

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF SOPHIA E. THOREAU AND MARY ANNE  
DUNBAR 1857?-1876

This is a rough copy of the thirty-one letters and post cards sent by Sophia Thoreau to her cousin Mary Anne Dunbar of Bridgewater, Mass. The originals were presented by Mrs. John Ford of Duxbury, Mass., to the Thoreau Society in June, 1950. They are now to be deposited in the Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Mass., as part of the Thoreau Society archives.

This is a rough copy made by Walter Harding, secretary of the Thoreau Society, in June and July, 1950. It is not to be trusted for accuracy of transcription, but is rather compiled for ease in ascertaining the contents of the letters. Words difficult to transcribe have either been left blank or have been followed with a question mark in parentheses (?). The letters have been assembled in their approximate chronological order, and where the date is not given in the letter itself, I have given my reason for dating on the back of the sheet.

A catalogue and condensation of these letters will probably appear in an early number of the THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN.

Walter Harding  
Princeton, New Jersey

July 13, 1950.



Tuesday Sept 15th

My dear Mary Anne

I hasten to acknowledge your note & to assure you that we shall be most happy to see you & Lizzie in Concord at the time you propose. I wish you might come even earlier, for our foliage has begun to assume the tints of Autumn & I really feel as if Summer was bidding us good bye.

I am glad that you have enjoyed seeing your cousins from the South.

I will be at the depot on Monday hoping to meet you. Mother joins with me in kind regards to yourself & father, we hope that he may be prevailed on to accompany you.

With love to Lizzie, believe me yours truly  
S. E. Thoreau

No envelope.



DATING 1857? Apparently refers to letter of Oct.  
6th, 1857 visit to Concord.

My dear Mary Anne  
I hasten to acknowledge your note & to assure  
you that we shall be most happy to see you & Annie  
might come even earlier than the first of Autumn & I really feel  
if Summer was bidding us good bye.  
I am glad that you have enjoyed seeing your  
cousins from the South.  
I will be at the depot on Monday hoping to  
meet you. Mother joins with me in kind regards to  
yourself & father, we hope that he may be prevailed  
on to accompany you.  
With love to Annie, believe me yours truly  
H. E. Thoreau

No envelope.



Boston Oct. 6th '57.

Dear Mary Anne,

A letter from home has just reached me together with your note. I am very glad if you remember your visit with pleasure & I trust we shall see you in Concord again when you can stay longer.--As to Mrs. Phillip she called at our house about an hour after you left. She then said that she could not decide about going to Bridgewater before the next Saturday when she promised to write you. Mother sends me word that she has just seen her again & finds that her friends are opposed to her going so far from home, & probably Mrs Whiting will keep her through the winter. I am sorry for your disappointment & I hope you will succeed in getting Harriet.

We are having most charming weather & I assure you I am improving it, getting in great bundles of hay, which if it does not grow musty before we meet you shall have a whisp of.--I should like to write more but aunt is hurrying me to get ready for the next omnibus to Dorchester where we are going to pass the day.

Do write me again soon. Remember me kindly to Lizzie All are as usual at home it is a week tomorrow since I left Concord. Father has been in the city once. I shall probably remain a week or ten days longer. You inquire after the big squash I suppose I must consider it was indeed duly honored since I saw a notice of it in the Boston Herald. Aunt calls upon me to stop So excuse me & believe me yours truly  
Sophy



Concord Dec. 31st

My dear friend,

The last few days of stormy weather have kept me closely housed. I have occupied myself in settling with my correspondents for I do not like to begin a new year in debt. Today comes your turn & I wish I had something very pleasant to communicate but the absence of sunshine always puts me in a somber mood. How nice it is to accuse the weather of ones stupidity.

As you express an interest in my affairs I will gladly give you some account of myself. After a fortnights dissipation in the city in Oct. I returned to Concord. Immediately my dear father was attacked with jaundice & became very dangerously ill, for many weeks I was absorbed in the duties of nurse. The good man is now much better & were it not for a cough which is very severe at present I should consider him quite sound.--

The other members of the family are in their usual health. Mrs. Dunbar has returned from her wanderings.--I am sorry that you could not report more favorably concerning Lizzie the autumn & winter thus far has been very trying for invalids. Please tell her that it was my good fortune to hear Thalberg (?), Vieuxtemps & LaGrange the night before I left Boston. I wish you could both have been present. Hard times seems to have interfered sadly with music this winter. As to Concord we are kept awake by our Lyceum lectures which have been particularly acceptable thus far. Mr. Emerson gave the first of the season, next came Mr. Alger & then Geo. W. Curtis charmed us all with his discourse on "Sir Philip Sidney." We are now listening to a course of lectures from Rev. Mr. Stone on English Literature.

The Concord "Dramatic Union" composed of some gifted young people serve us to an entertainment occasionally. Christmas night they gave us some scenes from Dickens so I think with their aid we shall be able to keep the cobwebs off our brains. It must be very pleasant for you to have neighbors in the old house.

What books are you reading? I have lately enjoyed some volumes of Ruskin, they are books to be studied rather than read. Charlotte Bronte's memoirs lately fell in my way. Was there ever so sad a history? Dont break your hearts over it if you have not already done so.

I hope that your father is wholly recovered from the effects of his fall. You must have suffered much anxiety on his account. Mrs Phillip (?) & daughter are still in our neighborhood. I trust you are well served without them.--Mother believes you will take it kindly, dear Mary Anne if she expresses her very earnest hope that no account of the impression made by her East Bridgewater friends may escape you. It would indeed be cruel to overlook so much genuine merit.

Mother & aunts join with me in wishing you all a "Happy new year"

Write again soon please.

Yrs.--Sophia



My dear friend,  
The last few days of stormy weather have kept  
me at home. I am glad to hear of your recovery.  
I wish I had something very pleasant to communicate  
to you but the absence of sunshine always puts me in a  
sombre mood. How nice it is to receive the weather  
of ones stupidity.  
As you express an interest in my affairs I  
will gladly give you some account of myself. After  
a fortnight's dislocation in the city in Oct. I re-  
turned to Concord. Immediately my dear father was  
attacked with jaundice & became very dangerously  
ill. For many weeks I was absorbed in the duties  
of nursing. The good man is now much better & were  
it not for a cough which is very severe at present  
I should consider him quite sound. --  
The other members of the family are in their  
usual health. Mrs. Parker has returned from her  
wanderings. -- I am sorry that you could not report  
more favorably concerning Lizzie the autumn &  
winter thus far has been very trying for invalids.  
Lizzie tells me that it was my good fortune to  
hear Thibault (?) & Vanderburg & Lagrange the night  
before I left Boston. I wish you could both have  
been present. Hard times seem to have interfered  
seriously with music this winter. As to Concord we  
are kept awake by our Lyceum lectures which have  
been particularly acceptable thus far. Mr. Snow-  
den gave the first of the season, next came Mr.  
Alger & then Geo. W. Curtis charmed us all with  
his discourse on "Sir Philip Sidney". We are  
now listening to a course of lectures from Rev.  
Mr. Stone on English literature.  
The Concord "Gymnastic Union" composed of some  
gifted young people serve us to an entertainment  
occasionally. Christmas night they gave us some  
scenes from Dickens so I think with their aid we  
shall be able to keep the cowboys off our brains.  
I must be very pleasant for you to have neighbors  
in the old house.  
What books are you reading? I have lately  
enjoyed some volumes of "Larkin", they are books to  
be studied rather than read. Charlotte Brontë's  
memoirs lately fell in my way. Was there ever so  
sad a history? Don't break your hearts over it if  
you have not already done so.  
I hope that your father is wholly recovered  
from the effects of his fall. You must have suffered  
much anxiety on his account. Mrs. Phillips (?) &  
daughter are still in our neighborhood. I trust  
you are well served without them. -- Mother believes  
you will take it kindly, dear Mary Anne is the ex-  
pression her very earnest hope that on account of the  
impression made by her best friend's illness may  
escape you. It would indeed be cruel to overlook so  
much genuine merit.  
Mother & sister join with me in wishing you all  
a "Happy New Year."  
Write again soon please.



Concord Feb 5th

My dear Friend

I hasten to relieve your suspense & to acknowledge my carelessness as the occasion of it all. I wrote to you in a great hurry I remember & carried the letter myself in season for the afternoon mail. In the course of the evening it occurred to me that I had neglected to put a stamp on your letter Aunt Louisa said that she would rectify the blunder, which she did early next morning & was informed that you had been notified in accordance with the new law. It used to be the duty of the Postmaster to advertize all letters not prepaid--

As to Mrs Phileis (?) she is still with Mrs. Whiting Harriet is at Mrs Wheelers I heard a few days since that she was getting ready to be married. By the way have you heard of Miss Jane Whiting's engagement? The town was much astounded at the announcement last fall. She is to marry Mr Barker, a Unitarian clergyman settled in Leominster. He is nine years younger than Miss Jane, & very unlike her in all respects so far as I know him.--

If you have not read "White Ties" (?) I think you & Lizzie would enjoy it. The characters are intensely drawn.--What a wonderful winter this.

My poor father continues being unwell still.--

We are expecting company to dine, so you must excuse a little blank paper, I am sorry to set so bad an example

Mother & aunt join with me in love to you all--

Yrs. ever,  
Sophy.



Concord Feb 28

DATING 1858? Father's continued illness.

My dear friend  
I hasten to relieve your suspense & to acknow-  
ledge my carelessness as the occasion of it all. I  
wrote to you in a great hurry I remember & omitted  
the letter myself in season for the afternoon mail.  
In the course of the evening it occurred to me that  
I had neglected to put a stamp on your letter Aunt  
Louise said that she would forward the letter  
which she did early next morning & was informed  
that you had been notified in accordance with the law.  
It used to be the duty of the postmaster to  
advertise all letters not prepaid--  
As to Mrs. Philia (?) who is still with Mrs.  
Whiting Harriet is at Mrs. Wheeler's I heard a few  
days since that she was getting ready to be mar-  
ried. By the way have you heard of Miss Jane  
Whiting's engagement? The town was much astounded  
at the announcement last fall. She is to marry  
Mr. Barker, a Unitarian clergyman settled in Leomin-  
ster. He is nine years younger than Miss Jane, &  
very unlike her in all respects so far as I know  
him--  
If you have not read "White Lies" (?) I think  
you & Linnae would enjoy it. The characters are  
intensely drawn--What a wonderful winter this.  
My poor father continues being unwell still--  
We are expecting company to dine, so you  
must excuse a little blank paper, I am sorry to  
not so bad an example  
Mother & Aunt join with me in love to you

Yrs. ever,  
Sophy.



