford is willing to undertake. You will see that Stanford has now some books and papers for you. I shall call at the Office of the Agent General, and if they are likely to be forwarding a package to Wellington shortly, I shall ask Stanford to send

what he has got there. Otherwise, I shall ask him to send them out to you direct. It does not answer to have a package "laid on the shelf" in the Agent General's Office. I have nothing further to add of a business character.

I am glad to hear that the "*Western Belle*" had arrived, and I hope that all your goods arrived in a satisfactory condition. I began to be afraid that I might have to put the Insurance policy in force. However it is better not to have to do so.

Mrs Farmer and all the bairns, except Alex<sup>r</sup> are at the Bridge of Allan for the holidays. I hope to go there next week. Alex<sup>r</sup> does not get his holidays till September. They are all perfectly well, and delighted with the change. You will be glad to hear that Edith obtained a Certificate of the College of Preceptors last term. We allowed her to go up for examination without special preparation, as a test of our girls being properly taught. She tried the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, and gained a Certificate very near the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. She was almost the youngest there, and it does her great credit, as well as honour to our Governess. Edith is now qualified (at 14) to go out as a teacher. This is all very satisfactory, and is a proof that we are in the right groove, as far as the girls are concerned. I hope equally so with the boys. With best love to your family circle.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, N.Z.

**26. Farmer to Hector, 9-09-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/10

Fernnibank House  
Bridge of Allan  
September 9<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I shall only write you a few lines to acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 25<sup>th</sup>, via Suez, inclosing No 2 of draft for £30, No 1, I having received by former mail and duly acknowledged. Also your letter of July 18<sup>th</sup> via San Francisco.

I am glad to hear of the arrival of the "*Western Belle*", and that the contents of the boxes were satisfactory. I had dreaded the opening of the boxes from the Store. It seems impossible that all the articles could have been collected together amidst the general confusion existing at the Store, but I presume that order reigns within, although apparently all confusion.

I paid Stanford and sent you his receipt by last mail.

We are now going for a drive round by Dunblane, Doune Castle, and home by Stirling.

With our kindest regards to you all

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**27. Farmer to Hector, 9-11-1879**

Hocken MS443-3/18/11

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
October 9<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I duly received your kind letter from Sydney, also the plans etc of the Sydney Exhibition. As you say it looks like a big unfinished railway station. I hope it will turn out a great success. It will have been a great pleasure to you, to be able to compare N.Z. Products with the productions of the other Colonies.

I am delighted to hear that Sir G. Grey has been turned out of Office. The country was fast being handed over to a communistic rabble, and I hope that the new Ministry<sup>9</sup> will merit, and obtain the confidence of the Colony.

I have had the beautiful maps you kindly sent me, mounted and varnished. I have not yet been able to show them to Sir J. Vogel. He is not easily found. I have not seen him at his Office for a long time. I fancy that the floating of the great Company has taken up a good deal of Vogels time lately, and the reactions of the City have been greater than the Agent General's Office.

You have sent me no commissions lately, and I have no business matters to write about at present.

This has been a ruinous year for farmers. It is estimated that there will be a differing of at least sixty millions sterling on the years agricultural produce, and as this means that the

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<sup>9</sup> The Hall Ministry (8 October 1879 to 21 April 1882)

purchasing power of England will be reduced by that amount, the distress throughout the country is very great indeed. Much of the poor land in England will be left uncultivated next season, as no one will occupy such land, under present prospects, when vacated by ruined tenants. Many landlords are leaving their country houses, so as to economize elsewhere, while others are discharging many of their servants. The gloomy prospects of the coming winter are very great indeed. I hope that next years crop may be good, and that would do more to revive trade than most people calculate on. Agricultural prosperity is too little valued by most people. I have always observed that good trade and general contentment follows a good crop. It even regulates in a great measure the price of wool.

Julia has been writing to Mrs Hector so I need say nothing about our household.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

**28. Farmer to Hector, 5-11-1879**

Hocken MS-443-3/18/12

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
November 5<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

I duly received your letters of Aug. 11<sup>th</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup>. Also several Sydney papers, and that wonderful production, the "Handbook of New Zealand". I wish it could be circulated and read throughout this country. What an amount of instructive information can be got in a couple of hours. I wish I could carry the "lot" in my head. I could then become an authority on New Zealand!

You have sent no commissions for a long time, but on your return to Wellington you will doubtless find that you are in want of something which can only be got in London. The individual whose photograph I inclose, will always be delighted to execute your commissions.

We move along here in the same "jog trot" way as when you were in England. We still retain the same four seats at the "Saturday Popular Concerts", and they begin on Saturday next. The Albert Hall concert season has commenced, and tomorrow Albania is to sing in "Elijah". We have three seats at the Albert Hall. We have also Stalls (2) at the Royal Academy of Music Concerts, and the girls (students) have free seats, and one Balcony seat each, to give away, so you see that we have no end of music. The Royal Institution season begins at Christmas, and we scarcely ever miss a lecture, (both Julia and I are Members,) and then there are other Society lectures to go to on special



occasions. Added to the above, my Vestry duties, and I now seem to have an occupations.

We are so glad to hear that Sir G. Grey has been turned out. He has done an immense damage to New Zealand by his communistic speeches throughout the country, and his wild theories will not so easily be rubbed out. When those who “have not” are taught that they have a right to help themselves to a share of what belongs to those who “have” it is a very dangerous doctrine to instill into the minds of a democratic community. I hope that Hall will get a strong government. We shall soon hear how he gets on.

I saw Sir J. Vogel a few days ago, and he looked very ill. He is seldom without considerable pain. I fancy that he indulges in forbidden food or drink whenever he is tolerably well, and he then suffers for some time afterwards. He seems unable to resist dining out.

I must ask you one more favour. Vol. X. N.Z. Institute Transactions has gone missing. Dr Campbell writes that it was posted, but I can hear nothing of it. Books frequently arrive in such a mutilated condition that it is quite impossible to deliver them. Can you spare another copy? I have asked Dr Campbell to Register future volumes when he posts them, and then the P.O. would have a record of where a missing package was to be found.

I suppose that you are again in Wellington.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

**29. Farmer to Hector, 4-12-1879**  
Hocken MS-443-3/18/13

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
December 4<sup>th</sup> 1879

My dear Hector

Another mail day has come around, and how quickly they always seems to come. We are in the midst of a very severe frost, and which has lasted now more or less for a fortnight. During several nights there has been 20 to 25 degrees of frost. Alex<sup>r</sup> was skating on the Serpentine this morning before breakfast. All out of door employment is stopped in the meantime, and so early in the winter, it is a serious matter for all those who have to earn their bread out of doors. Food and coal must be had at whatever sacrifice, and thereby the Pawnbroker makes large profits out of the necessities of the poor.

I duly received the N.Z. Court, Official Catalogue and some Sydney papers by last mail, from which I see that you were still in Sydney. I see that Julia's sisters had their pictures hung at the Exhibition. Are they good?

This may not be a fair question for me to put, but I should like your opinion, if you have seen the pictures.

I am glad to see that by today's "Times" that the new Ministry had now a working Majority, in consequences of four Auckland Members leaving the Opposition. What a wretched set of members Auckland generally sends to the Assembly. I hope that Grey may again retire to the seclusion of his Island home. It will take years to undo the mischief he has done since he returned to public life.

I am very glad to see that Wool has risen in value, and that increased demand is likely to continue. The present increase in price will add more than a million sterling to the value of New Zealand exports. I hope it may continue to rise still further. There is still room for another two or three pence rise.

Julia is not writing to Mrs Hector this mail but she is sending a Christmas book to your daughter. We all unite wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year. How very quickly the seasons come and go. It is seven years today since we arrived in England. Then our family were all children. Now, they seem fast becoming men and women!

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand.

**30. Farmer to Hector, 1-01-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/1

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
January 1<sup>st</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I shall begin this letter by wishing you all a very happy New Year, and many bright returns. You will be back in New Zealand long ere now, but you never seem able to stay in Wellington for many months together. Going "hither and thither" seems to be your fate in life.

I duly received your letter of 5<sup>th</sup> November, from Sydney. Also a paper containing a pretended likeness of you. What a failure!! What does Mrs Hector think of it. There is an excellent description of the N.Z. Exhibits.

I have been to the South Kensington Museum about the "Vol. of Drawings of glass show cases" and one will probably be sent to you by this mail, postage paid, with the Secretary's (Mr P. Owen) compliments. I found that they prefer doing the civil[?] in that way. Let me know if the book reaches you, and if not, I shall call again to remind them. They don't sell the book, and they would not give it to me to post.

You give me no further commissions. I inclose your account with me to date, and you will observe a small balance to your credit.

What a terrible calamity at the Tay Bridge. You will have seen an account of the dreadful details of the accident long ere this reaches you.

I fear that Mrs D. Hector is very poorly. She does for others much more than she has strength for, and I fear that more money than she can spare goes in the same way. This has been a most trying winter for very old people, and Miss Hector has been ill a good deal lately. She looks feeble and has less than her usual amount of apparent energy.

I am glad to say that we are all in excellent health, and as far as we can judge, education makes fair progress. We have not "genius" in the lot, but we hope that all have fair abilities. Herbert once showed some talent, but he wants industry. I doubt if there is any real genius shown in the world without industry. You may happen to know a fellow called Dr. Hector, who never finds a day half long enough for the work he strives to accomplish, and consequently generally succeeds in doing. Von Bulow (pianist) says "If I neglect to practise one whole day, I notice it myself. If I neglect to do so for two days, my friends notice it, but if I neglect to practise for three days my audience notices it". Talent is only developed by work, work, work. I wish that I had greater industry. I seem content to live and listen, or look upon the works of others. I should like to bring up my children to more industrious habits, but you will say show the example!!!

I have given a Mr Reginald Londale a card of introduction to you. He is a cousin of Mrs Holmes, Harrow Master, who Herbert is with. As I have never seen Mr Londale he understands that it is not expected that it is a friendly introduction but that merely he is to ask you for such information as will enable him to see some interesting places in N.Z. He is going round the world for his health. I decline to give letters of introduction to strangers, but I felt justified in sending Mr Londale a card, under the circumstances.

Julia will inclose a few lines to Mrs Hector.

I hope that Sir G. Grey and his communistic party have taken final leave of Official life. It will take years to undo the mischief they have done the Colony.

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington New Zealand

Dr. Hector, Wellington, New Zealand, in ac with James Farmer				6 <sup>rs</sup>
1879			1879	
Jan. 16	To Copper & Waters of shirts	£ 6 11 -	Jan. 1 By Balance brought forward	£ 97 11 2
" "	" Lenses of beads	- 19 -	Aug. 4 - draft	30 - -
21	" Goods at Home	32 1 9		
" "	" do for Mr. Munro	24 1 3		
Feb. 1	" Lewis & Allenby of	33 14 6		
20	" Sinclair Hamilton & Co. of	3 7 4		
" "	Shipping, freight, and insurance	1 14 2		
" "	" do for Mr. Munro			
Aug. 6	" Edwards Stanger of	19 7 10		
Dec. 30	" Zoological Society Publications for 1880	1 1 -		
31	" Balance carried forward	4 13 4		
		127 11 2		£ 127 11 2
			By Balance £4-13-4	
			December 31 <sup>st</sup> 1879	
			James Farmer	

### 31. Farmer to Hector, 28-01-1880

Hocken MS-443-3/19/2

6, Porchester gate  
Hyde Park, London  
January 28<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I see that you had returned to Wellington. I duly received your letter from there, of 6<sup>th</sup> December, by last mail. We were very grieved to hear that Mrs Hector had been so long in bad health, and sincerely hope that nothing serious has been the matter with her.

I have had no commissions from you for a long time, and I am in want of something to do.

I find vestry work a pleasant occupation, and keep up an interest in public affairs.

There is now some discussion going on about Jade. Did you write any description of it, or have you seen any? If so, where can such description be seen? Professor Warrington Smyth would like to hear your account of it. In what part of New Zealand it is found; if in large quantities, and what are the surrounding rocks etc etc. Also if anything is known as to the mode of working it into weapons and ornaments by the natives. A Green Stone quarry would be of considerable value here at present.

I hope that Sir G. Grey and his party are now put aside for ever, by the Legislature of New Zealand. They would soon have landed the pioneers of the Colony in the most dreadful discredit. New Zealand has borrowed on the London Market last year, no less than £7,240,000 (see Times of Jan<sup>y</sup>. 24<sup>th</sup>) being £14 per head of the whole population. I fear that the greater portion of the £5,000,000 borrowed by the general government has already been expended or pledged. The pace is altogether too fast. Heavy taxation must be the result. If wool sells at satisfactory prices all will go well, but heavy taxation and low prices for wool will be a serious matter for the Colony.

We are again having a very serious frost. All out of door labour is suspended, and much distress is felt amongst the labouring classes. In the North of Scotland the Thermometer has frequently been 20<sup>0</sup> higher than in London. Last Tuesday it was 22<sup>0</sup> higher at Aberdeen than in London. On account of the long continuous cold dry Easterly wind, we have had very little rain or snow since last September. On the West coast a good deal of rain has fallen during the short intervals of S.W. winds.

You will have heard of the death of Mr R. Stokes of Napier. His brother, Dr Stokes, is very infirm, and will, in all probability, soon follow his brother. Mr Stokes married about 15 months ago. I fancy more as a nurse than a wife.

Julia is writing to Mrs Hector, and will give all domestic news.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

**32. Farmer to Hector, 25-02-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/4

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
February 25<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of Jan'y 1<sup>st</sup>, and also some newspapers and Vol.10, N.Z. Institute Transactions, with best thanks. I have asked Dr Campbell to register all books from N.Z. in future. It only costs two pence to do so, and I was recommended to adopt this course by one of the Clerks at the Missing Letters Office, where I had gone to complain of the non-delivery of several books sent from New Zealand. The registration assists the P.O. in the delivery of books, when the envelopes are off, and in a mutilated condition, which they often are, from the rough usage they receive in transit.

You write that all your children had been having Scarlitina, and as you say that it was in a "mild form" I hope that no ill effects may be left behind. I hope that Mrs Hector is again quite well.

You appear to be kept on the move. No sooner do you return from Sydney, than you have to go elsewhere. Not only are you the Director of the Geological Survey of N.Z., but you seem to be Director of whatever goes on outside of politics. I specially exclude politics, because I feel sure that had you been Director of that swine, Sir G. Grey and Co<sup>y</sup> would never have had the power to do the mischief they have done. I am glad that Grey & Co. are now in their proper places. £29,000,000 is a large amount of debt for a Colony with less than 600,000 people. Besides, the Mortgage debt of private property will probably amount to half that sum. The fact is this, New Zealand belongs to Capitalists and financial companies in England, and the settlers there are mainly the Managers, or Agents to look after the investments. A freehold property is still liable to be taxed to pay the public creditor, and after all the Crown Lands are sold, and improved, the greater will be the security to the holders for New Zealand Debentures. The knowledge of this fact, no doubt, helps to float a New Zealand loan. A property tax will bring people to their senses, if properly and fairly levied. Hitherto property in N.Z. has escaped taxation as compared with this country. You know what a small piece of ground my house and stable stands on - well, my taxes for which was £130-18-6 for 1879. This includes Queen's taxes - £24-9-2, Parish rates £81-13-4, and water rates £19-16-00.

It seems an age since you have given me anything to do! I presume, principally, because you have been away. I find in private life, that the proper way to save money, is not to spend it, and that if you spend no money today, you don't spend twice as much tomorrow in consequence. One of Lewis & Allenby's Managers told me the other day, that a wet day in the season was tradeless to them of £600, and was never made up by increase of trade on any following day. People make what they have got answer their purpose, when inconvenient from any cause, to go and buy what is new. I infer from the above, that your

commissions will not now be doubled.

Julia will write all domestic news to Mrs Hector.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

[Top left of page 1

P.S. I have sent a copy of Royal Institution Transactions Registered J.F.]

**33. Farmer to Hector, 23-03-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/5

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I received your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. by last mail, and I am sorry to hear that your Linnean Society Transactions had not been received. The Secretary is ill, and I could get no information at the Office, and I left your letter at Stanfords, and Mr Sherriff was to find out all about the matter, and write to me what had been done. He has not written yet, and as I am going to Eastbourne with all my “belongings” tomorrow, for the Easter holidays, I must ask you to wait till next mail, when I hope to give you full particulars. I also hope to find out what “Exchanges” the Society will give for the N.Z. Museum. I have got the “*Challenger*” Expedition Report from the Royal Society and have been sent it by this mail Registered. Stanford has received all Royal Society Transactions to date. I shall be able to inform you by next mail what Stanford has sent you.

Mrs Farmer has not been very well for some weeks, and I am in hopes that a fortnight at Eastbourne may put her all right again. She has had excellent health for the last few years. Tell Mrs Hector to expect a pretty regular monthly letter from my wife. I hope she may be able to write by next mail.

All the lectures and Concerts have come to an end till after the Easter holidays. The Saturday Popular Concerts have been, if possible, more charming than ever during the Season. We still have our four seats. I wish you could pop in and listen to such charming music as we have been having all the winter. Our Albert Hall seats are also a source of great pleasure.

I am in hopes that Sir G. Grey has now been got rid of for now. I doubt if any other set of

men could be found, to do so much damage in so short a time, as the Grey Ministry has done to New Zealand. How they could ever have had such confidence bestowed upon them, and to retain it for so many years, is a mystery to me.

You always seems overwhelmed with work. The work of the world is not very well apportioned. Some do all that is useful, while others merely look on. I have always been one of the latter. I have never had the industry to work up any one subject. I am now too old to begin to do what I wish I had done when young. I fancy that I have been too difficient in courage to face difficulties requiring industry. However, here I am! Worry about one self will do very little without application.

With our united kind regards to you all.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**34. Farmer to Hector, 21-04-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/6

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
21<sup>st</sup> April 1880

My dear Hector

I received your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> Feby by last mail, dated at Christchurch. You are kept pretty well on the move.

I inclose you a note from Stanford which will show you what numbers of Societies Transactions & & have been forwarded to you. You will see that the parcel will be sent off next week. Do you get all your Societies publications? It is impossible for me to find out, but I do not object to "stir them up", if I know where the neglect lies. If all the publications, due, are now forwarded I shall be very glad indeed. The publishers from whom I got the description of the Whale for you, (Hardwicke & Bogue) have disappeared from Piccadilly, and if you want to continue the numbers I had better get them from Stanford, but you will have to let me know where yours leave off. The last I had was in July 1878. There is nothing more which I can think of at present.

