

cookies, Easter eggs and all sorts of things.

Pearie Thorndike came to my first birthday, and I to hers, she is only a few months younger than I. We were constantly together until we reached nine, then we wrote much and visited occasionally, so Pearie is really my oldest friend. Her two children Ellen, six, and Bert, nine, are darling.

Bethany simply had the time of her life. Both little girls loved one another, which of course pleased the two proud Mamas. Ellen read to Bethany every night. They even slept in the same room and stayed awake to all hushed whispering.

April 4, 1945

Nell, most darling,

It is forever since we written you, but then you are also ever in my thoughts.

The children and I have been visiting my childhood friend, Pearie Thorndike. She has two children older than ours. We left the Thursday before Easter and stayed until Monday. Your dear letter and the three books were awaiting us upon our return.

Thank you so much for the books. Both Sam and I have read the Wind ~~and~~ in the Willow's Whispers and love it.

I am had never read "The Wind in the Willows" itself and is now doing so with his feet on the stove. So you see what happiness you have sent us. Didn't you love the the Whispers, especially the part by Hamilton about Kenneth Grahame.

The Golden Dictionary I think is excellent. It is just what Beltham needed at this moment a help her with letters and spelling. She loves it and so does Seth. We haven't yet read Seth's book, they just want the Dictionary.

You do indeed spoil us and spoil us; but goodness, how I love you.

Our visit to Milton was a great deal of fun. I felt badly leaving Sam, but he was having a holiday from woodcutting and so was very anxious to work on the Red House. He was able to get two local men ^{from Wilshire} the sheriff and one other man to work over Easter at jacking up the back of the house, so he was glad to be free to come and go without us to mind about.

The children and I left on Thursday for Milton with two bags and a huge basket of Hot Cross buns.

The men came again. I did a lot of woodwork washing and peeled off large quantities of horrid wallpaper with Betty assisting. Seth played about in the sandpit and enjoyed water. Pa and the men messing about with exciting looking tools.

They've lifted up the whole back of the house so it is now straight. You should see the truckloads of rubbish they took away, glorious! You won't know the place.

The fact that we actually own it and earned it with our own hands is so wonderful to even comprehend.

and giggling.

On Saturday we went to the home of Pearie's parents in Clayland. I can't tell you what a strange and happy feeling it gave me to stand in the little children's dining room where Pearie and I used to have our meals, and see our children, at the ages we once were, seated about the old table and ~~was~~ watched over by Pearie's old Daddy, Cathy Cash.

After dinner ~~to~~ we took Seth and the two girls down to the stables, as Ellen has a horse of her own which she rides, and Beltramy was very quiet

to ride also. Both Fannie and I doubted if she would really do it when the moment arrived, but we surely had a surprise in store for us. Bill, the groom, had the old white pony, Snowy, all saddled and bridled. Betsey walked right up and let Bill put her on. Then she had one happy hour. Bill led her of course, but she brought it was wonderful, you should have seen that shining face and golden hair and the little old white pony!

On Sunday we had an Easter egg hunt and all sorts of strange and exciting presents popped up in odd places.

Fannie and her two, had a puppet show, a tiny one, using dolls, that Fannie had stored up, of the Kinder Box, it was most exciting.

Seth was a bit young for it all and missed his Pa badly. He kept asking when were we going home to Pa.

And was it good to get home!!! And Sam had done so much on the Red House since we had last seen it. We went up and spent the day yesterday, as

The house seemed so glad at
their voices echoing through it.
We opened the front door and
stood on the threshold. I put
a simple sentence to say, but
Nell, it meant more than I
can tell you.

I made a sketch of it from
the road so we now have that
to gaze at. I was so touched
tonight, Beltrany was upstairs
with me getting ready for bed,
Sells was already tucked away
and Lon was out shoveling
the driveway. Beltrany wanted
to run down stairs to get her
Bucky Bean so I let her she
could. When she came up she
had the sketch of the Red House!
She had climbed up to get it
off the refrigerator where we had

it. She wanted it in her room she said.

She has been wearing the little calico you gave her, this afternoon. She looked so dear and beautiful.

The drawings are coming. I'm doing the Ugly Duckling which I love. I'm making a coloured one for it at the moment. My how I wish you could see the pictures and I could hear your thoughts about them.

Galen is still among the stars which is perhaps just as well. I'm always disappointed though.

You should see my geraniums! I have some wonderful ones that I bought from a person named Dorcas Brigham. A strawberry scented, a lime, ginger, filbert, almond, apple apricot and two variegated ones. I love them so and have always wanted just those special kinds. Such lovely nosegays as they will make in summer.

Have you heard anything yet about your house? I think of it so often. It looked so beautiful in the snow the other day. Oh I do so hope it will be yours, Nell Darling. I'm still hoping.

You would be pleased to see Beltrami's love for her blue parrot!

I must stop, it is late and I have some mending to do. I love you so much and think of you so much. I long to talk with you. Just endless love, &c.