Monday Feb. 21st.

My dear Friend,

It gives me pleasure to respond to any expression of sympathy at this time of sad bereavement, & I would thank you most heartily for your very kind note.--It is two years last Oct. since my dear fathers long & wasting sickness commenced. He has been a most patient sufferer. At the last he declined very rapidly, he was confined to his chamber but three weeks & to his bed only one week. I shall be ever grateful that his suffering was not more acute & that his nearest & dearest friends were at hand with their sympathy & aid to comfort & relieve him so far as was in their power--

Through all my dear fathers illness he was borne up by that fallacious hope so often attendant on consumption. I do not think that he realized the impossibility of recovery till about ten days before he left us, but then he was "all ready, willing & waiting to be gone" as he said. My fathers two sisters were with us at the time of his death. They have since returned to Boston & I assure you we are lonely indeed. I feel as if there was nothing for me to do now that all anxiety on poor fathers account has ceased. But it is a great consolation to think of him at rest. Oh my dear friend would that I could express my appreciation of divine wisdom as manifested to us all. It is surely safe to trust the good God who so wisely careth for us.

While I must ever mourn his absence I shall delight to cherish the memory of his many virtues, & I trust that our loss is his gain.--Mother is at present suffering with the influenza.

Mrs. Dunbar has been confined with fever, some weeks to her room. She is now convalescent. Aunt L. is quite well. All join me in kind remembrances to your father & yourself.--You did not mention your cousin Lizzie. Is she with you at present? I remember her with interest. Please give her my love, & believe me

Yours affectionately  
S. E. Thoreau

Postmarked Concord.



DATING 1859. Father's death.

My dear friend,  
It gives me pleasure to receive your expression of sympathy at this time of sorrow. I would thank you most heartily for your very kind note. It is two years last Oct. since my dear father long & wasting sickness commenced. He has been a most patient sufferer. At the last he declined very rapidly. He was confined to his chamber but three weeks & to his bed only one week. I shall be ever grateful that his suffering was not more acute & that his nearest & dearest friends were at hand with their sympathy & aid to comfort & relieve him so far as was in their power. Through all my dear father's illness he was borne up by that faith which hope so often abandons on despondency. I do not think that he realized the impossibility of recovery till about ten days before he left us, but then he was "all ready" willing & waiting to be gone" as he said. My father & sister were with us at the time of his death. They have since returned to Boston & I assure you we are lonely indeed. I feel as if there was nothing for me to do now that all anxiety on poor father's account has ceased. But it is a great consolation to think of him at rest. Oh my dear friend would that I could express my appreciation of divine wisdom as manifested to us all. It is surely safe to trust the good God who so wisely cared for us.  
While I must ever mourn his absence I shall delight to cherish the memory of his many virtues & I trust that our loss is his gain. --Mother is at present suffering with the influenza.  
Mrs. Dunder has been confined with fever, some weeks to her room. She is now convalescent. Aunt is quite well. All join me in kind remembrance to your father & yourself. --You did not mention your cousin Lizzie. Is she with you at present? I remember her with interest. Please give her my love, & believe me  
Yours affectionately  
S. E. Thoreau

Postmarked Concord.



Bangor June 23rd.

My dear Mary Ann,

Mother and myself have been in Bangor about a week, & on our return Mother is anxious to stop & see her cousin Lemuel, so I write this morning to inquire if he is still living, & if you think a call from us would be agreeable. Please tell us where in Waterville he resides & if you think we should be made welcome. I am rather timid among strangers, but desire to consult mothers pleasure & so entertain her proposition. An early reply will oblige us.--The weather here is cold & rainy quite like May.

Mother sends much love & wishes me to ask your father & yourself with cousin Lizzie to visit us this Autumn. I do hope you will make arrangements to do so, it would afford us much pleasure to see you in Concord.

I left my brother to the very tender mercies of aunt Louisa & feel a little afraid that the fellow may be harmed by indulgence.

I received a very kind letter from Mrs Allen shortly after my fathers death. She wrote that Mrs. West was in Bridgewater & Mother sent for her visit Concord, but the letter was delayed & Mrs W. felt obliged to decline. I trust you will excuse these hasty lines. Cousin called me before I began to write & I believe I must run now.

Good bye, yrs affectionately  
Sophy.



My dear Mary Ann,  
Mother and myself have been in Bangor about  
DATE: 1860. After father's death, before Henry's;  
reference to letter of Dec. 27th (1860?)  
to inquire if he is still living, & if you think  
a call from us would be agreeable. Please tell us  
where in Waterville he resides & if you think we  
should be made welcome. I am rather timid among  
strangers, but desire to connect with those who  
are so certain in their proposition. An early reply will  
oblige us. -- The weather here is cold & rainy quite  
like May.  
Mother sends much love & wishes me to see you  
father & yourself with some time to visit us  
this autumn. I do hope you will make arrangements  
to do so, it would afford us much pleasure to see  
you in Concord.  
I left my brother to the very tender mercies  
of Aunt Louisa & feel a little afraid that the  
folly may be harmed by indulgence.  
I received a very kind letter from Mrs. Allen  
shortly after my father's death. She wrote that  
Mrs. West was in Bridgewater & Mother sent for her  
visit Concord, but the letter was delayed & Mrs. W.  
felt obliged to decline. I trust you will excuse  
these hasty lines. Cousin called me before I  
began to write & I believe I must run now.  
Good bye, yrs affectionately  
Sophy.



Concord Dec 27th

My dear Mary Anne,

I am resolved not to let this year expire without enquiring after our Bridgewater friends. It is now a year & a half since we have heard anything from you. I always regretted not receiving the letter you sent to me at Bangor. The postmaster was probably a Democrat, and unfaithful like all the Democrats I am acquainted with.

Don't imagine that I am a Republican. My motto has long been "no union with Slave holders" & I think prospects are brightening just now.--

Mother & I passed three weeks very pleasantly with our Bangor friends & on our return spent a night in Waterville, where we were very cordially received by your uncles family. The weather was oppressively warm. My head ached & I was uncommonly stupid, but mother was bright & enjoyed talking over old times. Do let us know how the family are at present. It seemed as if Peter could not long survive he was so ill when we saw him.

You dont know how often mother & I have wished we might have a visit from your father & yourself. We thought when all Massachusetts mustered here a year ago last September that we should see you. I trust you have not forgotten us.--Early last Spring my dear mother was very severely attacked with lung fever & ever since her health has been exceedingly frail. At present she is more unwell than usual suffering with influenza, which in her feeble condition, renders her very ill. I fear she will be obliged to confine herself to the house all winter. Do you hear from your cousin Lizzie? I fancy she is married, that is the fate of most who go to California. Please remember me to her when you write. I spent a month in Plymouth N. H. last summer with my aunts & another friend. We spent much of our time on the shores of lakes, & ~~mountain~~ mountain ledges. I was almost wild with delight, never having seen real mountains before. Have you ever visited the White Mts? I really grew fat upon the strawberries & mountain trout.--

Mother is anxious to hear from Mrs Cushing. She felt very sorry last summer to hear that Mrs. Mead (?) should visit Lexington without coming to Concord How is Mrs Copeland? If you know anything of Mr. Allens family we shall be pleased to hear from them.--Aunt Louisa & Mrs Dunbar are still with us, & well as usual.

I do hope that you will not let another season pass without reporting yourself in Concord.

Mother joins with me in kind regards to your father & yourself.

Let us hear soon how the Winter is passing, and believe me affectionately yours,--

Sophia E. Thoreau.

Dec 30th The old year is almost gone Let me wish you a happy new one.

Postmarked Concord Dec. 31.



My dear Mary Anne,  
 DATING 1860. Visit to Plymouth, New Hampshire.  
 Cf. FAMILIAR LETTERS.  
 I am always regretted not receiving the letter you sent to me at Bangor. The postmaster was probably a Democrat, and unluckily like all the Democrats I am acquainted with.  
 Don't imagine that I am a Republican. My motto has long been "no union with slave holders" & I think prospects are brightening just now.  
 Mother & I passed three weeks very pleasantly with our Bangor friends & on our return spent a night in Waterville, where we were very cordially received by your uncles family. The weather was oppressively warm. My head ached & I was unusually stupid, but mother was bright & enjoyed talking over old times. Do let us know how the family are at present. It seemed as if Peter could not long survive he was so ill when we saw him.  
 You don't know how often mother & I have wished we might have a visit from your father & yourself. We thought when all Massachusetts mustered here a year ago last September that we should see you. I first you have not forgotten us. -- Early last Spring my dear mother was very severely attacked with lung fever & ever since her health has been exceedingly frail. At present she is more unwell than usual, suffering with influenza, which in her feeble condition, renders her very ill. I fear she will be obliged to confine herself to the house all winter. Do you hear from your cousin Lizzy? I fancy she is married, that is the fate of most who go to California. Please remember me to her when you write. I spent a month in Plymouth N. H. last summer with my aunt & another friend. We spent much of our time on the shores of lakes, & especially Mountain ledge. I was almost wild with delight, never having seen any mountain before. Have you ever visited the White Mt? I really grew fat upon the strawberries & mountain trout.  
 Mother is anxious to hear from Mrs. Gehring. She felt very sorry last summer to hear that Mrs. Head (?) should visit Lexington without coming to Concord. How is Mrs. Copeland? If you know anything of Mr. Allen's family we shall be pleased to hear from them. -- Aunt Louisa & Mrs. Under are still with us, & well as usual.  
 I do hope that you will not let another season pass without reporting yourself in Concord.  
 Mother joins with me in kind regards to your father & yourself.  
 Let us hear soon how the winter is passing, and believe me affectionately yours,  
 Sophia M. Thoreau.  
 Dec 30th The old year is almost gone. Let me wish you a happy new one.  
 Postmarked Concord Dec. 31.