I mentioned to you last month that Mrs Farmer had not been very well for some time. She is now much better but does not regain her strength as fast as I should like. You may remember she suffered in a similar way, (profuse menstruation.) when you were here, but



on this occasion she was terribly pulled down. This has always been Julia's chief source of trouble. All the others are perfectly well. Ask Mrs Hector to excuse letter writing by Julia for the present. She asks me to send you all her kind regards.

I am glad to see the advance in the price of wool. Every penny makes a difference of upwards of £200,000 to New Zealand. A million sterling will add vastly to the general prosperity. Last year was bad all round, not only in the Colonies, but in this country it was simply ruinous. The crops were poor, and more than a quarter of the sheep in England have been destroyed by flukes. In some counties 75 per cent of the sheep are gone. There has been a greater loss in sheep than d----- corn. Bad harvests and other agricultural report has done much to influence the late elections. When people are suffering from bad times or bad trade, their first thoughts seem to be, "turn out the government".

Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer

Dr Hector, C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**35. Farmer to Hector, 20-05-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/7

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, London  
May 20<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of March 26<sup>th</sup> and I have to thank you for sending me the "Manual of New Zealand Grasses". It is beautifully illustrated, and forms a very valuable addition to New Zealand publications. You also send me a second copy of Vol. X. Transactions N.Z. Institute. You had forgotten having sent me a copy a few months ago.

Stanford will send by post, this mail, the books you ask to be sent at once. The others will be forwarded in the usual way. I shall endeavour to find out Hardwicke & Bogue's new address, (they have left Piccadilly and gone elsewhere) and find out what they have done regarding the "Whale" publication. If I find that they cannot continue to send you the "Parts" as published, I shall ask Stanford to do so, and to begin with Part 17. If you could send a list of the missing Plates, perhaps they might be replaced.

I shall attend to your order for "Campbells Sunshine recorder". A series of lectures has just been given at the Royal Institution on the "weather", by R. H. Scott, Secretary to the Meteorological Society, and he exhibited a "sunshine recorder", showing the work of one day. It is a burning lens, and blackens a line on prepared paper when the sun shines, leaving a blank space if a cloud passes over. I presume you know more about the working than I do. Negretti & Zambra have promised to fit one up to put in their window, and let me know the cost.

Julia has asked me to acknowledge receipt of Mrs Hector's letter to her, and to excuse another mail without a letter. I am glad to tell you that Julia is very much better, but not quite up to letter writing. She promises to write to Mrs Hector by next mail. All the others are quite well.

Our new Parliament meets today for transaction of business, and we shall see the Radical Programme in tomorrows "Times". We shall probably all survive the shock!

You have lots of work before you. All send best love to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**36. Farmer to Hector, 16-06-1880**  
Hocken MS-443-3/19/8

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
June 16th 1880

My dear Hector

I received your letter from Sydney, and also two newspapers which I sent on to Miss Hector, Selkirk, as directed by you. What a busy life you have, and what a deal you have in prospect in connection with the Melbourne Exhibition. Negretti & Zambra are making a Sunshine Recorder, the same as the one in use at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, and I have ordered five to be made for you, if the one they are now making turns out satisfactory. I consulted Sir J. Hooker on the subject, and he told me that I could not do better than accept Negretti & Zambra's offer to make them at £2-2-0 cash; they guaranteeing makes and quality equal to the one in use at Greenwich. I had hoped to have been able to write that one had been made, but they seem to be very slow on the matter. This will be the first one they have made, and I presume that the delay is thus accounted for.

Stanford posted you the three books you wanted in haste, by last mail, and the others you ordered will be forwarded in the usual way. I hope to be able to report progress with the Sunshine Recorder by next mail.

Mrs Farmer has not been very well for some time, and she took the opportunity of Alex<sup>r</sup> getting his holidays to go off with him for a trip around the Highlands. They are now at Dunblane, and may be said to be on their way home. I am in hopes that the Highland air may have done Julia much good. She will probably have written to Mrs Hector.

I inclose you a Photograph of Freda in her Court dress.

With kindest regards to you all  
Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**37. Farmer to Hector, 13-07-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/9

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
July 13<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I have received your Melbourne letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> May, and we were very glad to hear that you had been able to take Mrs Hector, a most enjoyable trip to Sydney and Melbourne.

I hope that you have both returned to New Zealand all the better for the little change, and that you found your children all quite well.

The "Sunshine Recorder" which was being made by Negretti & Zambra turned out a failure. They must be made of the best optical glass, and will cost £11-11 each. This is so much beyond your limit that I shall wait further instructions from you before ordering any to be made. Write and say if you are willing to pay that price.

The "Whale" book is all published that is going to be. I told Hardwicke & Bogue that a number of the plates were missing from the number you had from them, and they will endeavour to get them for you if you will give the missing information. No. 1 was the last published, which I believe you have got.

I see that you have some commissions in prospect for me. I shall be delighted to attend to them on receipt of instructions.

The New Zealand Parliament will have now met. The Ministry will have to face much animosity and trouble over finances. I should estimate that about £3,000,000 a year will be required to pay the interest of the public and private debt of the Colony. It matters little whether the debt be public or private if the interest has to be paid in hard cash, out of the Colony. If the price of Colonial produce keeps up at a remunerative price, things may go all right, with care, but with another term of Office of a reckless Government, the result to the credit of the Colony may be disastrous. I hope the present Ministry may have a fair trial.

Trade in this country has improved a little, and the harvest prospects are fair, at present. A good harvest makes such a difference in the buying power of the people.

Julia is now writing to Mrs Hector, so I need write no domestic news, beyond the fact that we are all quite well.

With kindest regards

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**38. Farmer to Hector, 11-08-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/11

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London, W.  
August 11<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I received your letter of June 19<sup>th</sup> inclosing the Linnean Financial Statement, for which I thank you very much. I have also to thank you for a number of newspapers. Had the Grey Ministry been still in power, the Financial Statement would probably have been "Balance Sheet" for the information of our creditors. The return of Grey to active life has been a sad event in the recent history of New Zealand.

You dread the possibility of your being obliged “to take to doctoring”, for your bread and butter, but when that event happens no one will have any money left to pay for your attendance. After the country is obliged to dispense with your services, it will be a black look out for us all. If we can all get back to New Zealand there will always be plenty to eat there.

I am very glad to hear that Mrs Hector and you are all the better for your trip to Australia. You require change of work, as well as change of climate. Excepting Alex<sup>r</sup>, all our family circle are at Bridge of Allan, and I hope to go there early next week. I having remained behind to get the house cleaning & & fairly started.

I am in hopes that we are now going to have fine harvest weather. The glass is fairly high and steady. We have had a succession of severe thunderstorms over about half of England and the floods have done much damage. In all the low parts of London, the cellars were filled with sewage, whenever the trapping was imperfect. The sewers could not contain the storm water on two or three occasions. This will show you the exceptional and serious nature of the storms. In the country several people were drowned in the flooded fields, in endeavouring to save stock. In other parts of England, and nearly the whole of Scotland there has been too little rain.

You send me no commissions. I presume that you are too busy to think of anything but work. The Melbourne Exhibition will keep you hard at work for months to come. N.Z. was most successful at Sydney, and your exertions contributed a good deal to that result.

Mr Larkworthy is taking a trip to N.Z. so as to avoid another English winter. He suffered a good deal last winter, and was advised to leave before another.

I remember you telling me, when we went to see him in London, that he was in an unfit state of health for office work in London, during winter, but that, if he went to a mild climate so as to miss our English winter, he ought return in much improved health. I hope that his present plans may succeed. Mrs Larkworthy goes with him, but his family will remain in this country.

Mrs Campbell and her daughters are now in London, and they will return to Auckland about the beginning of next year. Their stay in Europe has been longer than they originally intended. Dr Campbell hopes to have his new house ready to receive them on arrival.

I hope that Julia may have written to Mrs Hector. Give her my best regards.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, NZ

**39. Farmer to Hector, 3-09-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/12

Balmouth  
"East Nook of Fife"  
September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of the 17<sup>th</sup> July, inclosing a small account from Stanford, which I shall pay when I return to London. You need not have troubled about the balance of your account. I am not sure which side the balance is against, but it is only a trifling sum which ever way.

You write a sad account of the financial prospects of the Colony, and I don't think you have taken a too gloomy view of the state of affairs. I shall not see the papers you have kindly sent me till I return to London.

I cannot pretend to write you a letter here. I merely acknowledge receipt of your letter. With kind regards your belongings

Ever yours sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**40. Farmer to Hector, 6-10-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/14

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
October 6<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I received your letter of 14<sup>th</sup> August, also Vol 12 Transactions N.Z. Institute, and other papers, with best thanks. You were about starting for Melbourne, and although this may be genial employment to you, seeing that it is done in a quiet manner at your own cost, it is so far unsatisfactory. I presume that you have never been paid your expenses in any way of the work you have done out of the Colony.

I have paid Stanford's account £2-6-6. Also Bogues for parts 17 & 18 Orthographie de Cetaces £1.10-0. This will leave a small balance in your favour, I think, of less than a pound, and the balance will be a few shillings against you, after I pay a guinea to the Zoological Society in December. I mention the latter because you seem to think the balance is the other way. It is all right at present.

You will be surprised to see the history of the Whale turn up again. Bogue told me some time ago that no more of it would be published. I hope that the missing plates may have been sent in this parcel if you can send me a list of missing plates and Bogue will endeavour to get them.

I inclose you a "specimen" plate of a work now publishing, and if you would like to have it sent, I shall order it for you.

You will be very grieved to hear that Dr Campbell's eldest daughter, Ida, is very seriously ill. I fear that there is only a small hope that she may live to see her father, who is now on his way to England, and due to arrive on the 16<sup>th</sup> instant. Ida is suffering from Brights disease, of a very virulent form. You may remember how her limbs were swollen before Mrs Campbell went to Hobart Town with her two daughters. I fancy that there has always been this tendency in Ida. It will be a very sad meeting for Dr Campbell to see his dear Child as prostrated as she now is.

Miss Hector<sup>10</sup> is now in the drawing room with Mrs Farmer, and she is looking so well. I told her that I was writing to you and she sends you all her love. She is a wonderfully active lady at such a great age. You may remember her during a reel in our drawing room, and I fancy she then told us that she was 80.

I fancy that my wife is going to write to Mrs Hector. I send her my best regards.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, N.Z.

**41. Farmer to Hector, 2-12-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/16

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

It seems an age since I have written to you, and although I have to thank you for numerous publications and papers, I have had no letter from you for several mails. You are overwhelmed with work, and letter writing becomes a tax under those circumstances,

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<sup>10</sup> This is apparently not James Hector's younger, unmarried sister, Margaret, who would have been much younger.

except when absolutely necessary. When you return to Wellington you will probably have something for me to do.

The Melbourne Exhibition seems to be a great success, and your department is specially praised. It must be a costly affair.

I have been in Fife during the greater part of the last two months on very sad duties. I had to look after the affairs of a brother who died suddenly, and having left no Will, an application has had to be made to the Courts to appoint an Executor. This took a good deal of time, and is scarcely accomplished yet. Besides, my brother had been appointed by the Court of Session, what is called in Scotland, "Factor loco tutoris", for two minors, and I had to see that all accounts were in order to be sent to the Court Auditor. I got everything satisfactorily done so far as it could be for the present.

The sudden death of my brother was caused by an accident of a very peculiar character. He was walking down a stair, and his heel slipped on the bottom step, he fell back, and evidently injured his spine, or ruptured a blood vessel near the heart. He afterwards rode home, about 9 miles, and although he complained of having hurt his back very much, and that it all felt in lumps, he did not seem to suffer pain. Suddenly he fell dead, without the slightest warning. The Doctor said a clot of blood, by impeding circulation caused instant death. It shows what a slight cause, apparently, may occasion death. He was in excellent health, and leading an active life. Professor Pettigrew, from St Andrews, who made an examination said he had never seen a more perfectly developed muscular body. I have written all the above to you, as you will regard it as a singular cause of death.

My brother Robert, has sold out of his partnership at Napier, and he is coming home on a visit, and will return to New Zealand in a year or two.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well, and the young folks all busy with lessons. Education will now form part of your responsibilities.

Julia sends love to Mrs Hector, and she will write next mail.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.



**42. Farmer to Hector, 29-12-1880**

Hocken MS-443-3/19/17

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

London

December 29<sup>th</sup> 1880

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of Nov<sup>r</sup> 6<sup>th</sup>. Also a lot of papers and other publications, for which accept my best thanks. "The Manual of the New Zealand Coleoptera" is too ----- for me, but I shall have it bound and placed with my other New Zealand publications, in the hopes that my children may some day prize them highly.

I am in hopes that a period of real prosperity and economy has commenced throughout New Zealand. The tax gatherers having at last brought people to a sense of the necessity of industry and economy in public as well as private life. The only danger is, that a government of the Grey-Macandrew type may again get into power.

I have paid Stanford's account £8-7-2 and will pay the Entrance fee and other demands to Mr Collins, Sec. Mineralogical Society, when he sends an account of how much I have to pay. I have forwarded your letter to him, and asked him to send me an a/c. I also asked him to send the publications to Stanford, addressed to you.

We are having a very mild winter in London. The hawthorn tree, which you may remember in front of our house, is quite green. In Scotland the winter is most severe. Hard frost and a great deal of snow is the rule. In London S.W. winds and consequently no fogs, has been the prevailing weather all the winter, thus far. Severe weather seems to be now working its way South. We may have a severe change any day.

Julia has written to Mrs Hector and will have given all domestic news. We go on much in the same way as when you were here. Education being still our object. I hope that everything runs in the right grooves. I fear that a great portion of education is sheer swindle. It is only the clever boys that get proper attention, as a "Rule". Backwards boys get little real teaching at our great public schools. We have a tutor to work with our boys during the Christmas holidays, and they always do better work during the short time than they ever do in a terms work at School. We have an excellent tutor.

I presume that you were delighted to get back to Wellington. You have had too much Exhibition work lately.

I wish you all a bright and happy New Year.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

**43. Farmer to Hector, 23-02-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/1

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> with inclosures and also newspapers, with best thanks. The concluding part of your letter indicates despondency. A very unusual circumstance in your feelings. I fear you have too good reasons to take a gloomy view of public affairs. The public and private debt of the Colony is something enormous for the present population.

The Orthographie de Cetaces No 17 & 18 was sent to the Agent General's Office on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, but it seems a very unsatisfactory way of sending parcels to New Zealand. I hope that you may have received them long ere this letter. I doubt if Stanford would care to forward books from another firm of publishers. Besides it is doubtful if any more of the work will be published. What do you suggest? I shall gladly do as you think best.

I inclose your account to January showing a Dr balance of £13-10-1. This need not trouble you for the present.

Sir F. D. Bell has arrived, and looking bright and well. I am sorry to say that Lady Bell is ill. She seems to have been ill all the way home. Sir Julius Vogel has left the Office for good, and I fancy that he considers himself badly treated. From his style of living he seems to be very well off. Where the money comes from I have no idea. Successful card playing may add to his income. He is said to be one of the best Whist players in London and I fancy he plays every night, "till morning doth appear". This between ourselves.

I think that Bell will make an excellent Agent General. His manner is so good.

Dr Campbell will return to Auckland next month. Ida's death has been a sad blow to them. She seemed to be the chief bright spot in Campbell's life.

We are all well. Julia has now most excellent health. Douglas entered at Harrow this term, and took an excellent place - the "middle shell?" - one form higher than Herbert on entering.

I hope to be in New Zealand early next year. I shall have business to attend to which compels me to decide to go. "Bread and butter" must be looked after.

We have had some very severe weather since the beginning of the year, but I hope that "gloomy winter's now over".

James Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

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Dr. D. C. Hoctor, Wellington, New Zealand in account with James Farmer - 62										
1880										
Jan. 2 To E. Stanford &		£	2	6	6	1880				
Oct. 5 - David Boquer of (Whale)			1	10	-	Jan. 1 By balance brought forward to		4	13	4
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1881										
Jan. 1 - Mineralogical Society			4	18	9					
- 3 - Zoological Society			1	1	-					
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#### 44. Farmer to Hector, 22-03-1881

Hocken MS-443-3/20/2

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

Although this letter is dated London, I am writing it in Fife. I had to come here on matters in cause of settlement of the affairs of my late brother. My brother Robert, arrived from New Zealand last week and he is also here. I hope now to leave him in charge.

I have received your letter of Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> and executed all your commissions, so far as can now be done except the C.M.G. Crosses. I shall see about it on my return to London. The "*Challenger* publication" will require to be applied for by yourself, addressed to The

Secretary of the Treasury, Downing Street. They are published at H.M. Stationery Office.

I was informed by Mr Andrew, the head of this particular department, that no “presentation” copies would be given away until the whole are published, but that it would probably take 10 years. However, they may be bought, and if the Government decline to supply you in advance, do you care to purchase? I shall wait your instruction. One volume has been published, and a second will soon be ready. Mr Andrews told me that you might get them sent to you if applied for. It is worth asking at all events.

Dr Gunther’s book was too heavy to post, and it will be sent by first P.& O steamer, via Suez. I took it to the Post Office, and found it could not be sent by post. The other books you ordered will be sent by Stanford in the usual way. I also ordered a copy of “Bucklands British Fishes” to be sent. This book was in course of publication when Mr. Buckland died so that you are not likely to have seen it. I am glad that you have got the “Whale” satisfactorily completed. I don’t think that there is anything else on hand.

We have been having a terribly severe winter. The East coast is literally strewn with wrecks. During a snow storm of 70 hours duration it is estimated that 200 lives have been lost on the East Coast of Scotland. The ground is now covered with snow. “Seed time” will be very late. All farm work having been stopped since before Christmas.

I need not write about what you can read in the newspapers.

With best regards to your wife and bairns.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**45. Farmer to Hector, 20-04-1881**  
Hocken MS-443-3/20/3

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
April 20<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

For the first time during the present mail contract, the N.Z. Mail is late. Owing to a break down a few days after leaving Auckland the letters are not likely to be delivered till after the outwards mail has gone. Hitherto we have had New Zealand letters delivered as

punctually as from Edinburgh.

I have got your C.M.G. Order, and have posted it (Registered,) by this mail. You will be horrified at the price £5-10-0, but the maker has a monopoly, and charges accordingly. Crouch is not the maker, but I had to get the order through a jeweller to whom I was known. I hope it is what you wanted.

