Dearest Nell,

It was sweet of you to send "A Traveller in Time" which as I already have I am returning. I love the idea of the first few chapters, before Penelope goes back in Time, but after that it somehow drags, it doesn't seem as convincing as the first part. I really much prefer "Precious Bane". This sounds unpractical dearest of, but I am not one bit unpractical so please don't think so.

We're deep in winter quiet here which couldn't be more peaceful. For the last three nights the pipes of us have

been sitting about the kitchen table making Valentines. You never saw so many snippets of paper lace and ribbon and chopped up hearts.

Today I washed a ten and a half yard piece of tweed that we just took off the loom. It is now hanging, doubled, practically the whole length of the loom room and gives me the most indescribable feeling of pleasure and accomplishment. It is a heather blue colour, and the yarn was brought from the Isle of Skye by a friend a few years ago.

We've also been washing two sheeps fleeces which are now tacked to an old door down cellar while being pained and then left to dry, with alum and salt.

It is more fun having all four girls intended - meaning very shortly we hope to have all three of the old looms threaded with warps, can you imagine what a pleasant sight that will be. I've spun almost enough wool to make Seth a shirt and am now making up my mind whether to make it - checks or plain!

All is well on the farm, the latest excitement being the expected arrival of Sarah and Eliza Sheep's babies. We have a pine marten ward for them - an old stable and every few hours we take a look. Both of them look like over round melons at this point.

We've also been planning for the vegetable garden and I - rapidly developing a severe case of garden fever, brought

on by flower catalogues and the smell of the morning air. We get up while it is yet dark so you can imagine how "springy" it smells, even on cold mornings with a pearly looking moon setting behind the barn.

Charlie Parrot is sitting in her cage beside the stove grinding her beak and moaning and shooting remarks in at the rooms silliness. All the girls are up stairs reading, sewing and playing the dulcimer. Elsie has really become good at it and sings beautifully to all of us most every evening. There are three corgis stretched out on the kitchen bed behind me, all on their backs with their feet in the air, Raven, the mastiff is full

lengths on the rug before the stove and is playing a merry tune of snoring which at times shakes the kettle on the stove.

We're planning the most special Valentine party as Sally and Lisa are coming. I'm making a splendid white card board summer house which we will entwine with ivy and jasmine for the greenhouse. I'm it will see Melissa and Shaddens with a ring of Valentines all red round. Wire going to make pink ice cream for the summer raspberries and a heart shaped cake and more toys and just no end of Valentines for everyone.

I wish you could be here too.

Thanks again for sending the book and for your note and for your Christmas present, which I'm still debating as to what extra special thing I'll get with it.

Much much love as always,

Laura