Concord May 19th

My dear Cousin,

Let me thank you for your friendly inquiries as to our welfare. It makes me shudder to recall some of my experiences during the past year, & I really shrink from telling you what befell my precious mother last Dec. the 21st day of the month. It was bitter cold, all the family, (that is my two aged aunts & Joanna our girl) except mother & myself had gone to bed, when dear mother fell down a very steep staircase, very nearly killing herself. She was deprived of her senses for an hour or two, & during the time she called continually for Henry to help her, her right arm was frightfully shattered. The Dr. administered ether, & set her arm carrying off four pieces of bone in his pocket. It was months before poor mother left her bed. Our previous afflictions, & this terrible shock to my nerves, added to the fatigue of nursing mother has seriously impaired my frail health, & the spring finds us miserable indeed. Mother can walk, but there is no prospect that she will ever recover the use of her right hand. I would not forget the many blessings which attend me, but in my feebleness I do miss an earthly friend to lean upon, dear Henry was a host so wise in counsel & so efficient in every emergency. Oh it is a great mystery that we are left to live without him.

Ticknor & Fields are about to issue a volume of my brother's papers. Every moment of my time is occupied. I have been preparing some of my brother's MSS, for the press & of course I have household duties so that you will not wonder if I neglect my correspondents.

We felt sorry that you did not come with your father to see us last summer. Do come this season We should be glad to see Alice with you. If I remember rightly, she promised us a visit when she should come this way. Please give our love to her. --We had not heard of Mrs Cushing's departure. She was very feeble when I saw her in Bridgewater.-- Mother does not know recognize Mrs Hunt, of whom you speak & wishes me to ask who she is?--Is Lizzie Forbes in California still?--As to the army, I have only one distant relative, a cousin's son, who has lately entered the navy. I am spared that peculiar anxiety one must feel who has dear friends exposed to the dangers, & hardships of war, but my sympathies a severely taxed I assure you, in view of the melancholy condition of our country.--

Misery is said to love company you know, but I think it would be most refreshing to find one sound neighbor. Perhaps it will comfort your father to know that carbuncles prevail in this region. I am sorry that he is thus afflicted. I have one farmer friend, who is cured by working on the land when the warm weather comes. He has suffered with carbuncles the past two winters.--

Let us hear again soon. Mother & aunts send much love to yourself & family--

Excuse these hasty lines, & believe me

Your affectionate cousin,

Sophie



Thank you most sincerely for your invitation to  
visit Bridgewater, I wish we were able to do so.

DATING 1863. Mother's fall.



Concord Feb. 1st '67.

My dear Cousin,

It is almost embarrassing to break the silence which has so long separated us.

But be pleased to pardon all seeming neglect to overwhelming cares & responsibilities, growing out of the departure of my precious friends, attended with long continued illness on my part.

Let me thank you for the hearty expression of your sympathy, at the time dear Henry left us. It was fully appreciated.

As you may suppose much of my time has been devoted to the publication of his papers.

Five volumes have been printed since his death. --I trust that you have read them, & also the many friendly criticisms which discriminating readers have bestowed. I should like to tell you of numerous touching incidents, proving the respect & affection felt for him by those to whom he was personally a stranger. While the sense of our great loss is strengthened from year, to year, it is a pleasure to realize how many share our grief, & we are continually solaced by the sweetest memories of his whole life.--

I believe I have never told you of my dear mother's accident. In Dec. '62 one bitter cold night, she fell down a long flight of stairs--breaking her right arm, & otherwise injuring herself, so that her life being saved, seemed miraculous.

How thankful am I, for until I am deprived of the word mother, the sweetest drop in life's cup remains.--

Two years ago last Aug. my saintly aunt Jane --my father's elder sister passed away, leaving us really bereft, & a year since the 24th of this month, my good aunt Louisa, after a long & trying illness was released from life's burdens, thus narrowing our circle down to two. Whittier's lines are often brought to mind.

"How strange it seems with so much gone  
Of life & love, to still live on!

Ah mother, only I & thou

Are left of all that circle now."

Aunt Sophia is still with her son in Haverhill. She left Concord three years since. Last summer she visited us in July when her 85th birthday occurred. Her faculties are wonderfully preserved--I forgot to say that aunt L. died of dropsy. For a year or more previous to her death she was repeatedly attacked with apoplexy & we were constantly anxious on her account.

I wish you to realize how feeble my dear mother is. Since her fall she has never been able to dress herself, or use her needle--the right arm being nearly helpless, & owing to weak eyes she is much of the time deprived of reading. Notwithstanding her infirmities, she is ever cheerful.--I do not wish to send you a sorrowful letter, for the kind Providence which has sustained us amidst so many trials fills my heart with gratitude, & I would rejoice evermore.--We live much in the



past. Mother retains a lively interest in her old friends. She desires most affectionate remembrances to y'r father of whom I hope you will be able to give a good report. Do not delay to write & I will promise to be more faithful in future.

We have thought of you since the great storm & wondered how you would escape through the drifts. Have you a neighbor in the house near you? It would afford us much pleasure to see you in Concord. Will you not try to come with your father when the winter is past.

Hoping to hear very soon, believe me

Affectionately yrs

S. E. Thoreau.

Tristly criticism which distinguishes a man from a woman. I should like to tell you of a number of teaching incidents, proving the respect & affection left for him by those to whom he was personally a stranger. While the sense of our great loss is strengthened from year to year, it is a pleasure to realize how many share our grief, & we are continually solaced by the sweetest memories of his whole life.

I believe I have never told you of my dear mother's accident. In Dec. '81 one bitter cold night, she fell down a long flight of stairs--breaking her right arm, & otherwise injuring her self, so that her life being saved, seemed miraculous.

How thankful am I, for until I am deprived of the word mother, the sweetest drop in life's cup remains--

Two years ago last Aug. my anxiety was lessened by my father's slight stroke passed away, leaving me really bereft, & a year since the 24th of this month, my good aunt Louisa, after a long & trying illness was released from life's burdens, thus throwing our circle down to two. Whistler's lines are often brought to mind.

How strange it seems with so much gone

Of life & love, to still live on!

No mother, only I & thou

Are left of all that circle now."

Aunt Sophia is still with her son in Haverhill.

The last Concord three years since. Last summer

she visited us in July when her 83rd birthday occurred. Her faculties are wonderfully preserved--

I forget to say that Aunt died at 84.

A year or more previous to her death she was repeatedly attacked with rheumatism & was very

extremely anxious on her account.

I wish you to realize how lonely my dear

mother is. Since her fall she has not been able

to dress herself, or use her needles--the right arm

being nearly helpless, & owing to weak eyes she is

much of the time deprived of reading. Notwithstanding her infirmities, she is ever cheerful--

I do not wish to send you a sorrowful letter, for

the kind Providence which has sustained me since



Concord Nov. 29th '67.

My dear cousin,

I really feel that I have trespassed upon your forbearance by neglecting so very long, to acknowledge your prompt reply to my last letter.--

We felt very sorry to hear of y'r good fathers illness. At his time of life it seems almost impossible to recover lost strength, wholly. My dear mother had a severe lung fever some eight years ago, & she often refers to her weak side, as the result of the pain she then suffered.

You will doubtless be surprised to know that when the Spring opened I was prevailed upon to leave home. My health was so poor, that my friends urged a journey, & although I had never thought to trust dear mother to the care of another, still I felt that I should make a poor nurse unless my condition was improved. Accordingly I went to Bangor, & after an absence of nearly five weeks--returned decidedly benefited. On my way home I stopped in Haverhill to see aunt Sophia. She retains her faculties astonishingly, but her health is extremely frail.

She writes me letters now, filled with fears on her son's account. Cousin Charles has had repeated attacks of hemorage from the lungs during the past year, & this fall he is troubled with a cough, & pain in the side--alarming symptoms. But after bearing lifes burdens for eighty six years, I do hope that poor aunt may be spared the pain of losing her only stay.

Nearly all the time since August I have been engrossed with company. I think that the summer has been very wet & disagreeable, but the late, pleasant, autumn days have quite redeemed the weather.--

Mother is interested to hear from all her relatives, & thanks you for communicating news of them. You spoke of visiting Brookfield with your father this season, & mother has been earnestly looking to see you in Concord. I hope it is not too late yet. We shall I trust have Indian summer next month, & should be much pleased to have a visit from you, ere the winter sets in. It is no serious affair to take cars from Bridgewater to Concord, & I do hope that we may see you.--

I trust that you will have a neighbor in the old house the coming season if it is still empty.--

If you will come to see us I shall be glad to show you some of my dear brother's haunts, Pilgrims from afar often come to visit them. I was spending a day at "Walden" lately when a gentleman from the West came to the pond to search for Henrys house. He afterwards spent an hour or two at our house. It is a melancholy pleasure to find my brother thus remembered.--

Do let us see, or hear from you very soon. With

kindest regards from mother & myself to y'r father, believe me--

Yours affectionately

S.E. Thoreau

Postmarked Onncord Oct 29.



Concord Apr. 21st

My dear Mary Anne,

I am glad to congratulate you upon the approach of Spring. If you are as tired of cold & storms, as I am you will rejoice with me in the coming of genial airs.

Dear mother & myself are anxious to know what plans you have for the future.--

Does y'r good father feel vigorous enough to undertaking farming again? Upon receiving y'r letter in the autumn, I responded at once--proposing to you to spend the winter with us. After some weeks delay not hearing from you, I wrote to Waterville to learn y'r address.