I have made further inquiries regarding the "*Challenger*" publications, but you will require to make the application from New Zealand, or through the Agent General. Only two numbers have been published. I hope that you may have got Dr Gunther's Manual of Fishes, before this reaches you. The other books will take a longer time.

We are all grieved at the death of Lord Beaconsfield. His death is a National loss. His serious state of health has been the chief topic of conversation everywhere, ever since he has been ill.

My brother, Robert, arrived about a month ago, and he seems to have decided to return to New Zealand by the end of this year. I intend going with him. I have business requiring personal attention. I have not yet decided whether I shall take Alex<sup>r</sup> with me, but it will probably end in him going.

I shall not post this till tomorrow as the New Zealand mail may arrive in time to reply, if necessary.

We are having a very cold dry spring. Vegetation is ten to fourteen days late. It has been fine weather for getting the seed sown, but grass is very scarce for the stock. There has been great loss of sheep during the severe winter. On one occasion it snowed 70 hours without ceasing. The snow drifting all the time. You may imagine the difficulty of keeping a flock of sheep in safety under those circumstances.

Dr Campbell and family are now on their way to Auckland. They are now due at Galle, and may be in Auckland in a month from now.

All join in kindest regards to your household.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand.

**46. Farmer to Hector, 16-05-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/4

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

London

May 16<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

Since the date of my last letter, I have had two letters from you, but there are no commissions in either. You were about to start for Melbourne to “wind up” the New Zealand exhibits there. The Exhibition seems to have been a great success, and I am sure, that you must be heartily tired of Exhibitions. They do interfere with your other work. Otherwise, you would have much pleasure in seeing the products of the world. I was delighted to see that Mr Gollan had got 1<sup>st</sup> prize for Merino wool. He is very pleased, and it shows that his £300 Rams have proved a success. It was a great honour to beat the Victoria people on their own ground.

We move along in our usual jog trot ways.

Tomorrow, Alex<sup>r</sup> will be 21! We are giving a “coming of age” dance in honour of the event. How time flies. It seems a short period of time to look back to his being a child. Herbert and Douglas are at Harrow, and making fair progress, but neither do anything beyond. Freda and Edith are still at R.A. of Music and both play nicely. I think better than girls we m---, with few exceptions.

I intend taking a trip to New Zealand about the end of this year. I have business requiring attending to. I may mention that Mrs Farmer will be able to attend to all your little commissions while I am away. Whenever anything is beyond her knowledge, she will get assistance from some friends, probably Mr Warrington Smyth. Books & & can always be arranged with Stanford. I don't want to lose your monthly letters, which I might do in time, if some other friend attended to your little commissions. You see that I am selfish in a small degree.

Edith had your packet of beautiful photographs, and she will write to thank you for so kindly remembering her.

I hope that the C.M.G. order will be delivered safely, and be satisfactory. The price was so horribly high, that I fear that you would rather have gone without it.

With best regards to all  
Ever yours sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**47. Farmer to Hector, 18-06-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/5

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
18<sup>th</sup> June 1881

My dear Hector

I duly received your letters from Melbourne where you had gone to "wind up" the Exhibition. I am glad to hear that the New Zealand portion has been such a great success. No doubt, the trouble you have taken added greatly to the successful results. You will be glad to get back to what you regard as your legitimate work. You will now be busy with the work of the Session. There is a report that Sir G. Grey is again "coming to the front". I hope not. He is a most mischievous man to place in power. I shall be anxious to see the result of the present session. If Grey and Macandrew get one more hold of the purse strings, they may ruin the Colony. The "last straw" may be laid on sooner than we prepared for. The proposition of a "Bale of paper, and a printing press", to create money, was such an outrageous proposal to make by a Member of a Government, that the public creditor will carefully watch what is being proposed in future. The present government are honest, but I am afraid their following are generally only "lukewarm".

I shall require to pay a visit to New Zealand next year on business matters, and intend to leave early in the year, if not before Christmas. I shall be glad to do anything you may require before leaving, and Julia can attend to most business matters you may have, with the assistance of Stanford or some one she may consult with.

I inclose a long letter to you from Edith, and Julia has written to Mrs Hector. They will have written all domestic news. I join with them in kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**48. Farmer to Hector, 11-07-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/6

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
July 11<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of May 21<sup>st</sup> inclosing a Bank draft for £20, with best thanks. This puts your account a little on the right side for me. The C.M.G. Order was a costly ornament for its size, and intrinsic worth, and I trust that it may be satisfactory. Next mail, I shall hear all about it.

You will now be in the midst of Session work. The Grey-Macandrew party will no doubt make an effort to regain power, and as yet get hold of the "purse strings". I dread the financial position of the Colony. It must now take the whole of the wool money of the Colony, to pay the interest on the public and private debts. Leaving a large balance on the wrong side of the account. Notwithstanding the external burdens, the Colony seems to be making good progress.

I have decided to leave for New Zealand soon after Christmas, and Freda will go with me. My wife objects to my going alone, and Freda is very anxious to see the land of her birth. We shall spend some part of the time in Wellington, and look forward to the great pleasure of seeing you and Mrs Hector. Freda plays very nicely now, but she has no voice for singing. I am in the hopes that Edith will have a good voice. She plays very well. (age considered.) Both girls are still at the Royal Academy of Music. Herbert and Douglas are at Harrow and both are doing fairly well, but neither will ever make much "show". I had expected a higher standard, at one time. But the result is only fairly average. The girls show more talent than the boys. The boys seem to have too little ambition to "shine".

How do you manage about education? It has always been a matter of considerable anxiety to me, and I ----- the "race for wealth", in New Zealand, in order that my children might have the benefit of an English education and "up-bringing". I hope it may prove a success. A successful carer depends so much upon getting into the right "groove".

We are going to spend the autumn holiday at Dunblane Hydropathic Establishment, and will go there when the schools break up, early next month.

With our best regards to you all

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, New Zealand



**49. Farmer to Hector, 10-08-1881**

Hocken MS-44-3-/20/8

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

London

August 10<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

I have received your June letter, and also a number of Wellington papers, which are, at the present time, most interesting. I see that Grey loses no opportunity of saying a word in favour of his pretended communistic doctrines, and no doubt his speeches will bear fruit during the general elections. The cry against the holders of large property is very popular during an election. He never seeks to prove that the large run holders have damaged New Zealand, or that any one has been unable to get as much land as he had the means to purchase and cultivate in consequence of a few having large holdings. The prosperity of the Colony has in a great measure been due to the large run holders. They have been the making of the Colony. It would soon become a Colony of paupers if the holding of each man was limited to what he could cultivate with his own labour, or, that his flocks should be limited to say, 100 sheep. All enterprise would cease. How any one can believe that "Autocratic" Sir G. Grey, is sincere, when preaching such democratic doctrines, I cannot conceive. However, there is the fact.

It is a fact that the farmers in this country on the very large estates, are all better off than those on small estates. Not only are the farmers better off, but the labourers have better houses to live in and are in every way more comfortable than their class on small properties. A "wee laird" has nothing to spare, either in reduction of rent, or to add to the comfort of those on his property. If I were now going to farm land, I should lease it from one of the large proprietors. During the present agricultural depression in this country, the total failures have been generally amongst the tenants of small lairds. You will see that I am in favour of a man holding as much land as he can get into his possession, and it is better for the state that he should do so. Grey seems to have an objection to everything that is big and prosperous. Banks, Loan Coy<sup>s</sup>. and I presume wealthy merchants, are to him equally obnoxious, from a political point of view. Enough of Grey.

Julia and the bairns are at Dunblane for the holidays, and they are charmed with the place. I am going there in a day or two. Alex<sup>r</sup> will be left here alone. He will get his holidays in Sept<sup>r</sup>

I hope to be in New Zealand in 6 months.

With kind regards to your household

Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

Wellington N.Z.

**50. Farmer to Hector, 5-09-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/9

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

September 5<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

Although this has the 6 P.G. address we are staying at the Hydropathic Establishment, Dunblane. We are here for the school holidays, and will be here another ten days. Mrs Farmer, Freda, and I will then go to St. Andrews, and all the others will return to London. The boys have to go to Harrow on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst.

I thank you for the beautiful photographs you kindly sent us, and also for the papers and “cuttings”. The Parliamentary papers are most interesting. If the Financial Statement is absolutely correct, New Zealand is in a better state than it has been for many years. If the price of wool keeps up, there is no fear whatever. Every acre of grass, well laid down, adds to the resources of the country. The increase of sheep has been enormous during the last ten years, and in the further development of the country there seems to be no present limit to the increase of sheep and cattle. I expect great results from the freezing process of bringing meat to this country. So far it is a great success.

I had no letter from you, and I presume you had nothing particular for me to do. The printed matter you kindly sent contains a very great deal of most useful information in the most condensed form.

We have had very wet and cold weather here, and I fear that the crops will be very poor. Harvest will be late, and much of the corn will never ripen. Harvest has commenced in the early districts in Scotland but the colour is a dirty blue or grey instead of “golden yellow”. There will be great difficulty in both quantity and quality. In the earlier districts of England, the destruction by weather has been very great. It rained every day for about three weeks, after much of the corn had been cut, and the appearance of the stooks of corn standing in the fields, is as if it was stooks of dirty thatch, and there is much damage by sprouting. This will be another bad season for farmers. The weather here is now dry and cold, but too little sun to ripen the corn.

Dunblane is a curious looking old place. The streets are all so narrow, that there is scarcely room for vehicles to pass, in many places. The Cathedral is a splendid object, and how it could have been built in such an “out of the way” place is surprising. The stones must have been brought from the neighbourhood of Stirling, and in those days, there were no roads, and much swamp. The Hydropathic is on high ground, and is said to be very healthy. Our people are all in excellent health, and my wife has never been so strong and well as she is now.

With our best regards

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

**51. Farmer to Hector, 4-10-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/10

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
October 4<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of August 13<sup>th</sup>. Also a number of papers, "cuttings" & & with best thanks. The political information is most interesting. I am very glad to see that the government will be able to make both ends meet and I hope that that the electors will have the good sense to appreciate the fact during the next elections.

We arrived from Scotland on Sunday morning and we went yesterday (Monday) to Broadwoods about your Piano, and I think we shall select a "Boudoir Grand", which I think will be delivered in New Zealand considerably under £100. Probably a little over £90. I have no time to attend to other matters before the mail leaves, and I have only time now, to scramble through a very few lines. I having accepted an invitation to have some Pheasant shooting, in Lup---, and I am to go there this afternoon. I shall pay Stanford's account on my return, and have a receipt for the government portion of the account separately.

Mrs Farmer will not be able to write to Mrs Hector by this mail, but tell her that the parcel of stockings will be sent in the Piano case.

We were grieved to hear that you had been having illness in your house but hope that you are all quite well long ere now. I sometimes think that your letters have shown a certain amount of depression lately. You are evidently over worked, and as you say you have often very poor reward for all you have done for the Colony.

All our children are again hard at work with lessons. Herbert and Douglas are still at Harrow. The others are taught at home, excepting music and drawing. Alex<sup>f</sup> is still with Sinclair Hamilton & Co, and he works with a tutor two nights a week.

I hope to see you all about the month of March or April. Freda will go with me.

With all our kindest regards  
Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**52. Farmer to Hector, 31-10-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/11

7, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
October 31<sup>st</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of Aug<sup>st</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> via Brindisi and Suez, inclosing draft for Eighty pounds. Also your letter of September 16<sup>th</sup> inclosing cuttings from the papers, with best thanks.

I shall endeavour to have extracts (if not the whole matter,) inserted in "The Colonies" when I get back to London - I hope within the next few days. I am now in the East of Fife winding up the affairs of my brother who died a year ago.

Your Piano was shipped in the "*Weatherfield*" and I now inclose your "Bill of Lading". Also Broadwoods, and Sinclair, Hamilton & Co's accounts. You will see that I have paid freight here. It is insured for £110. I hope that the Piano will be satisfactory. I also send your Stanfords account, divided according to your instructions.

My brother Robert has bought a small estate near St Andrew's, which he is going to occupy, and he will not return to New Zealand.

I have so many interruptions here at present that I find it impossible to write, but I have inclosed all the accounts, and Bill of Lading for the Piano, and you have all the business matters which I have on hand for you.

We had a large sale here on Friday last of crops and farm stocking, and the buyers are now getting delivery of their purchases. I shall be glad when all is settled.

With best regards  
Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**53. Farmer to Hector, 1-12-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/12

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London

December 1<sup>st</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

Last San Francisco mail I received your letter inclosing a draft for £60 for the purpose of getting a Telescope for Mr Atkinson from Mr Browning. I at once put the order in hand, and I inclose your "pro forma invoice", and also Mr Brownings letter, which will explain matters better than anything I can write. I decided upon the Telescope to be sent, after a good deal of discussion with Mr Browning on the subject, and after he had read and considered the letter which you sent me from Mr Atkinson as well as your own letter to me. It will be ready for shipment in about a fortnight, and I propose sending it by P. & O. Steamers via Melbourne. I hope it may be satisfactory in every respect, and be delivered in good time. I may be there to have a look through the Telescope. I hope to be in N.Z. by the first week in March.

In regard to the books, I am not yet sure if they can be got. Stanford is trying, and Mr Vaux will also do what he can.

I paid Taylor & Francis' account which I inclose receipted.

I hope that the Piano is now half way to New Zealand. I send your duplicate Bill of Lading.

I think that I have gone over all the business part of our correspondence, and I presume that Julia has given Mrs Hector all domestic news.

Freda and I will start on January 18<sup>th</sup> by the P. & O. mail steamer. Our passages are arranged for. We will have no change of Steamer till we reach Melbourne or Sydney. We may go to Christchurch in the first instance.

I hope that the N.Z. elections may result in the return of a majority of sensible men. It will be a sad calamity if the Grey-Macandrew type of members are returned.

I thank you for the papers you kindly sent.

With kindest regards to you all.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**54. Farmer to Hector, 28-12-1881**

Hocken MS-443-3/20/13

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
December 28<sup>th</sup> 1881

My dear Hector

I received your letter of 5<sup>th</sup> November and also several Wellington papers, with best thanks. I have paid Stanford's account £11-16-8. Also Zoological Society for publications 1882 (21/-), and inclose your receipts. Julia will now pay all the accounts which you wish her to pay during my absence from London.

Browning is "getting on" with Atkinson's telescope, and I am in hopes that it will be ready to be sent by the same P. & O. Steamer that we shall go by, and will be due in New Zealand by the first week in March.

Stanford has only been able, so far, to get one of the books you ordered, and Mr Vaux has been also assisting to find them, and they hope to get one which has been ordered from Germany. The book I have got, but which I cannot read, and will copy the title is

La Langue Primitive de la Chaldia.

I shall take this book with me, and all the others that Stanford may be able to get before we leave.

We leave on January 19<sup>th</sup> and I have booked to Christchurch, so that we may see the South during the early autumn. I fear that we bought a more expensive Piano than you intended. In your last letter you say "I inclose you an account of Stanford's which I hope you will have funds of mine in hand to pay most it with". Now, you may remember when writing about the Piano, you said that if a Boudoir Grand could be got for £90 to £100, we were to get one. In trying the Piano at Broadwood's, the one we selected was so far superior to the most expensive cottage pianos, that we had no hesitation whatever in sending you a Boudoir Grand. I hope that will be satisfied when you have tried the Piano. The retail price of your Piano was 115 guineas, and that of the best cottage 100 guineas.

I hope to see you by the end of March.

Wishing all the Compliments of the Season in which I am joined by all at 6 P.G.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**55. Farmer to Hector, 18-01-1882**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/1

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
London  
January 18<sup>th</sup> 1882

My dear Hector

Tomorrow at noon, Freda and I leave Gravesend in the P. & O. S. "*Shannon*", and we have booked for Lyttleton. You may therefore expect to see us soon after you receive this.

I inclose your Browning's account for the telescope, and I am in hopes that it will be sent in the "*Shannon*", but as over 1000 tons of cargo has been shut out, and will be forwarded in the "*Clyde*", a fortnight hence, the telescope may not be in the '*Shannon*'. It was at the dock on Monday last, and I hope will be put on board. Alex<sup>r</sup> will send you the Bill of Lading. I have addressed it to you, as the whole transaction has been done through you, and you did not say to address it to Mr Atkinson. You might like to see it, and it can easily be forwarded to Nelson. I hope it may be satisfactory in every respect.

Hoping to see you within a week or 10 days after you receive this, and with best regards to you all.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**56. Farmer to Hector, 3-03-1882**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/2

"*Shannon*"  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1882

My dear Hector

Only a line to say we are thus far on our voyage - 200 miles from Glenelg, where we expect to be early tomorrow morning, and we hope to reach Melbourne on Monday. We shall leave for New Zealand by the earliest opportunity, and may go by the same steamer as this goes by.





**57. Farmer to Hector, 17-05-1882**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/3

*[Written by Mrs Farmer]*

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
17<sup>th</sup> May 1882

My dear Dr Hector

I sent to Broadwood's within a few days of receiving your note. The person who attended to the packing of their pianos was not at hand so I left your note with the understanding that the subject in question would be enquired into.

Not having heard from the Broadwoods I went again yesterday, and very fortunate enough to see one of their kind people. He took me down to the packing room to see a grand piano which was being packed for some different country.

There were battens on the lid of the wooden case, and also on the sides. The pianos are so fixed in the case, that no point is supposed to be able to pressed upon by the case. It occurred to the Manager while he was talking to me could the battens have been removed from your piano case while on board? That your case as well as all others, that are sent away from their warehouse had two strong battens from end to end, he is convinced. I am pleased to know that you and Mrs Hector approve of the tone of your piano. Freda mentioned in her letter what a delightful instrument it was to play upon.

I had no letter by the last mail from Mrs Hector but hope to hear from her next month. Perhaps you may smile when I tell you that I am anxious to hear what you and she think of my dear grown-up daughter. I hope that you think I was right in begging Jamie to take her with him. I could not bear the idea of his going so far from home alone. You dear friends, will have heard of the sorrow that came upon my dear ones almost immediately that they arrived in New Zealand<sup>11</sup>. I feel overwhelmed with the sad tidings, for of all afflictions that might occur to my dear parents this I never dreamt of nor did they.

It seems extraordinary and wonderful that Jamie should have reached N.Z. just as he was so much wanted.

