coming. Ones own hearth means so much, at least to me. Do you think I'm utterly foolish to buy it alone, should he go? Tell me. For all I know we may be having another baby too.

I just feel it is the right thing, to get the house. I know I have felt the uprooting of a home already these last two years, and to think of doing it alone without Tom seems too horrible, I mean renting. But somehow the thought of the Red House fills me with a comfort and a security. The children have felt the unsettledness of this renting so markedly, especially Bethany. Tell me, comfort me, I look up to you so, to me you are all that is womanly and wise

New Years Eve

Nell, most darling,

I have had a longing for you for days. When I wrote you that Christmas letter I didn't feel my real self, I have felt out of touch with you, but now I feel back again and so, happier.

In the first place, on December 22nd Tom received a notice from the Draft Board that he was to report for examination on the 27th. Nell, when I saw that paper I went cold all over. It was so sudden, so

unexpected! Tom went right off to the Concord board as he couldn't get down to Bethel. They gave him different papers to fill out and he then wrote to the Bethel Board to find out about it all. The next morning he went to see Young, his employer, and it appears Young had neglected to fill out a paper the Bethel Board had sent him which he had lost it under some papers on his desk! Well, Tom called up the Bethel Board from Youngs. Dan knows the Secretary. She said it wasn't too late if Young would fill out the paper and mail it in; but that Tom would have to take the exam anyway, here in Concord. That will not be until later in January, in the meantime we just have to sit and wait, we don't know what they will do. I am full of fear about it, but Tom feels confident. Every minute of the day as I go about that fear lurks behind all my thoughts; it is a piece of the "Thorn of the poor tree" Nell, I have had so much, I cannot complain, but still fear is with me, I can't help it.

The first day was such a shock I couldn't settle my mind on anything, but now I have decided that even if Tom has to go that I will go on with the Red House. At least that would be our own home, we wouldn't be cast completely adrift. ~~[illegible]~~ That I feel would steady me, and it would be something to build towards Tom's home-

to have Rosamond M^t Holden get over the Reading things — so that is settled. She will just stay here until she is able to travel to California.

Tom has been such an angel through all of this, I was in bed for two mornings with the cold — he insisted on it — and oh Nell, such tender loving care he took of me. Oh I love him so, noone has any idea of how sweet he really is, and to think that I should have been the fortunate woman to have won his love. He is so dear with the children.

Your Christmas package is not yet complete, this upset has caused it to be sadly

especially about the feelings of home.

Now that you know I feel as though a weight were lifted. I feel again close to you. Oh Nell darling, I love you so, I treasure our friendship so.

With that fear on our minds Christmas seemed to lack something, though we tried to make it everything it should be for the children. But for the cooky making we had with you, and the Dolls party the rest of Christmas seemed not quite with us; it was the strangest feeling, we never had it before. I can't quite fathom it. And here it is New Years Eve as I write, New Years

Eve — it has ever filled me with a sense of sadness, not of rejoicing, for I have loved the Old Year, the New Year is so unknown. What will this New one hold? wonder! How frightening life is, yet how dear and beautiful. It hurts one almost to think of the breath taking wonderful moments one experiences, the risings of the sun and moon, the bloomings and the fadings. I feel bound in, I cannot express all my soul is full of.

The pictures are still growing in spite of this, though I have had some time with a horrible cold which I cannot seem to get rid of. Both children are coming down with it now, I pray it will not hit them so badly.

Mama is getting along, though we find she has to stay in bed three more weeks before even getting up! She got the name of a Boston doctor who referred her to a Doctor Weil here in Concord who specializes in such things. He came out three days ago and looked Mum all over. He said she would be all right if she will just take it easily.

We have not mentioned this Draft thing to Mum, so please do not mention it to her should you write. She seems much better mentally. She has arranged for all her N. Y. things to be packed and

neglected. But it is coming, it is the nicest thing to think about and add to. You see we have a "Godmummy Box" and we just keep adding funny little things that please a Godmummy of a very special kind; when it gets properly full we will send it and then when it comes you must put on your magic cap and apron before you open it. I'm only terribly sorry it come not at Christmas.

Bethany loves her blue dress so much and her tippet. I believe they were her favourite Christmas present.

The grey dress your gave me has become my most

favourite too, it just seems to fit and suit, it is one of those dresses one always feels right in. I love it.

I must stop, it is late, the moon is high in Heaven, it is so beautiful shining on the white sparkling snow,

I love you so, and feel so much better having told you of all this. Please forgive me by my selfishness.

I did so love your letter and felt so unworthy of it in a way. Oh I do so hope the great house will be yours. Write me when you can, your letters mean so much. I long to sit with you in our kitchens, to sing and sew and rock babies and listen to the kettle and crack of the fire.

I love you,

E.