A very kind, & pleasant letter from y'r cousin Mary, informed me that you were settled for the winter in Plymouth. I hope you have had a good time--write me about it.--

My dear mother's health continues much as usual --her cough does not abate, still her strength holds out. Of course since her accident she has never been able to dress herself, or do any active work; but her mind is very bright, & she enjoys reading & keeps up with the times like a young person.--

Aunt Sophia, who is still in Haverhill, I think, may not continue long. Her son writes me that she is growing weak, both in mind & body. Aunt will be 87, if she lives till July. I intend to go & see her soon.--

I suppose you have read Mrs Michlbach's (?) novels. They interest, but are not exciting like Carlyle's veracious history of Frederick.--

After hearing from Waterville, I thought you would perhaps get my letter, which was sent to Boston, so that I did not write again. Not long since, the document was returned to me from Washington. I do hope this will reach you.

Mother sends much love, & joins with me in desiring that you & your father may make arrangements to visit Concord this spring--giving us all the time you can spare.--

Please let me hear soon, & believe me--

Yours affectionately--

S. E. Thoreau

Postmarked Concord Apr 21



Concord Apr. 21st

My dear Mary Anne,  
I am glad to congratulate you upon the approach  
of Spring. If you are as tired of cold & storm as  
I am, you will be glad to hear of the coming of Spring.  
I am, of course, as tired of cold & storm as you are.  
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I am, of course, as tired of cold & storm as you are.

DATING 1868. Aunt Sophia's age, cf. letter of  
November 29, 1867.

Dear mother & myself are anxious to know what  
plans you have for the future.--

Does y'r good father feel vigorous enough to  
undertake farming again? Upon receiving y'r letter  
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--her cough does not abate, still her strength holds  
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able to dress herself, or do any active work; but her  
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After hearing from Waterville, I thought you would  
perhaps get my letter, which was sent to Boston, so  
that I did not write again. Not long since, the  
document was returned to me from Washington. I do  
hope this will reach you.

Mother sends much love, & joins with me in de-  
siring that you & your father may make arrangements  
to visit Concord this spring--giving us all the time  
you can spare.--

Please let me hear soon, & believe me--

Yours affectionately--

S. E. Thoreau

Postmarked Concord Apr 21



Concord May 13,

My dear cousin

Your letter reached Concord the morning I left to visit some friends in South Boston.

Now I wish we could have met in the city. I thank you most heartily for your most friendly expressions of sympathy coming from a heart that has been tried, they are of much value.--

Since my return I have suffered a good deal with neuralgia in the head. My nervous system is sadly prostrated & it is hard to rouse myself, but I believe it would do me good to make a change & I know dear mother would approve the plan, so if the day proves fine & I am able, you may expect me to take the train for Bridgewater which leaves Boston at 1.45 Thursday the 16th I do not know how long the journey is. If convenient it will be very pleasant to meet you at the depot.

I have not written to Alice--still intend to. Please excuse these hasty lines--

With kind regards to y'r father & hoping to see you in a few days--

Believe me,

Yours affectionately  
Sophia E Thoreau

Postmarked Concord May 13







Concord Nov. 15th

My dear Cousin,

Before the cold winter sets in, dear mother & myself feel anxious to hear from you, & your father. We have heard nothing directly from you for a long time, & I am ready to confess that it is my fault. I am a very negligent correspondent but can plead frail health as an apology. The last you told us was, that your good father spent a homesick winter with friends in Maine--that you had been in Plymouth but had taken y'r copying home. Are you still together? & do you find the writing profitable? We are sincerely interested to know of y'r welfare. You will probably remember that my mother fell down stairs some eight years since. The injuries she then received together with the infirmities of age render her very helpless. She retains her mental faculties, but I do not like to leave her, else I think you might have seen me in Bridgewater. You can sympathize with me in the care of an aged parent. In August last being much prostrated & feeling the need of a journey I joined a party on a trip to the White Mts--was absent from home 9 days. I spent a day & a night on the top of Mt. Washington, went up by cars & came down the carriage road to the Glen. We made Bethlehem our headquarters & visited points of interest in that neighborhood. Our party hired a mountain team with a pleasant driver --took our lunch & spent our day in the forest. The memory of these pleasant excursions will be a joy forever

I saw by the paper that Niles Nilsson (?) was to sing in Bridgewater on Sunday. I hope you heard her & that I too may hear her.

The autumn has been full of sunshine I have had visitors & spent many days in our woods picnicing.

Mother is reading "Gates Ajar" How do you like the book?

Please let us hear from you soon. Mother sends much love to your father & yourself.

Yours affectionately

S E Thoreau.

Postmarked Concord Nov 15



Concord Nov. 15th

My dear Cousin,  
Before the cold winter sets in, dear mother &  
myself feel anxious to hear from you. We have heard nothing directly from you for a long time, & I am ready to confess that it is my fault. I am a very negligent correspondent but can plead trial health as an apology. The last you told us was, that your good father spent a homelick winter with friends in Maine--that you had been in Plymouth but had taken your copying home. Are you still together? & do you find the writing profitable? We are sincerely interested to know of your welfare. You will probably remember that my mother fell down stairs some eight years since. The injuries she then received together with the infirmities of age render her very helpless. She retains her mental faculties, but I do not like to leave her, else I think you might have seen me in Bridgewater. You can sympathize with me in the care of an aged parent. In August last being much prostrated & feeling the need of a journey I joined a party on a trip to the White Mts--was absent from home 9 days. I spent a day & a night on the top of Mt. Washington, went up by cars & came down the carriage road to the Glen. We made Bethlehem our headquarters & visited points of interest in that neighborhood. Our party hired a mountain team with a pleasant driver--took our lunch & spent our day in the forest. The memory of these pleasant excursions will be a joy forever. I saw by the paper that Miss Milson (?) was to sing in Bridgewater on Sunday. I hope you heard her & that I too may hear her. The autumn has been full of sunshine & I have had visitors & spent many days in our woods picnicking. Mother is reading "Gates Ajar" How do you like the book? Please let us hear from you soon. Mother sends much love to your father & yourself.  
Yours affectionately  
S E Thoreau.

Postmarked Concord Nov 15



Concord Sept. 18th

My dear Cousin,

I am greatly surprised on reading your last letter to find it dated so long since. Mother & myself often talk of you & y'r good father, & I hope you will excuse my delay in expressing the sympathy we feel for you. One can in a measure supply the loss of physical strength, but mental decay, it is most trying to witness. I experienced it in the case of dear aunt Louisa--

My mother is greatly blessed in retaining with rare vigor, all her faculties. I don't know what I should do without her society. For a few months last winter I was remarkably well, since then my health has failed, & this must be my apology for not writing to Bridgewater. If you could leave y'r father with some friends for a little time we should delight to have a visit from you, & would gladly defray y'r expenses.

Do you still occupy yourself writing. I should certainly have informed you had I known of any copying at the time you wrote. Mr. Emerson sometimes needs assistance but there is a young lady in town who serves him.

I trust you have a good girl. Help so called I find one of the severest trials of my life. I can seldom leave home for lack of a companion for dear mother. I managed to spend a week with a friend in Cohasset, in Aug. hoping the sea air might benefit me, but was sick all the time. Now I am looking forward to the cool autumn days, trusting they will bring me strength.--

One of our Concord girls, Miss Goodnow, is teaching in some town near you, & boards with a daughter of Mr. Copeland I do not recall her married name. Mother desires to know if her mother is living--she was troubled with a bad cough when she last saw her.--What can you tell us of the Waterville friends?--We have had a good deal of company the past season. An old friend of my mother spent week before the last with us.

Our friends from Maine have visited us--

I am just reading "Gyndale's Hours of Exercise in the Alps." (?) & find it exhilarating indeed.

Mother joins me in very kind regards to yourself & father--We are interested to know yr prospects for the winter--Write soon to y'r affectionate cousin

Sophia

Please accept the enclosed \$5. with the best wishes of my mother for your father's welfare.

Postmarked Concord Sep 18.



Concord Sept. 18th

My dear Cousin,  
I am greatly surprised on reading your last letter to find I have so long since & so often  
talk of you & your good father, & I hope you will excuse my delay in expressing the sympathy we feel for you. One can in a measure supply the loss of physical strength, but mental decay, it is most trying to witness. I experienced it in the case of dear Aunt

Louisa--  
My mother is greatly pleased in retaining with rare vigor, all her faculties. I don't know what I should do without her society. For a few months last winter I was remarkably well, since then my health has failed, & this must be my apology for not writing to Bridgewater. If you could leave your father with some friends for a little time we should be right to have a visit from you, & would gladly defray your expenses.

Do you still occupy yourself writing. I should certainly have informed you had I known of any copy- ing at the time you wrote. Mr. Emerson sometimes needs assistance but there is a young lady in town who serves him.

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I am just reading "Gynaeceia Hours of Exercise in the Alps" (?) & find it exhilarating indeed.  
Mother joins me in very kind regards to yourself & father--We are interested to know your prospects for the winter--Write soon to your affectionate cousin

Sophia  
Please accept the enclosed \$5. with the best wishes of my mother for your father's welfare.

Postmarked Concord Sep 18.



Concord Apr. 8th '72

My dear Cousin,

I know you will excuse my delay in responding to y'r friendly lines of sympathy for which I truly thank you--

Since the departure of my most precious mother I have been much prostrated, & for the past ten days all my strength has been taxed in breaking up house keeping. I have rented my house & gone to board with the family. I could not live utterly alone. No words can tell the severe struggle it has cost me to part with the many relics which had become sacred through association with all my departed loved ones. But my house must be emptied. I am sorry that you know so well how to sympathise with me in my loneliness. I long to see you & tell you the particulars of dear mother's passing away, & when the warm days come I hope to avail myself of y'r kind invitation & spend a little time with you.--

Dear mother was in her bed three weeks. She retained full possession of all her faculties to the last. The vigor & activity of her mind was truly wonderful. Her bodily infirmities she bore as she had done for many years, & the Lord granted a gentle exit.