Today is Alex's birthday - he is 22 years of age. He is such a good son, and a fine handsome fellow. He is very like his father in many respects, but without his first rate abilities. Herbert is doing well at Harrow, and Douglas too, I am in hopes. They are in the same house, and are so happy together.

I have let Edith give up most of her Schoolroom studies, for this term, but still she is fully occupied. This morning we have all been seeing a meet of the Four-in-hand-Club in Hyde Park. It was a splendid sight, for the weather was fine, and all passed off well. The Prince of Wales was on the second dray, looking as happy as ever, and the Princess of Wales

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<sup>11</sup> Mrs Farmer's parents died soon after James and Freda Farmer arrived in New Zealand.

appears in far better health than she used to do but still it keeps her pretty slim figure. She had her three daughters with her this morning.

There is to be a splendid concert at the Albert Hall this afternoon, to which Edith is taking my sister-in-law, and my niece.

Freda has given me a most pleasing account of your dear children making we wish more than ever that I knew them.

With kindest regards to yourself, and much love to Mrs Hector. Believe me yours ever sincerely

Julie Farmer

P.S. Mrs David Hector has been so ill lately, but when I called a few days since she was getting better, but still very poorly. Miss Hector came to see me lately with Miss Glennie. The former was in good spirits, and far stronger than Miss Glennie.

J.F.

**58. Farmer to Hector, 30-11-1882**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/4

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
November 30<sup>th</sup> 1882

My dear Hector

We arrived here on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, so that we have been a couple of months in England. I wish we could have brought the charming climate of New Zealand with us. Ever since our arrival the weather has been cold and damp, and I have never felt the English climate so disagreeable as I have done since our arrival.

I have not yet succeeded in getting you a small Photographic Camera. What I have seen are all much larger than what you wanted. I shall endeavour to see Professor Tyndall at the monthly meeting of the Royal Institutions on Monday next, and he may be able to advise me as to what would be suitable for you.

You will now be preparing to see the Transit of Venus. I hope you may have favourable weather, and with satisfactory results. In England, very little of it will be seen, and as the sun seldom shines at this season of the year, the chances are that few observers will see it at all.

You will now be quite settled in your new home, and I hope that you all like it, and that you all enjoy good health. If you do, you will never regret the change from Wellington.

I see that Sir W. F. D. Jervois has been appointed Governor of New Zealand, and I am in hopes that he will be a success. I met him once at dinner, and thought most highly of him. I feel sure that you will get on nicely with him.

I hope that the last addition of the Tribe Hector<sup>12</sup> is thriving, and as good a specimen as the earlier productions!!!

I frequently meet some of your friends, who all inquire kindly after you. We have to thank you for introductions to a number of highly valued friends. We value friends for their worth, never for their wealth alone consequently our friends are chiefly those to whom you are known, either personally, or by reputation.

I hope that Mrs Hector is again quite well, and that the educational arrangements for your family are all satisfactory. It is a great matter to get into the “right groove”. The ball then was runs smoothly round the circles, and how difficult it is to get it into the right one if it once starts the wrong way. Not only in the matter of school, but in every phase of life.

Do you know what are prospects of the “Ross” and “Humphrey’s Gully” Mines? I have heard nothing about either of them since I left, except that I see in the newspapers that the price of shares in both mines are quoted at higher prices than when I left. I have hopes that one or both, mines will be a great success.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well, and in our households way everything goes on “as per usual”. Very little change since you were here, except that the house seems filled with grown up people instead of children. To us the change has seemed gradual, but seeing that two sons now look down on me, “by ever so much”, the change has been real.

All join in kindest regards to Mrs Hector and your “belongings”.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

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<sup>12</sup> Lyell Hector (1882-1908).

**59. Farmer to Hector, 27-12-1882**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/6

6, Porchester Gate, Hye Park  
December 27<sup>th</sup> 1882

My dear Hector

I received your letter of Nov 4<sup>th</sup> inclosing photographs of your house, and family groups, which adds much to the pleasure of receiving the interesting views. We are very pleased to see Petone with its ---- surroundings, and no description which Freda and I could give, could so well let the others know what your place was like.

I don't think I can get the kind of camera you wanted. What I understood you to mean, was an apparatus that could be carried about in your wanderings and ready for use whenever you came across any objects of interest. Anything I can find is too heavy and cumbersome. Do you know where what you want is to be got?

All our children are now at home, and they look grown up men and women, with the exception of Cicely and Malcolm. The young ones have all grown a great deal since last Christmas. All are quite well, and so delighted to be all together.

I am sorry to see that the Waikato Natives are still going to be obstructive, but beyond delay in construction of the railway, I don't think that any harm will come out of it.

We are having unusually warm weather in London. The temperature outside our house is now 55<sup>0</sup>, and we have only had about five frosty nights in London this season, and only one light snow shower. In Scotland and the north of England and Wales, the winter has been very severe. The snow fall at Dundee in one day about 18 inches, and altogether over 30 inches of snow falls in less than a week. No such snow storm has ever been known in the East of Fife.

You seem to have had favourable weather for the Transit of Venus. In London we had dense fog, and it was only seen in a very few places in this part of the world.

All join in wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**60. Farmer to Hector, 24-01-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/7

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
January 24<sup>th</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

Usually at this season of the year I have sent you a long account of sundry payments which I had made for you during the past year, but I have no such claim against you at present. The only item being a guinea for the Publications of the Zoological Society, for which I inclose the receipt. I need not tell you that I shall gladly do any commissions you may have, as formerly.

I had no letter from you by last mail, but you were, no doubt busy with matters connected with the Transit of Venus, and had nothing particular to write about to me. You seem to have had very favourable weather for observing the Transit. In London the day was dark and gloomy, "as per usual" at that season of the year.

We have been having our whole family home during the holidays, and the boys are now returning to school. Malcolm returned to Slough yesterday, and Douglas will go to Harrow this afternoon. Herbert has been working with tutors for the London University Matriculation examination. Cicely is now the only girl in the school room. Freda and Edith still go on at the Royal Academy of Music, and attend lectures. Alex<sup>r</sup> is still with Sinclair Hamilton & Co. I have now given you an account of the "lot".

You have only begun the troubles of education. It is a great matter to get a start in the "right groove". None of our boys are very bright. They work steadily, but very slow. Your boys are still too young to judge of their school capacity. Public school teaching is very indifferent unless the boys are very bright in themselves. In fact, the principal part of the actual teaching is done by private tutors out of school hours, for which extra payments have to be made, and without this, the under average boy would learn very little indeed.

We are all quite well, and all join in kindest regards to your family circle. Wishing you a bright and happy New Year.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**61. Farmer to Hector, 22-02-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/8

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I only write to remind you that I still exist, and I value your letters very highly, but lately they have been "few and far between". I can easily understand the reason. You have had nothing particular to write about, and you are overwhelmed with necessary work. However, I shall be delighted to hear from you when you feel inclined to write, and have much pleasure in doing any commissions for you, whenever you require my services.

We have had a very wet winter, and all flat land throughout England has been under water at frequent intervals since the end of October. Only about two thirds of the usual quantity of wheat has been sown, and very little land has yet been prepared for spring sowing. The prospects of an abundant harvest have never been known to be worse at this season of the year. I hope that we may now have some dry weather. Although it has rained a little every day, the last three days have been comparatively dry, and the floods are subsiding everywhere. Scotland has been more fortunate. They have had a good deal of frost and snow, but the wheat was generally all got in, in fairly good condition, and farm work is well forward.

The Saturday Popular Concerts are as charming as ever, and we still retain our four stalls. The Royal Institution's Lectures are another source of real enjoyment and instruction. Our three stalls at the Albert Hall, with the forgoing, almost complete our list of "Plans of Amusement". We seldom go to theatres or other concerts. The Royal Institution lectures are instructive in the highest degree.

You seem to have done me an honour by appointing me god-father to your son<sup>13</sup>. I hope the little fellow may be improved thereby! This is the first time any one has done me such an honour. Mrs Hector did not mention his name in her letter.

I have sent you a small pamphlet about the Hydraulic mining, which shows the small yield of gold per ton, which can be sluiced at a profit, if done on a large scale. A value of a few pence per ton seems to leave a profit. This is encouraging for the probable results of the "Ross" and "Humphrey's Gully" mines. If you happen to know anything regarding either of these mines, I shall be glad of the information.

Julia has written to Mrs Hector and will have written all domestic news.

With best regards to you all.

Ever sincerely yours

James Farmer

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<sup>13</sup> Presumably Lyell Hector (1882-1908).

**62.Farmer to Hector, 16-05-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/9

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

May 16<sup>th</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of March 24<sup>th</sup>, and “as per usual” I see that you have been very busy of late. Except during the Sessions you are seldom at home. I am glad to have such good accounts of Petone. You all enjoy so much better health there than you did in Wellington.

I am sorry that you did not give me a written description of the Camera you wanted. I consulted those who I thought would know what would suit you, and among others, Mr Geikie of the Geological Survey, and he told me that he did not think that a small camera, which you could carry about with you, would be of any use for Geological purposes. I got similar information from those having cameras for sale. I shall now endeavour to find one of the size you describe, and send it. It must be capable of being packed in small bulk.

You will now be preparing for the Session. I hope that Grey, Macandrew & Co will never regain possession of the purse strings. No doubt they will try. It has been reported that Sir G. Grey is coming to England.

I am sorry to say that Julia has not been very well lately. Till now she has had excellent health for years. I am in hopes that she will soon be quite well again. A trip to the country will probably be the best thing for her. All the others are perfectly well.

With our kind regards to Mrs Hector and the bairns.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

**63. Farmer to Hector, 13-06-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/10

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

June 13<sup>th</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I received your letter of April 22<sup>nd</sup> dated at Auckland. You seem to be always “on the move”. While this gives you a perfect knowledge of the country, and in many respects, pleasant occupations, it takes you too much away from home. You will soon be on the wrong side of 50 for this sort of thing. I doubt if you now enjoy running up and down steep hill sides. And the crossing of almost improbable streams as you did twenty years ago. All that enthusiasm changes!!

I have now got you a complete set of Photographic Apparatus, and it will be sent per Steamer “*British King*”, to leave on the 20<sup>th</sup> instant, so you should have it in less than two months from now. I was under the impression that you wanted to take large views, and as you required a camera to carry in your hand, or pack in your Portmanteau I could find nothing suitable. However, after receiving your letter giving the size of plate, I soon found what you wanted. After a search, I selected from Browning. Besides the guarantee of his name, and not higher in price than others, I think you will have greater confidence in the apparatus, from your knowledge of the Maker. The Stereoscopic Company charges higher for the same article. I hope it will be satisfactory. 12 dozen prepared plates will be sent. They will keep for years. A ruby lamp is necessary to use. In my photographic days, a yellow light was used.

You give a sad description of the result of the Native Land Court. I fancy that the majority of the N.Z. Parliament are interested in keeping the present state of things as they are. The greed of land is so inherent in man, that every device is tried to obtain a large slice, and the present system of Native land sales favours the land speculator. It drives the natives into debt, and the only valuable thing they possess is land. At no distant date they will have very little left.

I inclose a Memo. of Brownings charges.

All join me in kind regards to your household.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.



**64. Farmer to Hector, 11-07-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/11

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

July 11<sup>th</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I inclose your Bill of Lading, and Brownings account for Photographic Apparatus, shipped per "*British King*". You will probably receive it before you get this letter. Fast steamers direct, alters the rate of delivery of goods altogether. I sent a Bill of Lading per "*British King*". I hope that the Camera will be quite satisfactory. I have half a mind to get a similar apparatus for my own amusement. The prepared dry plates makes it such an easy process to take views & & and the fitting up a sort of Laboratory unnecessary. Send me a specimen of the pictures you obtain.

This has been, so far, a very warm summer, and there is a prospect of a fair average crop. I dont think an abundant one. The winter was very wet, and the spring cold and dry, so that the land was ill prepared for the seed, in England. In Scotland the winter was not as wet, and there was a good deal of dry frosts, which prepared the seed bed for the spring corn, but did damage to the wheat, which is generally thin on the ground in consequence. The prospects of a fair crop are now more favourable than they have been at this date, for the last ten years. We may now have a course of good seasons. I hope we may.

Julia is writing to Mrs Hector, and will give all domestic news.

The New Zealand Parliament will now be in Session. My chief dread is that Grey, Macandrew & Co may get hold of the purse strings. Next mail will bring news of how the political "wires" are likely to be pulled during the Session. I sometimes see Captain Fraser, but he is no friend of this present Ministry, and speaks of them from his own point of view.

Do you know anything of the prospects of the "Ross" and "Humphrey's Gully" mines? They have both increased their dominion to about double the original area, which seems to have become necessary to secure water rights, to make even sure of a continuous and abundant supply. There may have been other reasons of a less unselfish character?

With kindest regards to Mrs Hector

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**65. Farmer to Hector, 7-08-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/12

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

August 7<sup>th</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> June, inclosing Bank draft for £10-, and have paid your subscription to the "Darwin Memorial Fund", £3-3-0, and Stanford's account £1-13-4, as requested.

Julia and all the bairns (except Alex<sup>r</sup>) are in Fife for the holidays, and I shall follow as soon as I get some work done in this house, which I wanted to see done.

I fear that we are going to have a very poor wheat harvest. The weather during the last six weeks has been very wet, and far too little sunshine for the season, with a low temperature during the end of July. In the East of Scotland the weather has been much brighter than in Scotland, and so far, the wheat has not been damaged by the excessive rains which have fallen in England, but throughout the country the harvest will be later. Oats and barley are looking well.

You will now be in the Middle of the Session, and able to form an estimate of the probable stability of the Ministry<sup>14</sup>. Next mail will bring us political news, and I shall be glad if there is no prospect of a Grey-Macandrew union. Last Session they kept aloof from each other.

There is no immediate prospect of dividends from either the "Ross" or "Humphrey's Gully" mines. Do you know anything of the prospects? At the best, gold mining is risky, although rich prizes are of frequent occurrence. I should like to have your opinion of those mines if you happen to have the requisite information. The development of the mines will be costly.

I am sorry to say that Julia has been less strong than usual during the last few months. The Monthly disarrangements have been of such an excessive character that she has generally been confined to her room for nearly half the time. I am in hopes that she is now better, and the bracing air of the North Sea may set her up.

I hope that you are all quite well, and that Petone is suitable in every respect. Your shrubs seem to have been damaged by a severe gale of wind, but damage of that description is soon restored in New Zealand.

With kindest regards to Mrs Hector

Ever sincerely yours

James Farmer

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<sup>14</sup> The Whitaker Ministry (21 April 1882 to 25 September 1883). By the time Hector read this letter. The Whitaker Ministry had been replaced by the Atkinson Ministry.

**66. Farmer to Hector, 31-08-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/13

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1883

My dear Hector

I received your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> by the last mail, and as the "*Ionic*" was advertised to sail on the 20<sup>th</sup> September, I lost no time in arranging for your sisters passage, which I am very glad to say is secured, and the deposit, £31-10- (half passage money paid). You ask me to draw against you for the amount, but I shall not do so. You can remit when convenient.

Miss Hector<sup>15</sup> will no doubt write all particulars to you herself. She proposed to pay for her passage, but as you requested me to do so, I wrote to her that I was to pay it at your request and that she could settle with you in New Zealand. I thought it better that she did not know that you had presented her with a passage until you told her yourself.

We are all staying at Kingoak, St. Andrews with my brother, and will return to London in a fortnight from now, so that we shall be there in good time to see your sister<sup>16</sup>. Mrs Farmer asked her to come and stay with us, but she says that Mr & Mrs Farquharson are going to London with her, and they will take lodgings. However, we will see them while there. Mrs Farmer will be able to get the things at the Haymarket Store for Mrs Hector, and have them put on board the "*Ionic*" as your sisters luggage. Her own luggage will probably be under what is allowed.

Harvest is now commenced in Fife, and so far the weather is favourable. Wheat will be under an average crop but oats and barley will be considerably over an average crop. Potatoes are pretty good, but turnips very poor, owing to a severe drought in June. This kept them a month late, and that the last growing month of the year.

I thank you for the Wellington papers. Political events seem to be progressing along "as per usual". I am glad to see that there is no prospect of a Grey-Macandrew party. Grey keeps on playing the ultra-democratic tune whenever he gets an opportunity. So long as he does so by himself, little harm will come of it.

We are all enjoying the bracing air of the North Sea. Living out of doors, and sea bathing, has done them all much good. Mrs Farmer is again quite well.

With my kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

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<sup>15</sup> James Hector's younger sister, Margaret.

<sup>16</sup> Martha Farquarson.

**67. Farmer to Hector, 1-10-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/14

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

October 1<sup>st</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I have received your letters of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> July, inclosing "First & Second" of a Bank draft for £25 at 30 days sight, on a/c, with best thanks. In a former letter you asked me to draw against you for the amount of your sisters passage money, but I prefer that you should remit at your convenience.

I inclose your account to date, which shows a balance in my favour of £68-12-6. Your sister asked me to insure her luggage at £50, and I insured yours at £30. Total £80-0-0. I am in hopes that the "*Ionic*" may have escaped the severe gales which we had during the whole of last week. She left Plymouth on Saturday, in fine weather, and the gale began in London on Monday morning. I fear that Miss Hector is very ill, and I hope that the voyage and change of climate may do her much good. We are all so glad that she got a good start, and hope that she was clear of the Bay of Biscay before the gale reached. I trust that all the arrangements are satisfactory to you.

We returned to London about the middle of last month, and are again settled down for the winter, "as per usual". I am glad to say that Julia returned perfectly strong and well.

I am sorry to see that political events are not running smoothly in New Zealand. By telegraph, Whitaker appears to have resigned, and Atkinson "reigns in his stead"<sup>17</sup>. I think this a misfortune for the Colony at the present time. Atkinson's political creed, is, in the first place, to retain power. I think he stated this in the House last Session. A very dangerous opinion for a Minister to hold.

I fear that a great deal of damage to come has been caused by last weeks wet weather, in the North of England, and throughout Scotland. This is a fine dry day here, and the barometer rising, and I am in hopes that the bad weather has passed over. October may now be a fine dry month. I only hope it may be. It is of the greatest importance that the Autumn wheat should be all sown by the middle of November, so that it may get a start before the frost becomes severe.

Julia wrote to Mrs Hector by the "*Ionic*", and will have written all domestic news.

With kind regards to you all.

Every sincerely yours  
James Farmer

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<sup>17</sup> The Atkinson Ministry (25 September 1883 to 16 August 1884).