A rare beauty came to her in death, I wish you could have seen her as she lay like a queen, bedecked with costly flowers, the tokens of friendship & respect.--

Henceforth my life must change, a mother's love cannot be supplied. I feel that a great share of my vitality has gone into the grave of my family--

I was sorry to miss seeing you in Boston last autumn. I met Mrs Townsend a few moments after she parted from you.--

We enjoyed seeing Mrs T. & Alice in Concord. Please give my love to her. I hope to write to Waterville soon.

Remember me to your good father. I trust that when the genial airs of Spring are come he will gain strength. The past season has been unusually trying.

Do write me again & believe me yhrs affect'ly  
S E Thoreau.

P.S.--Can I find at the depot a carriage to take me to your house?

Postmarked Concord Apr 8.



Concord June 1872

My dear Cousin,

It was very pleasant to get a word from you. The picture of your quiet home lies fair in my mind & I wish to thank you for all y'r kindness, very often do I think of you, & your good father. I can imagine how lovely is the landscape in y'r neighborhood & should enjoy a drive with you.

How glad I should be to show you our village just now in all its glory. Believe me, I like to be missed, & I am ready to confess that I missed you sadly, & Tuesday morning proposed returning to Boston--feeling afraid it might rain the next day. It would have been delightful if I could have seen you that day. My friends seemed surprised at the thought of my leaving so soon. They devoted themselves to my entertainment--drove to a pleasant pond & gathered wild flowers & I soon got better of the twinge of homesickness which I felt in the morning--

In the evening Mr Gifford & Mr Payne called, the latter was enthusiastic about Henry whose "Walden" he quoted--

Wednesday morning I had a nice ride to the city in company with Mr Allen. You will be glad to know that a burden was lifted from my mind to my back, by fortunately finding a black brilliantine suit--pret-tilly trimmed polonaise & cape all ready for journeying

By the way I have just received a letter from Bangor & learn that my friends will postpone their journey for a week, on account of Mr Thatcher's illness. It is a disappointment to all concerned.

I am indebted to you for the hints I received from that most valuable book which you put into my hands.--

I should like to have seen Mrs Latham & other friends who were kind enough to think of calling.--

Please thank Mary for finding my stud , I have had it repaired--on my way home I bought a new pair, but they will not come amiss.--

I passed a night with my friends in So. Boston & returned Thursday as I planned.

I devoted two days to neuralgia & since then have accomplished a good deal. I am not always the drome you saw me in Bridgewater.--

I must beg you to nurse y'r lame leg, have you tried rest? I am not surprised after the accident that it should trouble you. Perhaps you have taken some cold, do be very careful & defend it from rheumatism or the like.

Remember me most kindly to your father--

I must enquire for old puss, Kitty, Speck & Spot--hope they are thriving.--

I shall hope to hear again ere long.--

Yrs affectionately  
S.E.T.

Postmarked Concord June 13



Bangor July 31st

My dear Cousin,

It is a cool bright morning this; I have declined an invitation to join a party down to Fort Point, & will gladly devote a little time to you, who are often in my thoughts. It pained me to hear of your good father's prostration. I do hope he is stronger ere this, & that his hearing has returned. It was sad indeed about the poor cows. I wish I had one in my pocket to send you. The cherry is so abundant in our pastures that I should think many would perish if it is poisonous.

I had a pleasant visit of three weeks from my aunt & cousin Mrs Thatcher, & I went to the Peace Jubilee with Mr & Mrs Tolman. Did you accomplish as much? I shall like to relate my experience when we meet. The 28th of June we left Concord & had a very pleasant journey to Maine--stopping one night in Portland. At the end of a fortnight, I went with cousin Geo. & his wife to Mt. Desert. Our ride through the forest was delightful--catching glimpses of lakes & mountains. The scenery at Mt Desert is charming beyond description. Our visit was shortened by a telegram from Bangor announcing the increased illness of Mr Thatcher's father. We hastened back to find that the old gentleman had died the night previous. He was 96 y'rs old & we could only rejoice that the hour of his new birth had come, he had been totally blind for 12 years & confined to his bed over three years. The funeral took place at cousins house. Since then he has had a carbuncle & been under the Drs care. In the midst of it all Neba's (?) girl left & so the perplexity of changing help has been added. I hope you have found a woman faithful & efficient. I expect to go to Mrs Lowells soon to finish my visit & the first of Sept. my cousin Lizzie Lowell will return to Concord to pass a few weeks with me. I have not decided about my winter arrangements. It seems as if I could not leave dear old Concord & without my blessed mother's presence, how can I stay there? Time I fear can never heal my many wounds.--

If you should see Mrs Revere's daughter (I cannot recall her name) whom I met on the shore of Walden will you ask her to forgive my leaving her so abruptly. I was eager to speak with Mrs Emerson who passed at the moment. I cannot tell you how sorry I am to hear of the burning of Mr Emerson's house. Many sacred associations cluster about that home. My friends are ever kind & thoughtful, I have painted some in oils--read, sew, walk, ride, practise upon counsins fine piano still my life seems dream like.

I shall wish to hear from your father & yourself soon. Please direct to the care of Charles Lowell Bangor. And believe me your very affectionate cousin,

S.E.T.

Postmarked Bangor Aug 2.



Bangor July 31st

My dear Cousin,  
It is a cool bright morning this. I have de-  
clined an invitation to join a party down to the  
Point, & will gladly devote a little time to you,  
who are often in my thoughts. It pained me to hear  
of your good father's prostration. I do hope he is  
stronger ere this, & that his hearing has returned.  
I was sad indeed about the poor cows. I wish I had  
one in my pocket to send you. The cherry is so  
abundant in our pastures that I should think many  
would perish if it is poisonous.  
I had a pleasant visit of three weeks from my  
aunt & cousin Mrs Thatcher, & I went to the Peace  
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we meet. The 28th of June we left Concord & had a  
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through the forest was delightful--catching glimpses  
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charming beyond description. Our visit was short-  
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cousin's house. Since then he has had a carbuncle  
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Neda's (?) girl left & so the perplexity of chang-  
ing help has been added. I hope you have found a  
woman faithful & efficient. I expect to go to Mrs  
Lowell soon to finish my visit & the first of Sept.  
my cousin Lizette Lowell will return to Concord to  
pass a few weeks with me. I have not decided about  
my winter arrangements. It seems as if I could not  
leave dear old Concord & without my blessed mother's  
presence, how can I stay there? Time I fear can  
never heal my many wounds.--  
If you should see Mrs. Revere's daughter (I can-  
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so abruptly. I was eager to speak with Mrs Emerson  
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sorry I am to hear of the burning of Mr Emerson's  
house. Many sacred associations cluster about that  
home. My friends are ever kind & thoughtful. I  
have painted some in oils--read, sew, walk, ride,  
practise upon cousin's fine piano still my life seems  
dream like.  
I shall wish to hear from your father & yourself  
soon. Please direct to the care of Charles Lowell  
Bangor. And believe me your very affectionate cousin,  
S.E.T.

Postmarked Bangor Aug 2.



Concord Jan, 1873

My dear Cousin,

I do believe I inspired you to write me, for I had grown very anxious to hear, & thought from day to day that I must sent to enquire what had become of you.

I can easily imagine that the cares of your household must fully occupy these short days, & have they not been bitter cold?--I think that I wrote you in Oct. after Cousin Lizzie left me.--"It seems strange with so much gone of life & love to still live on" as Whittier says. I came back to my desolate home with many misgivings, to try the experiment of living alone. Thus far the winter has passed very pleasantly, My old friends welcomed me most cordially & all Concord seems precious to me. I improved the lovely Autumn days, visiting the favorite haunts of my childhood & my dear brother. I spent days in the woods. Nature soothes me. If the grave holds all my family, still the landscape is friendly.

I purposed to spend a part of the winter in Boston with my friend Mrs. Foster & so enjoy the intellectual life of the city, but thus far I have been a sort of prisoner. First came disease among the poor horses then the terrible fire added to the pestilence widened the gulf, & I have staid quietly at home.

I am just recovering from the effects of vaccination, which after a third trial, proved very successful. The cow virus disturbs the system more than the humanized but is of course the only safe lymph to be used. I trust that I am now protected from small pox & I hope ere long to visit the city--

I am very sorry for the loss you sustain in the death of y'r cousin. I am afflicted by the mysterious disappearance of my cousin Edward Lowell of Bangor. A young man about 25 years old. He left his family as usual the 9th of Nov. to go to his store after tea, & since that night has never been heard from. His poor family are overwhelmed--suspense is so much worse than aught else. They feel that he cannot be living--have dragged the river to find the body if possible & put the case into the detectives hands, but no tidings come.--

Cousin Mary sent for me to return & pass the winter, & I should have been glad to cheer & comfort them with my presence, but I was not very well & had some business matters which decided me to remain in Concord.--

If you read newspapers I am sure the tragic element will get cultivated, for it seems as if crime were epidemic, it is really frightful to contemplate the horrors daily spread before us.--It is rather singular that I am just now reading "On the Heights" --am glad that you have had that pleasure--We have a good Library & Mr Tolman with whom I board, brings home many valuable books.--

I am glad that your father is so comfortable. Does the deafness continue? I often think of you, & wish I could run in & have a chat with you in y'r sunny parlor. The winter landscape must be very beautiful. I should enjoy looking out upon the



trackless snow. Is not y'r woodland path blocked?  
I fear it would add too much to your cares to have  
a winter visitor & so I think you may not see me  
till the spring comes. A good deal of time I have  
devoted to painting in water colors & wished you  
were here to try y'r skill with the brush.---  
Remember me kindly to y'r good father & believe  
me ever your cousin

Sophia  
It is cruel to ask you to write me a line since  
you have a whole volume to copy but I will say  
that any word from you is always welcome. Please  
accept the enclosed with the best wishes of the  
season.