[illegible]

potato growing had arrived, and this insect is never heard of now.

We heard of the "*Ionic*" at the Cape, and I hope that your sister is having a pleasant passage, and will very soon be in Wellington. I hope that the change of climate will restore her to health. We thought her looking very ill, and the only hope was change.

The frozen meat trade should benefit New Zealand. I only hope that a supply may be kept up to keep the steamers employed. 30,000 fat sheep a month is a large addition to the demand, with increased consumption in the Colony. Frozen beef has not yet been a success. It may be so in time. All meat should be naturally cold a day before freezing, and there should not be the slightest taint. The carcass of a sheep is sooner brought into that condition than a quarter of beef. A cold chamber of dry air, for a time, would improve the condition of all meat before freezing. You should impress that upon the various "Frozen Meat Companies".

We are all quite well, and everything going on with us "as per usual".

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, N.Z.

P.S. Mrs Farmer will write to Mrs Hector. J.F.

**69. Farmer to Hector, 6-12-1883**

Hocken MS-443-3/21/16

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
December 6<sup>th</sup> 1883

My dear Hector

I duly received your October letter, and also some papers, for which accept my best thanks. Your letter was very short and written in a hurry and contained no news. You were about starting on a trip to the North. You are always on the move.

The arrival of the "*Ionic*" was telegraphed some time ago, and I hope that your sister arrived at Wellington "all well". I am in hopes that the voyage may have done her much good.

I am sorry to tell you that Julia is again laid up with one of those periodical ailments from which she has so frequently been ill during the last year. She has been confined to her room for the last fortnight. I am in hopes that she will be all right again in a few days, but it will take some time to get her strength back. All the others are quite well.

You will be surprised to hear that I have become a Fife Laird. I have bought a small estate near St. Andrews and I think you know the place. The "Rock & Spindle", being situated at the sea boundary of the property. Kinkell Castle stood on the cliff just over the "Rock & Spindle". The castle has disappeared long ago, but the foundations can still be traced, and subterranean passages or caves still exist which led from the Beach to the Castle. I have therefore got a property with a sort of historical interest.

My reason for buying land in this country, was to get Alex<sup>r</sup> well trained as a farmer, under my brother Robert's instructions. Kinkell adjoins Robert's property, and Alex<sup>r</sup> is now there. I only recently discovered that Alex<sup>r</sup> was bent upon being a farmer, and to remain in this country, and as the property I bought, was advertised for sale by "public -----" I quickly decided to purchase. Another opportunity of getting land so favourably situated for the purpose I had in view was never likely to arise again in my lifetime.

With all our kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**70. Farmer to Hector, 30-01-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/1

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
January 30<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

I duly received your short letter of 8<sup>th</sup> December, and we were all very glad to hear such satisfactory accounts of your sister. I hope that by the end of your summer she may be quite well.

You need not trouble yourself about not having sent a remittance. It will come in good time.

What splendid passages the steamers are making to New Zealand. Six weeks now seems to be an ordinary voyage. I hope that a supply of suitable sheep for the London Market may be kept up. Breeders will require to study what is required. Merino sheep are not suitable and Lincoln's are generally too fat. Half breeds fetch the highest price per pound but it is a difficult matter to keep a flock of sheep at that grade. The produce of half-breeds are uncertain, and breeders find it better to use pure breed makes with every

description of stock, so that only one satisfactory half bred crop can be obtained. It will require much skill to breed a type of which shall give a valuable fleece, and at the same time a carcass which will suit the London Market. A fortune is in store for such a breeder.

I am still hoping for success in the "Ross" and "Humphrey's Gully" Mines. Have you any reliable information? The newspaper "Reports" are so often framed for Stock Exchange purposes, that it is difficult to know what to believe. Dividends should be soon at hand if they are ever coming? Dr Campbell never gives an opinion, but lets me gather what information I can get elsewhere.

We have had a very mild and dry winter till about ten days ago, when we had a very severe gale and a great deal of rain, and on Saturday last we had one of the most severe gales we have had for years. At Edinburgh the barometer fell to 27-466 and Robert writes that at Kingoak it fell to 27 6/10 . Telegraphic wires were so much damaged, that there was only one wire left between London and Edinburgh, and no telegraphic news had been received from the West Highlands up till this morning. It is again quite mild, and too warm for this season. We have had no frost in London this season, and the thermometer has frequently been 60<sup>0</sup> during the day in the shade, and seldom under 40<sup>0</sup> during the night all the winter. During the gales, it was quite warm.

Alex<sup>r</sup> enjoys his new mode of life, and he is much stronger with out of door occupation. I am in hopes that he will become a successful farmer.

I am sorry to say that Julia has not been well for the last few months. She is now much better, but such perpetual pulling down has left her very weak. I fancy it is the approaching "change of life", and she may have excellent health after she gets over those frequent ailments.

With our best regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.



**71. Farmer to Hector, 24-03-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/2

Brownhills, St Andrews,  
Fife.  
March 24<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

You will see a new address on this paper, but Mrs Farmer and I are only here for a month, which will be up by the end of next week, when we return to London. I shall now make frequent visits to this part of the world. It will take some time for Alex<sup>r</sup> to get a knowledge of the working of a farm. So far, everything has gone smoothly and satisfactorily and Alex<sup>r</sup> likes his new mode of life, and is a most willing pupil in the art of farming.

I duly received your draft for £70- by the Brindisi mail, with duplicate by San Francisco. This will just about square our account. I shall send you a memorandum from London. I have not got your account here.

We are in the midst of a building operation here. I am having some alterations, and addition to the house, and this will take the greater part of the summer, but the old part of the house will be ready for us by the end of July. At present the mess in the house is something terrible to behold. Masons are at work, cutting out several new windows and pulling down partitions. When finished, the house will be comfortable and convenient. A more elegant house might have been created, but the old walls were too good to be sacrificed, and we are adding a new drawing room and dining room.

Winifred Campbell has arrived. Her engagement with Dr. Collins seems to be broken off, and she has been sent to England to be out of the way for a time. It seems to have been all done in a hurry.

I hope that your sister is improved in health. You will be able to judge if the climate of Wellington will suit her.

Do you happen to know anything of the "Ross" and "Humphrey's Gully" Mines? The development of those mines seem to have been a much more difficult affair than was originally expected.

Julia joins me in kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**72. Farmer to Hector, 20-05-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/7

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
May 20<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

Accept my best thanks for the trouble you have taken in the matter of "Humphrey's Gully", and the "Ross" mines. The "Report" you give of the former is splendid, and the quantity of gravel to get washed down into the sea seems more like the work of generations than that of a few years. I should like to see sluicing operations going on. I have read accounts of large tracts of fertile country being covered up and rendered worthless, in a very few years, by sluicing operations in America. However, there seems to be no such risk at "Humphrey's Gully" as the whole terrace will be washed into the sea. In a few months I hope to hear of favourable results from sluicing. In the meantime you have raised my hopes of getting excellent dividends, even although the greater part of the gold is washed away. All the light particles will be lost.

I am now on another visit to Brownhills, and am glad to say that the farm work is all progressing satisfactorily. Alex<sup>r</sup> is very happy, and likes the occupation. I am adding to the house, and the mess of masons rubbish is something terrible while living in the other part of the house. All the additions and alterations will be finished in a couple of months. We are all coming here in August for the summer holidays.

I am very glad to have work other than the Vestry, and I like farming.

I think my remarks about the band of sheep, as dressed up in holiday attire in the "New Zealand Times" is first rate. There is a certain market in this country for all surplus mutton, and at a paying price if suitable meat is sent in good condition, but it will never answer to send home inferior meat.

I hope that your sister is still keeping pretty well, and that all the others are quite well. You seem to be always on the move. Have you ever tried the Camera? I expected to have seen a specimen picture.

Winifred is now in Edinburgh with her Aunt. I hear that Dr Collins is on his way home. It may be with the prospect of a meeting. I believe the engagement was completely broken off.

With kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington, New Zealand

**73. Farmer to Hector, 18-06-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/11

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
June 18<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> April inclosing several accounts for me to pay for you. I have paid Stanfords of £4-6-6, and the Mineralogical Society, £3-3-0, and send you the receipted accounts. As regards the Darwin Memorial Fund claim, I paid this (£3-3-0), at your request on the 6<sup>th</sup> August last, and I believe sent you the receipt. It was duly charged in the account which I sent to you at the end of last year.

I congratulate you on the arrival of another daughter, and we were glad to hear that Mrs Hector was again all right. In proof, Julia had a nice cheerful letter from her. May she long continue well.

I see that the N.Z. Ministry have had an adverse vote<sup>18</sup>, and that Parliament was about to be dissolved. I am not surprised at this news. The general depression throughout the country was a sure stepping stone for the Opposition to obtain a "want of confidence" vote. I hope that Grey will not again become Prime Minister. He will either be at the head, or left out in the cold. I shall anxiously look for the result of the Elections. I never liked Atkinson as a Minister. He is sadly wanting in "tact", and will never become a great leader of men.

We have been having a very dry winter and spring, and the spring and early summer have been cold and very little sunshine. The wind is generally in the East, and I am afraid that the crops will be light. Rain is now much wanted all over the country. The season has been more favourable in Scotland than in the South of England.

Julia will write all domestic news to Mrs Hector. Give her my kind regards.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington.

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<sup>18</sup> The Atkinson Ministry was dissolved on 16 August 1884. After a period of uncertainty the Stout-Vogel Ministry took over on 3 September 1884, and lasted for the next three years.

**74. Farmer to Hector, 11-08-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/14

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

August 11<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

I am writing this at Brownhills, St Andrews, but before leaving London I received your letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> June and I ordered the Lantern & which you asked me to get for you, and it has been delivered to the New Zealand Shipping Co to be forwarded by their first steamer, I think the "*Doriec*". I have just got the account £6-1-6, and will send a cheque in payment thereof. Freight will be an additional charge. I asked Mr Medland to pay freight, and send me a receipt for the parcel, but the Shipping Co would not accept payment or give a Parcels receipt till a few days before the departure of the steamer. I shall pay freight when I go to London, and I hope you will get delivery of the package without a receipt. It is addressed to you.

We are occupying the old part of the house here, and it is in every respect so comfortable as compared to the usual lodging houses where we have generally spent the holidays. When the new part is finished it will be a most comfortable house. Julia and the children are charmed with it.

Petone will now be a beautiful spot. The plants which you had taken so much care in planting will now be a great addition to the beauty of the place. I hope you are all in better health than you were in Wellington.

This place suits all my family, and it adds so much to the enjoyment of the place, having good health.

I see that the N.Z. Ministry have resigned in consequence of the new elections. I fear another loan will be the result. A loan seems to be an absolute necessity to a successful Ministry in New Zealand. I never liked Mr Atkinson as Prime Minister. His manners are bad in every way. He never seemed to have tact to be a leader of men.

Julia will write all domestic news to Mrs Hector.

There is no word of dividends from the "Ross", or "Humphrey's Gully" mines yet, but I hope we long to hear of success.

I hope your sister is better.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**75. Farmer to Hector, 10-09-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/16

Brownhills, St Andrews

Fife

September 10<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

I hope you will have no trouble in getting the case per "*Doric*". The New Zealand Shipping Co. would not give Mr Medland a receipt for the case when he delivered it, but told him to come back for the receipt the day before the "*Doric*" left. This he could not do, and so no receipt has been given, and no freight or charges paid.

I inclose you the account for the contents of the case.

We have been here for more than a month, and shall probably stay till the end of October. We had a visit from your niece Miss Farquharson, along with the Huddles, with whom she was staying.

We are in the midst of harvest, and the crops are excellent. Another fortnight of good weather will be sufficient to secure all the corn. I hope we may have it.

I am afraid that the "latest edition" of the New Zealand new Ministry<sup>19</sup> means another large loan. Within a month you have had three new sets of Ministers. I presume that the present government will have a Majority pledge to support them before accepting office.

I am very glad to say that we are all quite well, and enjoying our new home in the country.

I hope that you are all quite well.

With kindest regards to you all.

Ever yours sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

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<sup>19</sup> The Stout-Vogel Ministry (3 September 1884 to 8 October 1887)

**76. Farmer to Hector, 7-10-1884**

Hocken MS-443-3/22/17

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
October 7<sup>th</sup> 1884

My dear Hector

I hope that you have had no trouble in getting possession of the Magic Lantern. I sent you the "Parcel's receipt", via Suez, as soon as I got it, but the steamer with the box would reach Wellington a few weeks earlier. The box being addressed to you, and as you are known in Wellington, a "decent sort of chap", I am in hopes that you will have got it without much trouble.

New Zealand politics seem to be in a sad mess. You have had three Ministries in a fortnight, and I fear that a large addition to the N.Z. debt will be the result. With Universal Suffrage, and the majority of the electors (who have nothing to loose,) wanting a "big wage", no Ministry can remain in power unless they are prepared to borrow, in order that wages may be kept up to such a rate as will satisfy the working classes. It is unfortunate for the Colony that it is so.

Although this is written on 6 P.G. Paper, we are all at Brownhills, and will not return to London till the end of this month. I shall probably remain a fortnight later. In fact till all the Martimas accounts are -----.

Julia is writing by this mail to Mrs Hector, and will have written all domestic news, so I need not repeat what has already been written.

I am glad to say that everything is going on satisfactorily on the farm. We have had an excellent crop, and all well secured.

With kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**77. Farmer to Hector, 1-01-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/2

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
January 1<sup>st</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I wish you all a happy and bright New Year, in which all our family join.

I received your letter of Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> and I am glad to see that the Magic Lantern had been delivered, and is satisfactory. I was afraid that you might have some trouble for want of a "Parcels receipt". However, I am glad to hear you got it.

I thank you for the Geological and the Meteorological Reports. Both are most interesting. What a vast amount of mineral wealth New Zealand contains. I am glad to see such large coal fields. With such abundance of Coal and iron the ultimate result will be great success. It is all a question of time, - capital and energy, properly directed.

I inclose your account with me to end of 1884, which I hope you will find correct up to date. I need not tell you how willing I am to attend to all your instructions in little matters in London.

I fear that there is something seriously the matter with Mrs Hector. We cannot find her address. A few weeks ago a parcel was left here addressed thus "Will Mrs Farmer kindly take care of this and send it to Dr Hector when convenient". Last night I opened the parcel, and found it to contain a Silver Tea Pot, Sugar basin, and cream jug. The above had been written on the label was in Mrs Hectors writing but no further instructions. Has she written to you; or do you know anything about it? A long time ago, Mrs Hector told me that she intended that you should get her silver Tea pot & & as they had belonged to your father, and had been bought by her husband, at the sale of your father's effects. At first she told me that she intended to send them then, but she afterwards changed her mind, and said that she would keep them during her lifetime. Before sending the things to you, I should like to have more definite instructions regarding them. However unless we can find Mrs Hector during the next few weeks, I shall run the risk of sending the articles to you.

With united kindest regards

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

Dr. Hector, Wellington, N. Z. in				account with James Farmer				6s
1884				1884				
Jan. 1	To Balance brought forward	£	68	12	4	March 13	By Bank draft	£ 70 - -
" 8	" Zoological Society (publication)		1	1	-	Dec. 31	" Balance	14 19 7
June 16	" E. Stanford ap.		4	6	6			
"	" Mineralogical Society, in <u>ft</u>		3	3	-			
Aug. 11	" Medland ap. lantern s.d.		6	1	6			
Sept. 11	" do - freight do -		1	15	3			
		£	84	19	7			£ 84 19 7
	To Balance brought down	£	14	19	7			
	December 31 <sup>st</sup> 1884							
	James Farmer							

## 78. Farmer to Hector, 28-01-1885

Hocken MS-443-3/23/3

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
January 28<sup>th</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

In my last letter to you I mentioned that a Silver Tea Pot, Sugar basin, and Cream jug had been left here, and addressed to be forwarded to you when convenient. Although we knew the hand writing to be that of Mrs Hector, I did not like to do anything till we had more definite instructions. We have now had a letter from Mrs Hector, asking me to send the articles to you. I have sent the articles to Elkington to do some necessary repairs and to pack and ship the case to you, and it will probably be sent of in about a fortnight from now by steamer. I think by the "*Ruapehu*" advertised to sail on Feb. 12. You may therefore expect the case soon after you get this.

I fear that Mrs Hector's mind was affected for a time. All that we could hear of her was, that she was not allowed to see anyone, and that she was somewhere in Chelsea. She wrote last week from Scarborough, and she writes that she is ordered to keep away from all excitement, for the present. I hope she may soon be quite well.



I continue to pay your Zoological Society subscription for publications, and I hope you always receive them. They are sent to the office of the Agent General.

The Saturday Popular Concerts are now in ‘full swing’, and are as charming as ever, and we still retain the four stalls we had when you were here. We have also the three stalls at the Albert Hall. These concerts are always of high class, and besides the pleasure they are highly instructive to the “bairns”.

Our family at home is now of small dimensions. Alex<sup>r</sup>, Freda, and Douglas are in Fife, and Malcolm is at Westgate. You may therefore imagine that our household is very quiet as compared to the bustle you have seen. You may remember when 13 always sat down to breakfast.

Colonial news are not very charming. Last years wheat crop in the south of New Zealand was much damaged by wet, and the English price being very low, even for the best wheat, the value of damaged cargoes has been very low indeed, and must have resulted in serious loss to the producers. There is no likelihood of wheat ever again being worth more than 40/- a quarter. I doubt if it can be sent from New Zealand at that price, with profit to the producers and shippers?

There is to be an Exhibition of Colonial products at South Kensington in 1886. If you are to come in charge of New Zealand Exhibits, you will, I hope take up your quarters at 6, P.G. I need not tell you how delighted we should all be to see you and Mrs Hector back again in your old quarters. I mention this, this early, in case you may be thinking of the possibility of coming. The Government ought to appoint me a N.Z. Commissioner for the Colonial Exhibition of 1886. I am one of the guarantors for those Exhibitions at South Kensington, but if the Government appoint other N.Z. Colonists, Commissioners, and leave me out, I shall decline to become one the sureties against loss. Guarantors for £50,000, has to be found to enable the preparations to be made.

All join in kind regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**79. Farmer to Hector, 12-02-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/5

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
February 12<sup>th</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

Only a line to say that the Silver Tea Pot, Sugar Basin, and Cream Jug, from Mrs Hector, are shipped per "*Ruapehu*", and I hope that they will arrive "safe and sound". The Tea Pot was all out of shape and sadly in want of repair, and I thought it better to have every article put in good repair before sending them out, and I have had them done up by Elkington, and am assured that they are now equal to new. I inclose "Parcels receipt" for box, and will pay cost and charge when I get the account from Elkington.

Mrs Hector is at Scarborough, and I fear in very poor health.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**80. Farmer to Hector, 24-02-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/7

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
February 24<sup>th</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I received your letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> January by last San Francisco Mail, and thank you for all your kind wishes for the New Year. I also thank you for the papers and "Reports" you sent me. You seem always hard at work, and the more you do, the more you are in demand for additional work. However you have the satisfaction of placing your "mark" on the foundation stone of the Colony. In old age you will look back with pride on your work. Unfortunately, that is about all the fruit you will reap. The "plums" fall into others baskets while you are doing hard Colonial work. It has always been so.

Before you get this letter, I hope you will have received the Silver Tea set. The box containing the Articles was shipped in the "*Ruapehu*".

I am very glad to say that we are all quite well. The winter in London has been

unusually mild. We have had no snow, and the frost has never been severe enough to freeze the Serpentine all over. In the North there has been a good deal of snow in some parts. But in the East of Fife there has been very little snow, and the frost has not been severe. There has been very little hindrance to farm work all the winter. I am going to Fife about the middle of next month. I want to be there during the spring seed time, so as to see that Alex<sup>r</sup> thoroughly understands the necessary work to be done at that most important season. After this year, I hope he may not require "leading strings".

Julia received Mrs Hectors letter inclosing photographs of your two boys. We were very glad to see how much stronger Douglas is looking. He now appears to be quite robust. I hope all the others are well. Education will now be your trouble. So many schools are mainly kept as a commercial speculation without the slightest regard to efficient teaching. I believe that there is quite as much dishonesty in the profession of teaching as there is in the adulteration of food. It is generally only the clever boys that are well taught, even in the great public schools.

I am in hopes that the depression in the Colony is passing away. A good crop, if well secured, will be a great help. There is no prospect of a high price for wheat at present, but if the quality is good, a much higher price will be got than was obtained last year.

Mrs Farmer will write to Mrs Hector by a next direct steamer. She now joins me in kind regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**81. Farmer to Hector, 22-04-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/10

Brownhills, St Andrews

Fife

April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I congratulate you on your having become Chancellor of the University of New Zealand, and I am sure that no better appointment could have been made, and long may you enjoy the honourable position.

I have been here for a month and intend returning to London next week. I came here during seed time to see that Alex<sup>r</sup> understands all about the work. We have been having one of the best seasons for working the land, which I have ever seen, and all the seed has been put in the ground in excellent condition. We have had dry frosty weather since the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, till about a week ago, and we are now having moist weather and fairly warm for the season. Vegetation is a fortnight later than it was last year at this date, but such weather as we are now having will soon bring things forward. To me farming is most genial employment, and it is perhaps, because I know very little about anything else, but from whatever cause, it gives me great pleasure and I see no reason why I should not indulge in it, even although not very profitable.

You always seem to be overwhelmed with work of a more scientific character than mine, and no doubt of an equally pleasurable finding.

Your grounds at Petone will now be a great source of pleasure, and no doubt are much changed since I saw them. Your climate is so superior to ours in bringing things forward. It takes a generation here to grow a tree twenty feet high.

I do not count this as a letter. It is only a hurried note. I had set apart the morning to write N.Z. letters, and was hindered.

With kindest regards to you all.

James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

Wellington

New Zealand

**82. Farmer to Hector, 18-06-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/13

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of April 25<sup>th</sup>, and am glad to hear that you had the Silver Tea Pot & delivered in good condition. The duty, £6-15-0 seems very high. With Elkington's amount for repairs, and shipping charges added, it will cost you a considerable proportion of its intrinsic value.

I gave Stanford the order to send you binding covers, and the catalogue you wanted, and they will probably be sent by this mail.

You seem to have been making great preparations for the reception of a stray Russian Cruiser, but I am in hopes that you will have no such unwelcome visitor at present. I doubt if Russia would have sent a war vessel so far from home. The risk of failure would be very great, and the want of a certain coal supply would, I think, prevent any hostile vessel approaching Australia. However, it is better as matters have been arranged. I shall be glad when the frontier line is finally settled.

We are now having fine summer weather, and I think, fair harvest prospects. May was very cold, and in consequence, harvest will be a fortnight later than last year, and I don't think the crops will be as good. The quality of the grain depends upon the amount of sunshine during the next three months.

We are all quite well, and by the end of next month will go to Fife for the holidays. We generally move in the same "groove".

There is no sign of dividends from either the "Ross" or "Humphrey's Gully Mines", and I doubt if the "Ross" will ever be a successful concern. They seem unable to find the rich layers of gold which had been so successfully worked before, and the surface sluicing does not appear to give satisfactory results.

I am in hopes that your opinion of "Humphrey's Gully" will turn out correct. They should, by this time, be ready to commence sluicing. I shall await the result of the first cleaning up with considerable anxiety.

All join in kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.

Wellington

New Zealand

**83. Farmer to Hector, 1-07-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/14

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
July 1<sup>st</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter inclosing Bank draft for £15- with best thanks. You need not feel troubled about not having sent earlier. It is all in good time. I also thank you for the paper read by the Governor on the defences of New Zealand. You seem to have been making great preparations for defence all over the Colony. I hope you may never have to fire a gun in the defence of the Colony. War would be a terrible calamity for the Colonies. Three months ago it looked very like war with Russia and it does not yet look like a final settlement of the matter in dispute. Any attempt by Russia to occupy H---- will be the beginning of a terrible struggle for the "Upper Hand".

In a month from now we will be all off to Brownhills. It makes a delightful change, and especially so, seeing that we do not require to book for lodgings, and having all our garden and dairy produce on the spot! I should add eggs and chickens. And besides all the above, an unlimited supply of fresh air from the North Sea.

Up till now, this has not been such a favourable season, for the crops as last year was. The weather has been too cold, and too little rain. Harvest, from present prospects will be a fortnight later than last year, and a late harvest generally means a difficult crop. However, it is still too soon to form a correct judgment. A good month would make a great difference on the prospects of the crop. The temperature for June has been several degrees under that of last year. The rearing and feeding of cattle and sheep is now the chief source of profit for farmers in this country, and wheat is only grown for the straw for bedding. No litter makes such good bedding for stock as wheat straw. Very little wheat is grown in Scotland. Under 70,000 acres a year, and consequently the price of wheat is a matter of small importance to farmers in Scotland.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well.

All join in kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**84. Farmer to Hector, 7-10-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/15

Brownhills, St Andrews,

Fife

October 7<sup>th</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I owe you several letters, and I fear the reason is chiefly because you seldom give me anything to do, and partly, because we have too many mail days. When we only depended on the San Francisco Mail, a day was set apart for letter writing, and it was done.

Harvest is now pretty well finished, and the corn secured, and I fear with disappointing results. The season has been peculiar. The seed was well got in, but the spring months were bleak, and the nights were frequently frosty up till the middle of June. Afterwards, little or no rain fell till the second week of August. Consequently, the crops are generally light, and the harvest was about ten days later than last year. September has been a bad harvest month. Rain fell nearly every day all the month, and the weather cold and boisterous in the extreme. Turnips, owing to the drought, will be little over half a crop throughout the country. Our turnips are excellent, and we have a good crop, (all round) and pretty well saved. Last year our crop was excellent. This year, I should say a fair average. I thoroughly enjoy a farming life, which makes up for the worries of unfavourable weather, at times. I am glad to say that we are all quite well. This is a splendid climate for the autumn holidays. We have the pure North Sea air.

Your sister<sup>20</sup> was out here one day, and we thought her looking thin, but she said she was quite well.

I had expected you home for the Colonial Exhibition, and I cannot conceive why the government have appointed a man, who in no respect whatever, is worthy of the appointment, and I am very sorry that it has been made. The appointment is bad in every way from my point of view. The Colonial Exhibition is likely to be a great success, and a Colonial Man of the First Class ought to have been sent from New Zealand.

I hope that you are all quite well. Julia asks me to say that she will write to Mrs Hector when she returns to London. She will leave this about the end of this month. I shall stay here till about the end of November.

All join me in kindest regards to your household.

Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer

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<sup>20</sup> Either Margaret Hector or Martha Farquarson.

**85. Farmer to Hector, 31-12-1885**

Hocken MS-443-3/23/17

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
December 31<sup>st</sup> 1885

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of Nov 18<sup>th</sup>, inclosing a packet for Mr Warrington-Smyth, which I will give him tomorrow morning, as a New Years card from you. I shall ask him for a small specimen for Professor Dewar, who takes very great interest in minerals.

“As per usual”, you seem hard at work. I wish you had been coming home for the Exhibition. It would have been a rest for you, as well as giving pleasure. We should be so glad to see you. I am glad to hear that you are all well. Your elder children will soon be “grown up”.

I am very glad to say that we are all quite well. Douglas is the only one absent. Alex<sup>r</sup> and Edith arrived from Fife this morning. Douglas only has a few holidays now, and he did not care to take so long a journey for a week.

We are having mild and damp weather. It has tried to freeze on several occasions, but it generally rains during the afternoons. The weather in Scotland has been very boisterous for about a week, and in the North a good deal of snow fell yesterday, and the day before, but when Alex<sup>r</sup> left Fife, yesterday, it was thawing rapidly, under the influence of a Westerly gale.

I fear that there is great depression throughout New Zealand at present. The low price of all Colonial produce leaves no margin for profit. Trade is bad everywhere, and there seems no bright spark to be seen anywhere. All producers tell the same tale. The cost of production is too great. As between the producers and consumer the middlemen get all the profit.

I send your annual account. It has dwindled down to small dimensions!

All join in wishing you and your family circle a bright and Happy New Year.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand



Dr. Hector, Wellington N.Z.

in account with James Farmer

62

1885

Jan. 1	To balance brought forward	£ 14 19 7
2	- Zoological Society	1 1 -
July 3	- Elkington & Co. - 24 Spring Plates	4 2 -
		£ 20 2 7

1885

June 22	By Bank Draft	£ 15 - -
Dec. 31	- Balance	5 2 7
		£ 20 2 7

To Balance brought down £ 5 2 7

December 31<sup>st</sup> 1885

James Farmer

# 86. Farmer to Hector, 27-01-1886

Hocken MS-443-3/24/1

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
January 27<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

More than a year ago, Mrs Hector left a box containing books, which she said were intended for you, but they were not to be sent or written about, until she had decided something about them. The books seem to be the original edition of Sir Walter Scott's Novels, and Mrs Hector having written to you to ask if you would go to the expense of fresh binding, and what description, and as you have never replied to her on the subject, she has asked me to find out from you, if you would have the books sent as they are, or would you go to the expense of having them re-bound. If the latter, say what kind of binding you would prefer.

I have authorized a small expenditure on your account. It is to repair the frame, and clean a portrait of Dr Barclay. I met Mrs Hector yesterday, and she told me that you would like to present the picture to the Scottish National Gallery, but that the frame was much broken, and the picture in a very dirty state, and that unless you would go to the expense of repairs, she could not send it. I dont think it will cost beyond £2 or £3. Seeing that the picture runs considerable risk of loss or damage in a lodging house, I thought it better to agree pay the cost, without referring the matter to you. Mrs Hector had the picture sent from Moffat, where it had been stored, and it will now be repaired and sent to Edinburgh. I hope you approve.

I fear that Mrs Hector is often in want of “ready cash”, or she would have had the picture put right at her own cost. She gives far too much in parish work and what that sort of thing leads to for her means. When a Clergyman gets hold of a woman with a tender heart, he generally manages to get her last penny. I fear that this is Mrs Hector’s position.

Wishing you all a bright and happy New Year.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

**87. Farmer to Hector, 25-02-1886**  
Hocken MS-443-3/24/2

6, Porchester Gate, Hyde Park  
February 25<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

Since I wrote to you last, I have seen the portrait of Dr Barclay and I advised Mrs Hector that she had better communicate with the Secretary of the National Gallery, Edinburgh, before having anything done to the picture, with the result that it had better be sent in its present state. I have not heard whether the picture has been sent.

All your friends here, regret that you are not coming to represent New Zealand at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. It would be your proper place, after all you have done. I am in hopes that the Exhibition will be a great success. India will have a magnificent display. They have so much that is beautiful to look at. I hope that New Zealand will have a fair display of things of more recent development than India.

We have had a very severe winter, and it is said that more snow has fallen this winter than in any since 1860. We are now having a severe frost, and as there is no wind, have had it foggy in London for the last fortnight, with no sunshine. In the country it has been bright sunshine, except during snow showers, which have been frequent. If the weather does not change very soon, then spring will be very late. We are promised two bright Comets in April, which will probably warm the earth. But at present everything looks cold and bleak.

New Zealand is passing through a period of great depression. All Colonial produce has low value. I think lower than it has ever been before, and so far as one can judge, there is no bright prospect in the immediate future. Trade is bad all over the world.

The workmen in this country will not work at wages to leave a profit to enable the

manufacturers to compete in the worlds markets, and in consequence a very large number of foreign workmen are employed in this country. It is said that a quarter of the workers, confectioners, tailors, and fancy goods makers are German, and a large proportion of the Clerks in Mercantile houses are also foreign. No wonder that "John Bull" feels himself being pushed aside. Contractors import broken road metal to mend our roads and streets from Belgium in large quantities. The iron girders for the large warehouses in London are, as a rule, imported from Belgium. We admit goods duty free from all parts of the world, but are met by hostile tariffs whenever we send our goods. Free trade only exists in name. It is all one sided, and against this country.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well.

All join in kind regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**88. Farmer to Hector, 24-03-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/4

Brownhills  
St. Andrews  
Fife  
March 24<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I received your end of January letter by last San Francisco mail, inclosing a small account of Stanford's, which I paid before leaving London.

We have now got, (I hope.) to the end of a very severe winter. It has been a perpetual succession of severe snow storms and hard frost. Consequently, all farm work is far behind, and the spring very late. No corn will be sown, or potatoes planted this month, and generally the greater part is done by the end of the first week of April. It has been a sad winter for work people who depend upon out of doors work. In fact, they are almost starved to death. They are much worse off in large towns. In London it has been something terrible. The suffering poor had neither enough food or fuel, and only half clad. It is hardly possible to conceive the misery endured by hundreds of thousands of starving

people during the past winter. In big towns they are out of sight, but in the country they are seen and cared for by some one. To give you an idea of the winter, I am having some buildings done, and up till Monday last the masons have only been able to work 9 days since Christmas. In days gone by, masons were all hand loom weavers and were never idle by comparison. They have now nothing to fall back on, and besides, they are generally all bound by Trades Union rules, which prevents a skilful workman earning more than an average rate of wages. They are not allowed to make up for lost time. Although all contract work, they all stop work at five o'clock, to the minute.

I have heard, (by telegram,) a grand account of the "Ross" mine. I hope it is all true. It seems to have been a very dry summer on the West Coast, and they have been unable to do much sluicing at "Humphrey's Gully" through want of water. A very much larger supply of water must be bought, or the mine will be a failure. So far, the results have been poor, and disappointing.

With kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**89. Farmer to Hector, 22-04-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/5

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I received your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> February yesterday. It must have been delayed, as I had March letters ten days ago. I am glad to hear that you are all well. I only wish that you had been coming home to the Exhibition. It was your proper place. However, it cannot be helped.

I am sorry to hear that you have such a large number of shares in the New Zealand Shipping Co. It was a mistake their building such expensive steamers. When they decided to try steamers, they could have hired all that they required, as they did at the first. There are now thousands of fine steamers laid up, because it does not pay to run them. None of the Atlantic Steam shipping Companies are paying dividends.

I am in hopes that the West Coast gold mines are yet going to be a success. The "Ross" is reported to have come upon a layer of very rich stuff. I only hope the news may be true. Paying "calls" is a great drain upon ones reserves, and I shall be very pleased to get dividends instead.

I am still in Fife, and hope to return to London next week.

With kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**90. Farmer to Hector, 20-05-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/7

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
May 20<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of March 29<sup>th</sup>, announcing the birth of another daughter<sup>21</sup>. I hope that Mrs Hector is again quite well, long ere now. You will have to add a few more bedrooms to Petone if this sort of thing goes on!! However, they are the right sort. May Mrs Hector and you live to see them all well started in life.

I shall send you a box of vegetable seeds by next N.Z. direct steamer. They will then arrive in time for spring sowing. I shall get the seeds from Carter.

The Exhibition is a great success, and I spend a considerable portion of each day there. The enormous quantity of raw products from the various Colonies, and their variety are perfectly astounding. Canada has a grand display, in manufactured articles, as well as raw products, and is, by far, the most important portion of the Exhibition. New Zealand is less costly fitted up than some other courts, but the display of new products is very fine. All the elements of future greatness are there. I only wish you had been here to represent the Colony. It would have been your proper place.

We continue to hear favourable "Reports" from the "Ross", and I am in hopes that dividends will take the place of "Calls" ere long. "Humphrey's Gully" mine has only shown poor results hitherto, but they may not be getting all the gold. It is difficult to save very light gold. The great force of water rendered necessary to wash the stuff, carry's the very fine gold away.

I am very sorry that the price of all Colonial produce continues so low, and it must be hard upon many hard working settlers to make ends meet.

Julia is writing a few lines to Mrs Hector. With kind regards to all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

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<sup>21</sup> Marjory Hector (1886-1948), youngest child of James and Georgiana Hector

**91. Farmer to Hector, 4-06-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/9

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
June 4<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> April, and we were all glad to hear that Mrs Hector was again quite well.

I have sent you a box of vegetable seeds from Carter, per “*Aorangi*”, but they have not sent me a “Parcels receipt”. However, I hope that you will have no difficulty in getting the box. I send the seeds as a present, and hope they may arrive in time for spring sowing.

I paid the £2-16-0 account to Stanford on March 12<sup>th</sup>, and I paid the balance, £2-4-6, yesterday.

I shall gladly receive the £20 from Mr Callis on your account but unless he brings, or sends it, I may never have an opportunity of seeing him. I go to the Exhibition almost every day, and if, by the end of June, I have not heard from Mr Callis, I shall endeavour to find him out.

I doubt if I ever sufficiently thank you for the many publications you send me, but I now especially thank you for the “Appendix to the Statistics of New Zealand”. Each page is a complete history of the subjects it treats of.