I am just recovering from the effects of an  
operation, which after a third trial, proved very  
successful. The cow which disturbs the system  
more than the humanized but is of course the only  
safe lymph to be used. I trust that I am now pro-  
tecting from small pox & I hope ere long to visit  
the city--

I am very sorry for the loss you sustain in the  
death of y'r cousin. I am afflicted by the mysteri-  
ous disappearance of my cousin Howard Lowell of Dan-  
port. A young man about 25 years old. He left his  
family as usual the 2nd of Nov. to go to his store  
after tea & since that night has never been heard  
from. His poor family are overwhelmed--an expense is  
so much worse than night else. They feel that he  
cannot be living--have dragged the river to find the  
body if possible & put the case into the detective  
hands, but no tidings come--

Cousin Mary sent for me to return & pass the  
winter. & I should have been glad to cheer & comfort  
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singular that I am just now reading "On the Heights"  
--am glad that you have had that pleasure--I have  
a good library & Mr Tolman with whom I board, brings  
home many valuable books--  
I am glad that your father is so comfortable.  
Does the disease continue? I often think of you &  
wish I could run in & have a chat with you in y'r  
sunny parlor. The winter landscape must be very  
beautiful. I should enjoy looking out upon the



Bangor July 1st 73

My dear Cousin,

Trusting that you have not forgotten me quite, & fearing you may unless I report myself without more delay, I will send a few lines this morning. Soon after the receipt of your letter in Jan, I fell ill with a bilious attack, & really am not yet recovered. I suppose I have dyspepsia, that covers a multitude of evils.

The experiment of boarding did not prove wholly agreeable, so in the spring I decided to sell my house & make my home with my friends in Bangor who are most dear to me. I have no doubt it was more trying--I felt a sense of greater loss in all familiar things--being under my own roof. My old friends & neighbors were exceedingly kind, & I shall hope to spend much time with them in the future. It seemed wise to give up all care of renting & keeping my house in repair, so I put it into the hands of a broker, after waiting two months & not finding a purchaser I decided to lease it for three years to F. B Sanborn, who will keep it in repair. Mr S. is a friend I have long known, & it is pleasant to have his family occupy the house. I purposed to visit all my friends before I left Massachusetts. The middle of Apr I went to So. Boston for a week or ten days, & I staid six weeks! The weather was cold as you will remember & I did not I returned to Concord to find warm weather & the country perfectly enchanting. The breaking up selling furniture, & severing myself from every association grown sacred was enough to prostrate me & I did not feel able to make visits. But another season I trust I shall look in upon you.

When I was in Boston I to reap some of the fruits of the city. Heard Bellen (?) the elocutionist. Attended two of McDonalds lectures which gave me great pleasure particularly the first upon "Macbeth".

For music I heard the Hampton Students & also Rubenstein's Ocean symphony by the Harvard orchestra & Wieniawski the violinist.

Did I not do well for an invalid--

We are enjoying a lovely rain today which is greatly needed.--

I regretted to read the death of Simeon Dunbar & thought that dear mother would have known just who it was. I have often heard her speak of "uncle Simeon". I fancy the deceased was a cousin.

Now dear Mary Anne if you have not dyspepsia, I beg you will write me at once--care of Charles Lowell. I am anxious to hear from y'r father & yourself & think of you very often. Believe me y'r affectionate cousin--

Sophia

If you are not familiar with "Gold Elsie" & other works from the German of "Maslitt" (?) I think you will find them pleasant reading.

Postmarked Bangor.



Bangor Sept 25th

My dear Cousin,

I did not mean to let so many weeks go by without responding to your welcome letter. I was in Camden when it reached Bangor. I went with my aunt Maria the middle of July, & spent six weeks very pleasantly. The scenery is charming--the sea & mountain air combined make it a very desirable resort for summer. Now I wish you could have been with me to climb some of the mountains. It makes me ache to think of y'r copying whole volumes--nothing tires me more than writing. I should like to look in upon you these bright September days, & enjoy the golden splendor of our Autumn woods. I do not think the tints in this region are so beautiful as in Massachusetts. But I do not expect to go West before Spring. I am rather dreading the long cold winter of Maine.

Last week Miss Dunbar--Alice I suppose, called at Mrs Thatchers to see me. My home is with Mrs Lowell on the other side of the stream. She thought she might find me, as yet I have not seen her, & shall be sorry if I do not meet her. If I knew where she visited I should certainly try to see her.

I am sorry that y'r father is not well enough to enjoy sitting & seeing his friends. You do not speak of his deafness. Has the trouble abated any? I think the summer has been very trying for invalids, so cold & dry.

When I was at Camden I whiled away a good deal of time in reading stories, & recall "Off the Skelleys" (?) with pleasure. I like Miss Igenlow's (?) poems.

It was a most mysterious & kindly providence which brought to light the body of my dear cousin Ned. It was found in a cove six miles below Bangor entangled in weeds, which prevented it from being carried out to sea.

While the discovery crushed the last ray of hope, it put an end to the terrible suspense which had become almost too heavy for mortal endurance, & I think that now their hearts are beginning to find rest.

The body was fully identified, & his friends feel that his death must have been accidental. It is a sad sad loss to his family.

What a summer of horrors the past has seemed. railroad accidents, fires murders &c &c have filled the daily papers.--

Do let me hear from you soon. Have you good help still? I always recall my visit in Bridgewater with a melancholy pleasure it was associated so intimately with my darling, blessed mother's childhood experience.

With love to your father. Believe me

Yours truly,

S.E.T.

Postmarked Bangor Sep. 25.



Postmarked Bangor Sep. 25.  
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out responding to your welcome letter. I was in  
I did not mean to let so many weeks go by with-  
My dear Cousin,

DATING 1873? Finding of cousin's body.

Bangor Sept 25th



Bangor Nov 25th

My dear Cousin,

I well remember the rainy day you refer to in your letter, it was pouring here lustily. Yesterday we had a real down East snow storm & winter seems well begun.

Since the cool weather I have felt much stronger & have enjoyed many walks & rides. Bangor is a delightful city. I only wish it were not so far from Boston.--

I am rejoiced to hear that your father's deafness has abated, & that he was able to enjoy his birth day. I feel as if it would do him good to go often to the village--ones faculties rust so soon without use. You do not speak of y'r house keeper, or servant. Is she still with you?

I wish very much since you desire it, that you could find some lucrative employment.--Writing tires me so fearfully that I always pity you when you have it to do. I hope you have had success in the magazine business, & am proud of your energy & enterprise.--

Is cousin Louise--Mrs Townsend pardon my stupidity, I am truly sorry for her accident.

What do you find to read? A neighbor sent me Louisa Alcott's "Work" published in the Christian Union, beside the story I have found much valuable reading. Several of the books by Fred. Robinson have come in my way, but I do not care much for them. I miss the scientific works I had access to in Mr Tolman's family last winter. Have you heard about the famous new library in Concord? One of our wealthy citizens erected & presented to the town a very convenient & ornamental building, which already contains ten thousand volumes all free for the use of the villagers. Here one must pay eight dollars a year for access to the books. --I find that they have no Lyceum--as with us, only occasional lectures. It takes too much time and money to hire lectures from abroad.

I set up a stand of flowers in my chamber this fall. I have now a lovely tea rose in blossom and some mignonnnette the latter I intend to paint & I wish you were by my side to try y'r hand with me.

The snow plough has just opened a path which I must improve before another storm--which seems threatening.

Please remember me kindly to y'r good father.

I inclose a trifle to go to the dentist, or into yr mouth after any fashion you choose.

Believe me your affectionate cousin--

S E Thoreau

Let me hear soon & excuse my shabby epistle. I am using borrowed ink. Perhaps that has something to do with it.

Postmarked Bangor Nov. 25.



Bangor Nov 25th

My dear Cousin,  
I will remember the rainy day you refer to in  
your letter. Building of Concord Library.  
1873. DATING.  
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seems well begun.  
Since the cool weather I have felt much stronger  
& have enjoyed many walks & rides. Bangor is a de-  
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I am rejoiced to hear that your father's health  
has  
improved, & that he was able to enjoy his  
birth day. I feel as if it were to him good to go  
often to the village--ones I visited must be soon  
without use. You do not speak of your house keeper,  
or servant. Is she still with you?  
I wish very much since you desire it, that you  
could find some lucrative employment.--Writing times  
me so fearfully that I always give you when you  
have it to do. I hope you have had success in the  
magazine business, & am proud of your energy &  
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is cousin Louise--Mrs Townsend pardon my stu-  
pidity. I am truly sorry for her accident.  
What do you find to read? A neighbor sent me  
Louise Alcott's "Work" published in the Christian  
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reading. Several of the books by Fred. Robinson  
have come in my way, but I do not care much for  
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in Mr Tolman's family last winter. Have you heard  
about the famous new library in Concord? One of  
our wealthy citizens erected & presented to the  
town a very convenient & ornamental building,  
which already contains ten thousand volumes all  
free for the use of the villagers. Here one must  
pay eight dollars a year for access to the books.  
--I find that they have no Lyceum--as with us,  
only occasional lectures. It takes too much time  
and money to hire lecturers from abroad.  
I set up a stand of flowers in my chamber this  
fall. I have now a lovely rose in blossom and  
some mignonette the latter I intend to plant & I  
wish you were by my side to try your hand with me.  
The snow plough has just opened a path which  
I must improve before another storm--which seems  
threatening.  
Please remember me kindly to your good father.  
I enclose a little to go to the dentist, or  
into your mouth after any fashion you choose.  
Believe me your affectionate cousin--  
S. A. Thoreau  
Let me hear soon & excuse my hasty epistle.  
I am really pained in the throat that has some-  
thing to do with it.

Respectfully Bangor Nov. 25.



Concord Oct. 28th

My dear Cousin,

It is three weeks since I returned to Concord. Cousin Lizzie Lowell came with me & staid a fortnight. I have had a pleasant summer--that is, my friends have been devoted to my comfort & helped me to bear my cross. There come moments when a sense of loneliness absorbs me & this world is a blank. During the summer I have had dyspepsia--am now much better--reaping the benefit of journeying & change of scene & air--Concord seems perfectly charming, & for the present I shall content myself here. My cousins wish me to spend the winter in Bangor. I did think of going to Washington with some friends who make it their home in cold weather, & passing a season with them. But I hear such fearful reports of the miasma occasioned by the opening of sewers that I have decided that it would be absurd to go there for health or pleasure.