It had escaped my memory that this was mail day, and I have only time to write a hurried letter.

With kindest regards to you all

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.

**92. Farmer to Hector, 13-07-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/12

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
July 13<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I am sorry to have to write to you that I have not heard from Mr Callis, and I don't think that he intends to pay you back the £20- which you kindly lent him. Seeing that I had not heard from him up till the end of June, I found his address in the "Anglo New Zealander", and wrote to him on the subject, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, but have had no reply. He must have had my letter, or it would have been returned to me. Since then his address has disappeared from the above paper. Had he intended to pay, he would have written to me long ere now.

You will have seen the long list of honours conferred upon our distinguished visitors connected with the Exhibition. I only wish that you had been here instead of Sir Julius von Haast. I presume that political intrigue had something to do with the appointment. The New Zealand Court is not up to the mark in the matter of decorations when compared with other Colonies, but considering that only about a third of the money has been spent on it that has been spent by some other Colonies, it is really excellent. The vast resources of the Colony are well shown, but not in such profusion, or in such elaborate cases as in other Australasian Colonies, where money seems to have been no object.

We are all going off to Fife about the end of this month, "as per usual". It makes a most delightful change. We have had a few weeks of very warm weather, which has altered the prospects of harvest. A month ago everything seemed very late, but a few weeks of bright sunshine has changed the appearance of the country rapidly. Harvest may not be late after all. I don't think the crops will be abundant. The cold and very wet spring did much damage.

You have never written instructions regarding the "Waverley Novels". Mrs Hector asked us to keep them until you wrote whether to send them as they are, or to have them rebund. I should like to hear from you what you want done.

I have again to thank you for the valuable N.Z. Publications you have kindly sent me. Also for Wellington papers.

All join in kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington N.Z.



**93. Farmer to Hector, 30-07-1886**

Hocken Ms-443-3/24/13

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
July 30<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

What a terrible eruption you have had in the Lake district<sup>22</sup>. We had the news by telegram about six weeks ago, but had no idea that it had been of such a serious character, until arrival of the San Francisco mail. It is difficult to conceive the force required to do such an amount of damage in such a short space of time. The beauty of the Lake District is destroyed for ever. It is very sad to read of the terrible sufferings of those who were in the midst of it all. Escape must have seemed to them impossible from the first.

I have never heard from Mr Callis. He knows that I have no legal power to compel him to pay, and he therefore ignores me. I wrote to him about the beginning of this month, as politely as I could, merely saying that a Mr Callis from Wellington would pay me £20 on your account, sometime in June, and that if he was the Mr Callis referred to, I should be very glad to hear from him on the subject. However, he has never replied to my letter. If he had intended to repay you, I think that he would have communicated with me long ere now. He would have informed me when it would be convenient for him to pay, if he had been unable to do so as arranged.

Julia and all our family are now at Brownhills, with the exception of Herbert, who will not get his holidays for a few weeks. I shall go North next week. I always stay behind to see the house dismantled for the autumn cleaning.

Sir Julius von Haast read a paper at the Exhibition a fortnight ago on the Geology of New Zealand, but he never mentioned the name of Dr Hector. However, you had friends there, who did you justice as far as they could. Professor Rupert Jones, spoke of you in the very highest praise, referring to you as having thrown quite a "new light on geological science".

I thanked him on your behalf for what he had said, and asked him for his card to send you, and which I inclose. Professor Warrington-Smyth also spoke of your geological work in the very highest praise.

I hope you got the seeds I sent you all right.

With kindest regards to Mrs Hector.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

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<sup>22</sup> The Tarawera eruption of 10 June 1886.

**94. Farmer to Hector, [ca Sept 1886]**  
Hocken MS-443-3/24/3

Brownhills  
St Andrews  
Fifeshire  
[ca Sep 1886]

My dear Hector

As I was leaving London for Fife, I had your letter, in which you write that I shall probably have expended some money on your account for the rebinding of Sir Walter Scotts Novels. This is the first intimation you have ever given me that you would like them rebound. As you do not say how you would like the books bound, I presume that you agree to have them "Half Bound". I had suggested this to you, after having consulted Mr D. Stott, bookseller Oxford Street on the subject. I have felt all along that until you gave me instructions regarding those books, that I must keep them. Mrs Hector told me that on no account to send them until you decided if you would go to the expense of having them re-bound. On my return to London, I shall put them in hand and send them out to you as soon as possible.

We are having a very cold and dry spring, and while it is very favourable for farm work, there is no growth whatever. Until the last few days, (when we have had westerly winds,) there has been a continuous N.E. wind for the last six weeks. The cold has been most severe. Our crops have all been sown in the most perfect conditions. I have never seen land as thoroughly well worked as it has been this season. If a "dry seed bed" is favourable to a good crop, there should be an excellent crop this year. The same description of weather has extended all over the country. Far too cold for growth, but most favourable for spring cultivation. The hill farmers are very short of feed for their sheep.

Why should one season be so unlike another? I suppose that something happens which upsets the natural laws, and then those changes of the seasons occur which makes the cultivation of the soil a matter of difficulty. Last year at seed time we were having snow and heavy rains up till the Middle of April, and no seed was well got in, and all too late.

I am out of hearing of everything relating to the Colonies up here. St. Andrews people are more connected with India. Although this is said to be a very cold part of Scotland a large number of Indian people come to St. Andrews to end their days. Good society. The Golf Links, with cheap and good education has much to do with it.

I am very glad to hear the price of wool is keeping up. Frozen mutton is too low to pay. Until trade is better in this country the price of meat will not rise. Working men, when they have high wages are the great consumers of meat, but they cannot purchase half as much as they would like to eat, at present.

I hope you are again quite well, and that Mrs Hector and the “bairns” are also well.

With kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

**95. Farmer to Hector, 7-09-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/16

Brownhills  
St. Andrews  
September 7<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

First, let me thank you for the excellent “Report”, with maps of the Lake District, which you have kindly sent me. What a “big” fire must be somewhere underneath? This has been a year of tremendous earthquakes and eruptions. At such great distances apart, that there can have been no communication between the places affected. I hope that they are now pretty well over for the present. There is a very large “safety valve” now established in New Zealand, which may keep other parts of the North Island safe for the present. What a terrible disaster had Mount Eden “burnt up”. We are up here for the holidays, but I miss the Exhibition. We have commenced harvest - later than usual by about ten days. Seed time was three weeks late, owing to a very severe winter and spring. We had a great deal of snow up till the end of March. I think the crops will be under average, generally.

Mr Callis has not paid me the £20 you advanced him, and he did not reply to the letter I wrote to him on the subject. I heard of him at the Office of the N.Z. Commissioners, and there, he was in bad report. He had applied for an appointment in the Exhibition and failing to get one, had set to work to write abusive letters about the N.Z. Court. Having no power to act, I cannot again apply to Mr Callis for payment.

Do you ever hear anything about “The Ross” or “Humphrey’s Gully” mines? I hope that the long looked for “rich wash dirt” in the “Ross” has been reached, and as they seem to have now an abundant supply of water at “Humphrey’s Gully” good results in both mines may be the result.

We are all quite well. Mrs Farmer left for London this morning with Malcolm, who is going to Eton.

I have given an introduction to you to a Mr Somerwell, of Sorn Castle, Ayrshire. He is going a long sea voyage on account of bad health, and with a view to settle there if he finds the climate and prospects suitable.

With best regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**96. Farmer to Hector, 6-10-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/20

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park  
October 6<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> August, and I also thank you for the papers. The scramble for power among N.Z. political men is only in imitation of those in this country. The leading statesmen in this country are, as a rule, well off, but in New Zealand, to some, it is "bread and butter", and that makes a great difference in the matter of patriotism. Unfortunately for New Zealand the "bread and butter" element is too much a consideration, and hence the perpetual addition to the debt.

I fear that I may not be in London before the closing of the Exhibition, and consequently unable to give you the information about your exhibits, but I can tell you this much, not only from my own observations but from those more competent to judge. Hector has been put in the "back seats". Haast is everywhere in the "front row". There can be no doubt of that fact.

The "Ross" and "Humphrey's Gully" mines are still disappointing. They are both getting a little gold, but I doubt if enough to pay expenses. I am afraid that the venture will end in failure. We always hear of rich prospects, but never realized.

Harvest is pretty well over here, but in the later parts of the country the greater part of the corn is still out, and the weather is very damp. Not much rain, but no drought to dry the corn. Last few days we have had a thick mist. As a rule, a late harvest is unfavourable.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well.

With our united kind regards  
Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington

**97. Farmer to Hector, 2-11-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/22

Brownhills  
November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I have received your letter of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the papers which you kindly sent me. I see that the Session ended "as per usual", with a big loan, and so the N.Z. "pot will be kept boiling" for the present. As usual, the loan was applied for in London, time over, and thus Sir Julius Vogel will see his way to make another loan necessary next Session. The writing big cheques with other peoples money is the chief mainstay of a Colonial Ministry.

You have more faith in Mr Callis than I have. In July, I wrote a polite note to him to say that I had been asked by you to receive £20 from him in your account. He did not reply to my letter, and he has not yet taken any notice of it. Had he written to say that he would at some future time repay you, if unable to do so now, I should have thought more highly of him. However, there the matter rests for the present.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of your sister. We had only heard of her return from New Zealand a short time ago.

We have had a month of very wet weather, and it is said that half the corn north of York is seriously damaged by wet. We had a fairly good crop considering the lateness of the season, and we had it all well secured in good time. A great deal of corn is still out in the fields, and for the last month it has rained nearly every day. Not very much rain has fallen, but it keeps on raining every day, sufficient to wet the corn.

I am unable to give you any Exhibition news. I left London early in August, and have lost the "run" of things there, and I never meet any one down here from the Colonies. St. Andrews has no attractions for Colonial visitors.

I shall be here another fortnight. The Martinmas accounts have to be settled next week, and after that, farm work goes on very much in fixed grooves. Alex<sup>r</sup> likes a farming life, and is now a fairly good farmer, and a good judge of stock. If I could persuade the feminine part of the family to give up London, I should much prefer to live here. I like a country life, with plenty to do.

I am in hopes that wool will keep its present value. If it does, it will give all the wool growing Colonies a help. The New Zealand clip will be worth three quarters of a million more at the present prices, than at the low prices existing a year ago.

With best regards to your family circle.

Yours very sincerely  
James Farmer

**98. Farmer to Hector, 29-12-1886**

Hocken MS-443-3/24/25

6, Porchester Gate,  
Hyde Park, W.  
December 29<sup>th</sup> 1886

My dear Hector

I received your letter of November 17<sup>th</sup>, yesterday per "*Kaikoura*", inclosing photographs of your family, for which accept our best thanks. They look a fine "lot". I also thank you for the frozen lamb which you have kindly sent, and I hope to get it in time for our New Years dinner. The "*Kaikoura*" will reach the Royal Albert Dock this morning, and I hope to get delivery of the lamb by tomorrow. It does not take long to discharge a cargo of frozen meat. It goes on night and day with a large number of hands. Fruit and vegetables are spoiled if the temperature is reduced under 40<sup>0</sup>. I had some excellent apples of Auckland growth last July, and they were brought here in a temperature of as near as possible of 40<sup>0</sup>. The fruit and vegetables for ships use are kept in perfect condition all the voyage at that temperature. If frozen, they are all spoiled. I mention this as you had thought of sending a dish of green peas.

I have seen Stanford regarding the non-payment of your R.G.S. subscription which had not been paid for 3 years. The fault lay with the Society in not having called for payments, as they had done in previous years. Stanford will pay the arrears, and I gave him an extract from your letter in which you complain of want of exchanges of their publications. In writing to the Secretary, Stanford will send the complaint you make. I resigned my Fellowship some years ago, as they ceased to publish their Transactions, and at their meeting, whenever there was an attractive meeting, all the best seats were Reserved for the Council and their friends, and Fellows who did not belong to the "inner Circle", had to be content with the back seats. As a rule, travellers who read their own papers, seem unable to send their voices beyond a very limited span, and a good deal of what they say, is said with their back to the audience while describing a Map against the walls, and it is impossible for anyone to hear what is said unless pretty near the table.

We have had a month of very severe weather, and on Sunday night last, the most severe snow storm we have had for many years. Sad havoc has been made amongst Telegraph wires and trees. It is sad to see so many beautiful trees in the Parks so damaged, and many blown over. Many fine trees have the principal branches on one side completely broken away, and generally splitting away a portion of the main stem in the process of breaking away. Throughout Europe there has been most severe snow storms, and all telegraphic communications have been suspended since Sunday. While we, (in London,) were having such a heavy fall of snow, it was raining heavily in Fife, and blowing a S.W. gale.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well. We were all together on Christmas day, except Douglas. He only gets a weeks holidays now and it is too long journey to undertake at this season of the year for pleasure.

We all wish you a happy Christmas and a bright New Year.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**99. Farmer to Hector, 26-01-1887**

Hocken Ms-443-3/25/1

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
January 26<sup>th</sup> 1887

My dear Hector

Another mail day has come round, and somehow I always put letter writing off till the last. I am glad to say the weather has at last become bright and milder than it has been for nearly two months. Until a few days ago, we have had very little sunshine since the end of November, and we have had an unusual quantity of snow, and severe frost, with an excessive range of temperature. Frequently over 20<sup>0</sup> in the 24 hours. It has never been a bright dry frost all the winter, and has consequently been most disagreeable weather, and very injurious to health. I hope that we are now done with such weather for the season. I wish we had your bright winter days in London.

I inclose your account to the end of last year, showing a D<sup>r</sup> balance of £11-4-1. Stanford has not yet sent the account for your arrears of R.G.S. Subscriptions, which he promised to pay and send me the account. I shall pay it directly he sends the account.

I am afraid that neither the "Ross", or "Humphrey's Gully" are going to be a success. Do you ever hear anything about the prospects of either? A very large sum of money has been expended on both mines, and it seems doubtful if any portion of it will ever be got back. "Humphrey's Gully" stuff shows a good prospect on the surface all over, but it is said that this is the result of the washing of the surface by the rain throughout countless ages, and the gold has been left on the surface. Do you agree with that theory? There may be something in it? If so, it accounts for the small yield of gold obtained by sluicing. The value of gold per yard of stuff has only been about seven pence. According to prospects taken on the surface, more than twenty times that value. I presume that the means for saving the gold are on approved principles. If you ever have an opportunity of obtaining any trustworthy information, I should like much to have your opinion.

I may have to pay you a visit about the end of the year. I may be able to do my business without making the trip, but at present I fear I may have to go.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well.

With best regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

*[The account mentioned above is not held in the file of letters]*



**100. Farmer to Hector, 24-02-1887**

Hocken MS-443-3/25/4

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
February 24<sup>th</sup> 1887

My dear Hector

We are all so grieved to hear of your serious accident, but hope that long ere now you are again well. You will have to exercise more care in future, when exploring difficult country. I can remember when you were as fleet, and "sure footed" as a goat, in walking along, or over anything that came in your path.

I thank you for the slip of newspaper you kindly sent me. It is the only New Zealand news I had by the mail delivered yesterday. My correspondence with N.Z. friends is now very limited. Dr Campbell writes by every San Francisco mail, and only sends duplicates by direct steamer, unless he has anything specially to write.

I am glad to say that we have had a delightful change in the weather. With the exception of a few frosty days, February has been mild and dry all over the country. December and January having been as bad as you can imagine. I hope that we may now have a fine spring. As a rule, I think that when the early part of winter has been exceptionally severe or mild, the later part is the reverse. A sort of compensation takes place.

I intend going to Fife in about three weeks from now, and will stay there till all the spring seeds are sown. The farm work is now pretty well forward.

I may have to take a "run" out to New Zealand about the end of this year.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
N.Z.

**101. Farmer to Hector, 22-03-1887**

Hocken MS-443-3/25/5

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1887

My dear Hector

As I have had no letter from you since your sad accident, I feel considerable anxiety

about you. I sincerely hope that you are again quite well, and we shall all be glad to hear from yourself that you are so. Twenty years ago you could run up and down the most inaccessible looking cliffs, and look back in wonder on those who were afraid to follow you. I can well remember our trip along the beach from Hastings to Shortland, when we had to dodge the rising tide by climbing up steep cliffs, and getting down again on the other side, to get round little headlands. At that time it was all easy travelling to you, while your more bulky and older companions were more or less in the greatest state of fatigue. I fancy that you are now approaching that stage without knowing it. You should now leave off exploration work. You have already done far more than your share.

We had a very severe snow storm last week, with bitterly cold weather till today. It is now blowing a “stiff gale” from the S.W. and the snow has all disappeared from the Parks, and the rivers throughout the country are probably in “high flood”. We may now have fine spring weather. Seeing that we have East winds in London for two months we may look for a compensating period of Westerly winds.

I intend going to Fife about the end of this week, and will be there for a couple of months. I like to be there during “seed time and harvest”, so as to talk to Alex<sup>r</sup> about the work going on the farms. I should like to live there altogether but the others object.

From all accounts, there is still great depression in the Colony. The large debt, public and private, is a great strain upon such a small population. The increased price of wool will be a most welcome addition to the sheep farmers. Last years prices were ruinous to all whose properties were mortgaged beyond half their value. The frozen meat trade has not been so successful as was expected. Price has been too low during the last two years. The working classes in this country are the great consumers of meat in this country when wages are high, but unfortunately, trade is bad all over, and wages are cut down to almost starvation point in all the manufacturing districts. I see no prospect of better times.

There does not appear to be an early prospect of dividends from either “The Ross” or “Humphrey’s Gully” mines. Do you ever hear anything about the prospects?

I fancy that Mrs Farmer is writing to Mrs Hector.

Hoping to hear favourable news of your health, and with kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer.

Dr Hector C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**102. Farmer to Hector, 28-07-1887**

Hocken MS-443-3/25/7

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
July 28<sup>th</sup> 1887

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of June 16<sup>th</sup> and also papers, and “The New Zealand University Calendar”, with best thanks.

I am sorry to see that you, as well as other correspondents are taking a very gloomy view of the financial prospects of the Colony at the present time. The pinch of paying interest is now being felt, and which the low price of Agricultural produce makes so difficult to meet. The high price of labour in the Colony renders it impossible to compete with the products of Europe, where the price of labour is less than half, and the cost of transit is so very low, as it is now.

The Waverley novels have been bound, and shipped per “*Aorangi*”, and I inclose your Bill of Lading, and also Stanfords account, which I have paid. They seem to be a very costly present to you, but the old binding was quite worn out. There is one Vol. missing, but Stanford may find one to supply its place.

Mrs Farmer and family will leave tomorrow for Fife, and I shall go in a week or ten days. Trains in every direction are now filled with people leaving London. All this week omnibuses and cabs have been constantly passing our house, laden with luggage. The Naval Review at Portsmouth on Saturday last, seems to have brought the season to a close.

All your friends are so pleased with your additional honour. “Better late than never”, but it should have been given last year. We are all so delighted.

Some friends have come in, and I must close.

Again offering you our hearty congratulations.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**103. Farmer to Hector, 16-11-1887**

Hocken MS-443-3/25/10

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
November 16<sup>th</sup> 1887

My dear Hector

It seems an age since I have written to you, but somehow the older I become the less I am inclined to write, unless on some important subject. I have to thank you for many letters, papers, and other publications. Your political horizon seems cleared for the present, and I hope that all wasteful extravagance is at an end for the present. There will be no further expenditure on Political Railways for some time to come, I hope. I am very sorry to see that Sir Julius is still in the "House". I hope he may never again be a Minister. His very political existence seemed to depend on "Big Loans". Any ministry has now a difficult duty to perform.

I fear that there is still a great Colonial depression, and the failure of the Bank of New Zealand to pay a dividend last half year, will have added to the already depressed state of the country. We have had no details about the losses of the Bank, and I hope that nothing more serious than the loss of a half years dividend has occurred. I am very glad that I am not now a shareholder and hope that you are not.

I am glad to hear that you like the binding of the "Scott's Works". The cost was considerable, but the covers were nearly all loose, and otherwise in a dilapidated condition, that it was necessary to have the volumes bound, to preserve them. Stanford found a volume to take the place of the missing one, which you will have now got.

Julia having written to Lady Hector I need not write any domestic news to you. I returned from Fife on Saturday last, and am now here for the winter. By the end of March I hope to return to Fife. In the meantime, being a "Guardian of the Poor", and a Vestryman, I have work every day except Saturday, and on that day, during the winter months, we ---- The "Saturday Popular Concerts". We still occupy the same four seats. These concerts, and the Albert Hall concerts are nearly all our musical entertainment. Patti is to sing tonight at the Albert Hall, and we expect a great treat. It is now, (5.30 P.M.) a dense fog, and we may have to go in a four wheeler if we can risk going a all. It is also keen frost, and the roads will be very slippery. However, I think we shall make an effort to get to the concert.

You will receive this about Christmas and I wish you many happy and bright returns of the festive season.

I may have to pay you a short visit before long. Your house and grounds will now be very beautiful, and I hope a success in every way.

With kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington

**104. Farmer to Hector, 12-01-1888**

Hocken MS-443-3/26/1

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.1  
January 12<sup>th</sup> 1888

My dear Hector

Years roll on, and seeing that another year is past and gone, I send your account with me, up to end of 1887. I wish you all a happy and bright New Year.

We are now in the midst of a dense fog. It has been almost dark for the last three days, and it seems to have been equally dark all over the South of England and France. The barometer is now falling a little, and I am in hopes that we may get some wind, which would soon clear the fog away. "Up till now" we have had no fogs since the middle of November, and only about four days of severe frost, and no snow has fallen in London this winter. The grass in the Parks is as green as in early spring.

Our sources of entertainment are much the same as when you were here. We have the same stalls at the Albert Hall, and at the Saturday Popular Concerts. We are also pretty regular in our attendance at the Royal Institution Lectures. Both Mrs Farmer and I are Members, and we take season tickets for the girls. We ought to be all very scientific, but I doubt if merely "rubbing" along the outer edge of science adds very much to scientific knowledge, beyond certain very elementary facts. However, we all attend the lectures as a matter of duty as well as pleasure.

I had almost made up my mind to have paid you a visit, but somehow my proposed trip has been put off.

I am in hopes that "times" are improving in New Zealand. The papers are generally less gloomy than they were some months ago. New Zealand wants more people, but the democratic element is too strong in the Colony to allow a large scheme of immigration to be adopted. The wage earning class are too much interested in keeping wages high, to allow of the introduction of Labour. High priced Labour means no productive industries. It is impossible to produce any article in New Zealand at a profit, to compete with a

German made article of the same description. A German is satisfied with 3/- a day, and the day is never too long for him. In the Colony anything under a shilling an hour is regarded as starvation wages.

I thank you for the papers you so kindly send me.

With kindest regards to you all.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

*Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.*  
*in account with*  
*James Farmer*  
6. Porchester Gate,  
Hyde Park, W.  
*Dr*  
*January 2<sup>d</sup> 1888*

<i>1887</i>				
<i>Jan. 1</i>	<i>To balance brought forward</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>4 1</i>
<i>" 5</i>	<i>" Zoological Society Subscription</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1 -</i>
<i>July 26</i>	<i>" E. Stanford a/c</i>		<i>19</i>	<i>- -</i>
<i>Oct. 10</i>	<i>" do</i>		<i>-</i>	<i>7 2</i>
<i>Dec 31</i>	<i>" Zoological Society Subscription for 1888</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1 -</i>
			<i>£ 32</i>	<i>13 3</i>

**105. Farmer to Hector, 23-03-1888**

Hocken MS-443-3/26/2

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1888

My dear Hector

I have to thank you for the Geological and other papers which you have kindly sent me, and the contents prove that you are not yet too old for hard and active work. The longer you live, the more work you seem able to do. Long may it be so!!

I am in hopes that New Zealand is getting over the terrible state of depression that has existed for the last two years. The people have no doubt been taught to practise greater care in their general expenditure, and a higher price for wool has been a very important help. The frozen meat trade has not been of much advantage so far, but it may yet become a success. If trade would improve in this country so as to enable the Labouring Classes to eat as much meat as they should like, double the quantity of animal food would be consumed that is now used, and the greater quantity would have to be imported. It now costs three pence per pound to pay all expenses on frozen meat, and to sell it at fourpence halfpenny leaves very little for the producer in the Colony. It is only ten shillings for a fat sheep weighing 80 lbs. Too little!!

I fear that both the "Ross" and "Humphrey's Gully" Mines are going to turn out failure. The good prospects seem to have all disappeared. The large outlay has been wasted so far as I can see at the present time.

The New Zealand government has been cutting down expenditure with an unsparing hand lately, but it seems like "shutting the stable door after the stud has been stolen". Sudden and severe retrenchment may be preparing the way, for a return to power of such men as Vogel. After such a period of inflation, people won't like a sudden collapse. The present Ministry, are to me, almost unknown names. I have a great dislike to Sir H. Atkinson. He always appears to me as a sort of "Communist" in disguise. He always seemed to me to have a natural antipathy to the holders of large estates. I don't think that he would object to an all round division, now and again. Especially of land.

Sir F. Whitaker is excellent in the highest degree, but he is too old for hard work. He is almost 80!! What is Sir Julius Vogel doing, and how does he live? Although large sums of money have passed through his hands, I doubt if he has provided for a "rainy day". I hope he may have.

I am going to Scotland next week. I like to be there during "seed time and harvest".

All join in kindest regards to your family circle, and I remain as ever,

Yours very sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**106. Farmer to Hector, 15-06-1888**  
Hocken MS-443-3/26/5

6, Porchester Gate  
Hyde Park, W.  
June 15<sup>th</sup> 1888

My dear Hector

I duly received your letter of April 19<sup>th</sup> inclosing a Bank draft for £20 on account of balance at end of 1887, with best thanks.

In a few hours from now, you will hear the sad news of the death of the German Emperor. His reign has been short, and the sad result of his illness has always been regarded as a question of a very short time, ever since his accession.

You will have heard that the last New Zealand loan was applied for four times over. It shows that the Colony has not yet reached "the end of its tether" in the matter of borrowing!

Sir Julius is still in London, but he has reached the end of his tether, in the matter of floating big companies. I hear that he has failed in his endeavours to float a company to publish a large Illustrated Book of some kind, and he at last admits that his name is not in favour in London.

The New Loans will keep the Colonial pot boiling for the present, but it must be a cause for considerable anxiety to all who have property in New Zealand. The Colonial debt, public and private amounts to nearly £100,000,000. A large sum for a population of 600,000.

I sometimes think of making another trip to the Colony, but it takes a great effort to decide unless for preparing for business. At three score and six, I don't feel so inclined to undertake the journey as formerly.

From all accounts times are mending in the Colony, with the exception of Auckland, which seems to continue in a very depressed condition. The failure of the timber trade has been a serious blow to Auckland, and the output of gold has also greatly diminished.



You will have heard of the engagement of Herbert to the daughter of Sir G. D. Harris. You may have seen the young Lady a child at our house.

All join in kindest regards to your belongings.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector  
K.C.M.G.

*[James Farmer travelled to New Zealand in late 1888 and early 1889, and there is no correspondence covering this period].*

**107. Farmer to Hector, 17-05-1889**

Hocken MS-443-3/27/1

6, Porchester Gate  
London W.  
May 17<sup>th</sup> 1889

My dear Hector

Long ere this, you will have heard of my arrival in London, and I am glad to say, "safe and sound". I lost sight of you at the Christchurch station on our arrival from Wellington, and went to the Railway Station in the afternoon, in hope of seeing you, but you did not appear, and I presume that you went overland to Dunedin.

We have all been in Fife for a month, and are now settled down in London till the end of July. We shall then return to Fife till the beginning of November. I should prefer to stay there altogether, if I could persuade the others to leave London!!!

I have seen a number of your friends since my return, who all ask most kindly after you. There seems little prospect for you being in London, even for a short holiday?

I wish that I could have seen more of the Colony when I was there, but circumstances ensured it necessary that I should return with as little delay as possible. I fear, from all I could see and hear, that there is still terrible depression throughout the Colony, and especially so in Auckland. I wish I could see a "ray" of hope for brighter times. The public and private debt is more than the Colony can bare. The expenditure of so much borrowed money had so unduly inflated the people, that they seemed to think it was all the result of real prosperity, and only realized the sad fact of the mistake they had made, when the money, (public and private) was all spent.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well. Our usual number at table is now only four!! When you were here 13 was the usual number at breakfast.

With kindest regards to Lady Hector and your family.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington, N.Z.

**108. Farmer to Hector, 6-08-1889**

Hocken MS-443-3/27/2

6, Porchester Gate, W.

August 6<sup>th</sup> 1889

My dear Sir J. Hector

I received your letter of June 28<sup>th</sup> this morning, inclosing a copy of "Financial Statements", and which is the most satisfactory one I have seen for many years. Although it shows a considerable increase to the public debt, the Colony seemed to be fairly able to meet all demands. I hope that "the tide" of renewed grounds for prosperity has fairly set in. I fear that Auckland is still in a "bad way". The whole place is heavily mortgaged, and there is no production of sufficient importance to pay interest.

I am here all alone. The others are all at Brownhills. They left London on Friday last, and I hope to leave in a day or two. We shall be there till the end of October. The fresh air, direct from Norway does them all good, and they return to London, quite "set up" for the winter.

This has been, "up till now" one of the most favourable seasons for farmers I ever remember, in Fife. They have had mild weather, with bright sunshine, and sufficient moisture throughout the seasons, and in consequence, the crops are all looking well, with the prospect of an early and abundant harvest. In the south of England, the crops have generally suffered from heavy rains. All bulky crops have been laid flat, and I fear terribly damaged by mildew. For the last month we have seldom had a day without a thunderstorm and heavy rain. I hope such weather may not extend to the North. Such weather causes potato disease unless there are sufficient intervals of bright sunshine to supply starch.

My stay in New Zealand was far too short and hurried to see all I should so much liked to have seen, but I had, for other reasons, to be back here by the beginning of April, and so had to hurry on.

To give you some idea of our changeable weather. While I have been writing this letter, I began with mild weather, but dull. There has since been a thunderstorm, with very heavy rain for about twenty minutes, and now we have bright sunshine. We may now have a fine afternoon.

With kindest regards to Lady Hector and your family.

Ever sincerely yours  
James Farmer

**109. Farmer to Hector, 28-12-1889**

Hocken MS-443-3/27/5

6, Porchester Gate, W.

December 28<sup>th</sup> 1889

My Dear Sir James

It seems an age since I have written to you, but somehow the older I become, the less inclined I am to write. Now that I am a grandfather, I need not pretend to be still a young man! I have now two grandchildren.

I wish you and all your belongings a happy Christmas and a bright New Year.

A year ago I was in New Zealand, and in the brightest sunshine, and most charming climate. Here, at noon today, it is nearly dark. I am now writing with gas light, in the middle of the day. Up till now, we have had a mild winter, but dull and damp, as a rule. We are much in want of a month of hard frost, and bright sunshine.

I am glad to say that we are all quite well. Our family at 6 P.G. is now so different to what you will remember. Our usual number at breakfast is now reduced to four. In days gone by the numbers were about a dozen! I cannot say that we are happier for this change, but I hope all is for the best. The ravens push the young birds out of their nests when they are full fledged!

You will be doing the same sort of thing before long. Ours are now pretty well dispersed.

You are always busy. The Dunedin Exhibition was occupying your time lately. I hope it will be a success. To my mind, Exhibitions are being overdone. They are merely huge shops, where people are allowed to sell goods without paying rent or taxes. The shop keepers of London complained seriously at the loss of custom during the years of the Annual Exhibitions in London. However, Exhibitions are the fashion for the time being.

The statement made by Mr Barclay regarding the affair of the Bank of New Zealand will have done much harm. However important it may have been to make the statement, people will dread that there may be some truth in what was stated. If true it discloses a terrible state of the Banks affairs.

With kindest regards to Lady Hector, and all your belongings.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington

P.S. You will have heard that Winifred is married at last. J.F.

**110. Farmer to Hector, 14-05-1890**

Hocken MS-443-3/27/6

6, Porchester Gate,  
London, W.  
May 14<sup>th</sup> 1890

My dear Sir James Hector

It seems an age since I have written to you, and your letter of April 1<sup>st</sup> which I have just received, reminds me that I owe you one letter at least.

I am sorry to hear that you were ill, but hope that you are quite well again long ere now. Influenza seems to have spread all over the world. Although few deaths occurred from the complaint itself, the after effects were most fatal. The death rate in London was increased by over one thousand per week, for more than a month, during the worst of the time it lasted. We all had Influenza, but with care, we all escaped after complications.

There is no immediate prospect of my return to New Zealand for the present. I am getting too old to undertake long sea voyages for pleasure, and it will only be pressing necessity, if I ever again go around the world!!!

I am glad to think that the tide of prosperity has generally set in, in New Zealand, but I fear that Auckland is still in a state of great depression. The Bank disaster was much more severely felt in Auckland than elsewhere throughout the Colony, and judging from my own affairs in Auckland, there is no upward movement visible at present. The flax industry should help Auckland, but there seems to be less enterprise in the north than in the south. Wellington seems to take the lead in the production of flax fibre.

We are now having very fine weather. We had very little frost or snow in the winter. Grass, even in Scotland, was green all the winter, and the spring had all the appearance of being very early, up till the end of March. April was cold and dry, and at the present time, the flowers on the Horse Chestnuts in the Parks are, if anything, behind time. Grass is excellent everywhere, and the winter wheat, never having had a check, is most luxuriant. The spring weather has been most favourable for lambing, and the milk farmers are all in good luck!

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Mr Dillon<sup>23</sup>, and sympathize with his poor widow and family.

We shall hear about you all from Mrs Hector when she returns to London. She has seen a great deal of the country during her short stay. She has more energy than strength, and I hope she may not attempt too much!

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<sup>23</sup> Husband of Georgiana Hector's sister, Constance.

Freda and Cicely are the only members of our family now at home, and our house looks quite empty, as compared with a few years ago.

All send kind regards to your household.

Yours ever sincerely  
James Farmer

Sir James Hector K.C.M.G.  
Wellington  
New Zealand

**111. Farmer to Hector, 23-01-1891**  
Hocken MS-443-3/28/1

6, Porchester Gate,  
Hyde Park, W.  
January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1891

My Dear Sir James Hector

It seems an age since I have written to you, and my only excuse must be that I am getting too old for letter writing. On the 17<sup>th</sup> instant I was 69, and have therefore begun the “three score and ten”. Although not so fleet as I was thirty years ago, I enjoy excellent health, and am as active as most men are at 60. I am also glad to say that we are all quite well. I think that we can say what few families can say, a doctor has not been sent for, ten times during the last ten years.

I hope that you are all quite well. Your two eldest children will now be “grown up”, and Barclay will be working at prospective future employment. I should be glad to hear of all your doings.

We have just got to the end of the most severe frost and snow storm I ever remember, and it has been unusually severe all over Europe. The frost commenced about the end of November, and excepting a very few days, when there was a slight thaw, it lasted till yesterday. Mrs Farmer walked among the Serpentine yesterday, and there were many thousands of skaters. A rapid thaw set in last night, and today we have a S.W. breeze and much higher ----- and the “Times” weather forecast predicts an end to the frost. With two heavy falls of snow in London the streets were in a terrible state. There is no place to put the snow if it could be carted away. We have now a vast quantity of dirty snow all along the Bayswater Road, which will take months to melt away. The Canal having been frozen for about six weeks, no refuse could be sent away, and great heaps of dirt has been accumulating on all the Wharfs along the banks of the Canal. It will take a long time to

clear all the filth away, after the Canal is open for traffic, and I fear that offensive smells will be the result after the stuff begins to thaw.

It has been a sad time for all out of door workers, as all work was at a stand still. In the North of Scotland they have had, up till now, a mild winter, thanks to the Gulf Stream. In Fife there has been little or no hindrance to farm work. They have been ploughing, while were frozen.

I should like to pay one more visit to New Zealand. It is difficult to decide, unless necessary duty arises. A year ago we had almost decided to let our house for three years, and all go to New Zealand, staying at the Cape a month or two on the way.

You have had an election on the "One man one vote" system, and so far as I have heard the result has not been satisfactory<sup>24</sup>. "King Mob" will now rule New Zealand, and the result will be no immigration of working men. It never seems to occur to working men, that with immigration on a plentiful scale, they wold rapidly become employers of labour themselves. Advance New Zealand is no part of their Programme.

All join me in kindest regards to your family circle.

Yours ever sincerely

James Farmer

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<sup>24</sup> The Ballance Ministry took power on 21 January 1891. It was the start of over 20 years in power by the Liberal Party.