One friend had neuralgia in every joint, another had chills, another was put upon a diet of quinine pills as an antidote to the poison she had imbibed & so forth & so on.

I very often think of my pleasant stay at your house & feel very much interested in you & y'r good father. I was truly sorry to hear of his deafness. Trust your girl proves servicable & faithful--

What a trying season we have had. The heat was far less severe in Bangor than in Mass. & we did not have thunder storms, but plenty of rain--indeed I am quite tired of this dripping weather since I got home. I have failed to accomplish much that I desired on account of the rain. I can scarcely wonder at the epidemic among horses if dampness is the cause. I do sincerely hope your horse may escape. Only think of Boston--with men & oxen drawing carts through the streets. The description Mr Tolman gave us last night of the appearance of the city without horses, was at the same time laughable & sad.--

I pity the poor, afflicted animals & hope they may soon be well again--While I was with Mrs Thatcher I read two pleasant books from the German of E. Marlitt (?)--"Gold Elsie" & "The Old Man Sele's Secret." (?)--I feel as if I had looked upon a pleasant landscape. I think you might enjoy the stories when the snow comes.--

Has your cousin John recovered from his rheumatic attack.

How I wish you could look in upon me in my pleasant room. Can you not leave y'r father just for a little while. I should delight to show you the improvements in our village & have a good chat with you beside.

Do write me very soon & excuse my delay;--

Remember me affectionately to your father--

Believe me yours truly

Sophia

Postmarked Concord Oct 28

Two pressed leaves enclosed.



Concord Oct. 28th

My dear Cousin,  
It is three weeks since I returned to Concord.  
Cousin Lizzie Lowell came with me & stayed a fortnight. I have had a pleasant summer--and I am now much better--reaping the benefit of journeying & change of scene & air--Concord seems perfectly charming, & for the present I shall content myself here. My cousins wish me to spend the winter in Bangor. I did think of going to Washington with some friends who make it their home in cold weather, & passing a season with them. But I hear such fearful reports of the miseries occasioned by the opening of sewers that I have decided that it would be absurd to go there for health or pleasure.  
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Has your cousin John recovered from his rheuma-tic attack.  
How I wish you could look in upon me in my pleasant room. Can you not leave your father just for a little while. I should delight to show you the improvements in our village & have a good chat with you beside. Do write me very soon & excuse my delay;--Remember me affectionately to your father--Believe me yours truly  
Sophia

Postmarked Concord Oct 28  
Two pressed leaves enclosed.



Bangor July 8th

My dear Cousin,

I will not delay a moment to acknowledge y'r note. I know it is a long time since I have written & I have wished often to hear from you, but dearest, my apology must be ill health.

I have been sick the past year, & when the winter was passed I determined to go to Massachusetts. So as early as Apr 13th I left Bangor with my aunt Maria who is just eighty y'rs old. We boarded 7 weeks in Boston. Taking the advice of an eminent physician I got relief & am now much better. I had hoped during this summer to see you in y'r house. But being obliged to go up so early on account of my health and having aunt with me I could not. I stole out to Concord for a few days, leaving aunt with some friends who came from Washington to board with us.

Three weeks since we returned to Bangor. I took a severe cold on the journey & have been suffering ever since. I am better & long for warm weather. Did you ever know such a cold July?

Did you send me "Aldine's" pretty illustrated Almanac? I was delighted to receive it, but did not recognize your superscription. The post mark was so blurred that I could not read it. Somehow I felt as if it came from Bridgewater & so I wrote to thank Mr. William Allen he declined the acknowledgement, shall I thank you? I feel very grateful to someone.

You speak of being busy. Are you writing at present?

And does your poor father sleep so much. I often think of you in your retired home. I hope he does not suffer pain. Who have you for help. I trust she is somewhat companionable.

Wonder if you have seen "Thoreau The Poet Naturalist," by W. E. Channing. The book has pained me very much. I enjoyed seeing old friends in Concord. The place is changing rapidly improving very much. But O! it was trying for me to return & find so much gone. As Whittier says--

"How strange it seems, with so much gone

Of life and love, to still live on!

No longer forward nor behind

I look in hope or fear,

But grateful, take the good I find

The best of now and here."

I must tell you something father funny Three friends have sent me a needle case, well filled from different quarters one from London. I dont know whether I am considered very industrious, or whether it is a hint to use the needle more. At any rate, sewing does not agree with me & I think my supply of needles will last me a long while.

Do let me hear as soon as you find leisure-- Remember me kindly to your father if he has not forgotten me.

Believe me

Your affectionate cousin

S.E.T.



My dear Cousin,  
 I will not delay a moment to acknowledge your letter. I have often tried to hear from you, but business has prevented me. I have been sick the past year, & when the winter was passed I determined to go to Massachusetts. So as early as April 13th I left Bangor with my aunt Maria who is just eighty years old. We boarded 7 weeks in Boston. Taking the advice of an eminent physician I got relief & am now much better. I had hoped during this summer to see you in your house. But being obliged to go up so early on account of my health and having aunt with me I could not. I stole out to Concord for a few days, leaving aunt with some friends who came from Washington to board with me. Three weeks since we returned to Bangor. I took a severe cold on the journey & have been suffering ever since. I am better & long for warm weather. Did you ever know such a cold July? Did you send me "Aldine's" pretty illustrated Almanac? I was delighted to receive it, but did not recognize your supercription. The post mark was so blurred that I could not read it. Somehow I felt as if it came from Bridgewater & so I wrote to thank Mr. William Allen he declined the acknowledgment, shall I thank you? I feel very grateful to someone. You speak of being busy. Are you writing at present? And does your poor father sleep so much. I often think of you in your retired home. I hope he does not suffer pain. Who have you for help. I trust she is somewhat companionable. Wonder if you have seen "Thoreau The Poet Naturalist," by W. E. Channing. The book has pained me very much. I enjoyed seeing old friends in Concord. The place is changing rapidly improving very much. But O! it was trying for me to return & find so much gone. As Whittier says-- "How strange it seems, with so much gone Of life and love, to still live on! No longer forward nor behind, I look in hope or fear, But grateful, take the good I find The best of now and here." I must tell you something father funny. Three friends have sent me a needle case, well filled from different quarters one from London. I don't know whether I am considered very industrious, or whether it is a hint to use the needle more. At any rate, sewing does not agree with me & I think my supply of needles will last me a long while. Do let me hear as soon as you find leisure-- Remember me kindly to your father if he has not forgotten me. Believe me, Your affectionate cousin, S. E. T.



Bangor Nov 23rd 1874.

My dear Cousin,

It is so long since you wrote me, that I cannot tell when I last heard. I believe you are in my debt, but as my letters are of so little value I will not be ceremonious. I cannot wait longer to enquire how you & your good father are getting on. I sympathise most truly with you in the solicitude you must feel for your dear father in his great feebleness. Do let me hear what his condition is at present & what success crowns your efforts. I think of you as a most enterprising & worthy daughter, whose reward should be great.--

Perhaps it is scarcely polite to intrude my infirmities, but I know that you will be sorry to hear that I am still belong to the invalid army--am a pretty active member as you will think when I tell you that I have been during the past season, to the seashore, & in September I went up into the wilds of Maine, as far as Katahdin Iron Works, a strange region which afforded me much pleasure. I manage to get a great deal of satisfaction out of life, which is a comfort to my friends, as well as myself.

The soft, hazy, days of autumn have lingered till almost now. To day it seems as if winter had come in earnest. The ground is white, & the snow is quietly falling.--

My reading of late runs to magazines. The publishers give me the "Atlantic" out of respect to my brother's memory. A friend gives me the reading of Scribners Monthly & the Harper's cross my path often.

I gathered a good many Autumn leaves--the tints were gorgeous, reminding me of home, such seasons as the past, are uncommon in Me. I have been painting a little some of the bright leaves. Have you tried your hand at the brush yet?

I fancy you always busy--wish I could look in upon you this morning, you & your pussy cats, that most abused feline race has always interested me, & when I was a housekeeper, I strove to do my duty by some of the tribe. Please let me know how many find a home on your nice quiet farm. One of my Concord friends shocked me by telling me that she had sent her pets, Frisky & Sambo to the butcher!! I lost my relish for sausages after that.--

I shall hope to hear from you very soon. Tell me if you have done any visiting or had company--all about yourself. Let me know particularly how your father does--give him my kind regards-- Please accept the enclosed from your sincere friend--

S. E. Thoreau

Postmarked Bangor Nov 23.



Bangor Jan. 1875

My dear Cousin,

It is too bad that I have delayed answering your letter so long; for it was full of pathos & went straight to my heart.

I can sympathize most truly with you in the sense of loneliness, which must at times oppress you, and darling, if, earthly friends forget, remember, there is One who never forsakes us. "May His peace be o'er thy way With its dove pinion slite. "We ask not that our path be always bright But for Thine aid to walk therein aright; That Thou, O Lord! through all its devious way Will give us strength sufficient to our day: For this, for this we pray."

Winter seems now to be upon us in earnest. It is very cold & the snow very deep, however I manage to get out almost daily, if it does not storm. My cousin Mrs Thatcher, lives nearly a mile from Mrs Lowell's, so I have always a pleasant object in view when I walk. I like to inquire for auntie each day. She had an ill turn lately & at her time of life (she is now eighty) we feel much solicitude. She has quite recovered, save a little loss of energy.

I think I may have mentioned the illness of my cousin Ben. Thatcher's wife. The family are looking hourly for her departure. It seems a dark dispensation. Ella is about 30 y'rs old, & will leave a husband & two little children--a large circle of friends & relatives. She has been sick nearly two years of consumption & is entirely reconciled to the change which awaits her.

I should like to see y'r plants, mine are a great comfort to me.--wish I could tell you what little I know about painting. I have a friend in Stuttgart who lately sent me, five autotype facsimiles of drawings by the great masters Michel Angelo, Rubens, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci & Claude Lorraine. Am I not rich?

I hope Santa Claus remembered you at Christmas. I was quite overwhelmed with presents, a pair of gold studs, a pretty gold thimble, a little walnut table, Whittier's "Hazel Blossoms"--lace for my neck & an ornamental rug bag of crash wrought with scarlet worsted. For New Years I received from Mr. Emerson a copy of his new book "Parnassus." Also I would thank you for the Bazaar & Nursery which came safely.

I hope you will see y'r cousin, Alice. I think I must have seen her years ago in Taunton, but am not sure, her sister Lizzie I can never forget. Hope you are getting along comfortably in y'r retirement, with your feeble father to care for. I am thankful that Margaret is so trusty--My regards to y'r father. & much love to y'rself from S.E.T.

I need not assure you that a letter is always welcome from Bridgewater.

Postmarked Bangor Jan. 11.



Bangor Sept 2nd

My dear Cousin,

Our letters are so few & far between, that I am troubled to tell when I last heard from Bridgewater, at all events I desire to learn, how you have got through the warm summer. The lovely cool air of this morning makes me feel that the autumn is at hand. It was my hope to make you a little visit this spring, but loss of health interferes with all our plans. I have not wished to trouble my friends & so I have hesitated to tell them that I am suffering with ascites. I was tapped a fortnight ago for the sixth time, I rally quite to the surprise of my physician, & how long my vitality will hold out I cannot tell. In the meantime I strive to get what satisfaction I can out of life. In April I went to Boston to consult Dr. Bigelow. The journey proved too much for me, & I was obliged to stay three weeks in the city before I could return. The last of July I went to Castine for a fortnight & enjoyed the sea air, Aunt & Mrs Thatcher were with me. We went by water & returned by land. The scenery was delightful.

I think of you, confined by the infirmities of your dear father. I hope he does not suffer. do write me all about him & yourself. Do you find leisure for reading? I am just now interested in the Greville Memoirs." My eyes sympathize with the debilitated state of my system, so that I cannot use them as much as I would like.

I read the history of Castine when I was there. It is a queer old place--was occupied by the French as early as 1615. The oldest forts in the country are there, or rather the remains of them, great numbers of coin, silver & gold have been discovered. The State Normal School has been established in the town, & creates I should judge, pretty much all the life & bustle one sees.--Do you ever meet my friends The Allen's Their daughter Margaret I hear is married.

I hope that you will be able to write me soon Give my kind regards to your father & believe me your affectionate--

Cousin Sophia

Postmarked Bangor Sep 2.







Bangor Oct. 5th 75

My dear Mary Anne,

To be in harmony with this dark day, I have chosen a dark tint from my new box of stationary. I have just been reading "Nature & Life" by Dupillon. I have learned a great many facts which I wish I could always remember. I send along one item which occurs to me just now. "A man of average weight, in the climate of France, generates heat enough to raise seven gallons of water to boiling point every day"!! Just think of it. The paper on "Light & Life" is very interesting. In the absence of sunshine you need not expect a brilliant letter from me. I have science to uphold me in being dull.

I thank you most heartily for your sympathetic expressions. I thought after my visit at your house, that I should often look in upon you. I felt that there was a bond of sympathy growing out of similar bereavements, & let me add, that made us congenial, but alas! my health was already failing. I did not know however, what the disease was, till two years ago this month. I have tried various physicians without avail. I suppose mechanical aid is all that can be afforded, & I am most thankful for that.

I am sorry to hear of your illness. This is bad weather for ~~the~~ rheumatic symptoms. Do try to rid yourself before cold winter comes. I read "Old Money," in the Spring & liked it. MacDonald is a great favorite. I heard him lecture in Boston ten years ago. Macbeth was his theme upon one occasion, when he preached a grand sermon on remorse.

I got a letter from Concord lately urging me to visit friends there. My Dr. said I might take a sleeping car & go. But my good spirits deceive my friends, & they are not aware how little stamina I have. I could not bear the journey nor the excitement. I have a very nice home with Miss Lowell & when the weather admits, I walk & ride a good deal. I wish you could visit me. I am so far away from my friends that no body comes to see me. They are very kind & write often.

I am sorry that you can no longer hope for the return of your uncle & his family. I have often thought how much company y'r cousin Lizzie might have been had she been spared. It is sad to recall the way of her death, so early.

I hope you have no stock in the Eastern R.R. as I have. It is again voting to be swindled after their fashion. Do write when you can.

Remember me to y'r father. Sincerely yours,  
Sophia.

Postmarked Bangor Oct. 6.



Bangor Jan 5th 76.

My dear Cousin,

Your letter found me in bed. It came the day after my tenth operation. The same mail brought three more, & since then I have received several, so that the other day when I sat down to respond to one of my Concord friends, I found that I had nine letters to answer, just your number & I believe you will pity rather than blame me for not thanking you earlier for y'r most welcome epistle, & the pretty bright neck tie. I wear it very often & think of you. The little heads pleased me too. I determined when the holidays came to send you a neck tie, & purchased one for you, but you anticipated me, & remembering how much use you have for a pen, I send you a gold one, hoping that it will give you satisfaction.

I am sorry to know that you have suffered again with rheumatism. I have had a touch of it, first in one foot & then the other. I have thought it was epidemic in this neighborhood so many cases have occurred. The weather is very trying & I have been able to get out but seldom. The loss of Concord society grows upon me daily. My lack of health prevents my making new friends, so books are my resource. Mr. Emerson sent me his new volume & I have got "The Songs of Three Centuries," by Whittier, my favorite poet. We are reading "Sevenoaks." I am truly sorry that your pastor's wife is so ill. It is so sad to leave home comforts, & die among strangers as so often happens when consumption is the foe. I am glad that your father does not suffer acutely. My dear aunt Maria is under the Dr. & nurse's care attacked from time to time with excruciating pains. Her Dr. is fearful that she has stones in the gall bladder. Aunty is blessed with entire peace of mind in prospect of her departure. It is a great mystery, that of pain & our sympathies are all taxed in her behalf. I wish that you could see the sacred flower of the Chinese, which I have in blossom, a friend sent me the bulb from California. Do you keep plants this winter? Did you know Jane Whiting who taught in Bridgewater? She has lately died of cancer. A caller interrupted my letter, & now it is growing dark, so with the kindest wishes of the New Year Believe me yours truly--  
Cousin Sophia.

Postmarked Bangor, Jan. 5.



Bangor Feb. 15th

My dear Cousin,

Although in your letter of Jan. 9th you described your dear father as very feeble, still it was a surprise to me, yesterday to learn that he had left you. I hasten to assure you of my tenderest sympathy. Experience has taught me to feel for you. I know what it is to bear the infirmities of the sick & aged--to watch them long years & then to see them depart, & I know the void, the bereft heart feels when all are gone--better still I have tasted that the Lord is gracious. He softens our hearts in seasons of bereavement making us more sensible to His loving kindness, & helping us to appreciate our friends & neighbors.--

I am glad that you were able to do for your father to the last.

How suffering reconciles us to the separation from friends.

It was pleasant that his mind grew clear toward the last.--

I am glad to have looked upon your home, with its green & sunny fields, & I wish it were feasible for you to retain it. Until you leave it, you will never realize how sacred it is, how hallowed by the memories of those who have lived, & died there. You say it seems the last thing to give up. I felt just so, but since then, I have relinquished health. If only faith & resignation take its place, I will not murmur.--How gladly would I send for you to share my home if I had one of my own. I thank you most truly for saying that you are willing to come to my aid. I think you would be a dear little nurse. Although I have been confined to the house the past month with rheumatism my left limb being much swollen, with some other new symptoms added to my ordinary condition, still I take care of my room & of myself. Cousin May keeps no help. I read, sew, paint & write a good many letters.

I really believe that the inclement weather has developed the rheumatism & I have heard of a good many cases in the neighborhood. I hope you escape.

I trust that the soft airs of Spring will bring healing to many.--

I have been reading "Madame & her Friends," lately.

I am much interested in all that concerns you. So do tell me of your plans. Whilst I occupied my house it furnished only a shelter I have been the gainer by renting it. The times are such that I suppose you would hardly like to sell y'r farm. I wish you could rent it to a pleasant family, with whom you could make your home.--

After the severe storm of yesterday it is delightful to see the sun. I hope it shines in Bridgewater & helps to cheer my little cousin's sad heart.

Yours ever

Sophy.

Postmarked Bangor Feb. 16



DATING 1876. After Mr. Dunbar's death, before  
Sophia's.

My dear father, I received your letter of Jan. 9th. It was a surprise to me, yesterday to learn that he had left you. I hasten to assure you of my tenderest sympathy. Experience has taught me to feel for you. I know what it is to bear the infirmities of the sick & aged--to watch them long years & then to see them depart. I know the void, the bereft heart feels when all are gone--better still I have tasted that the Lord is gracious. He softens our hearts in seasons of bereavement making us more sensible to His loving kindness, & helping us to appreciate our friends & neighbors.--

I am glad that you were able to do for your father to the last. How suffering reconciles us to the separation from friends. It was pleasant that his mind grew clear towards the last.--

I am glad to have looked upon your home, with its green & sunny fields, & I wish it were possible for you to retain it. Until you leave it, you will never realize how sacred it is, how hallowed by the memories of those who have lived, & died there. You say it seems the last thing to give up. I felt just so, but since then, I have relinquished health. If only faith & resignation take its place, I will not murmur.--How gladly would I send for you to share my home if I had one of my own. I thank you most truly for saying that you are willing to come to my aid. I think you would be a dear little nurse. Although I have been confined to the house the past month with rheumatism my left limb being much swollen, with some other new symptoms added to my ordinary condition, still I take care of my room & of myself. Cousin May keeps no help. I read, sew, paint & write a good many letters.

I really believe that the inclement weather has developed the rheumatism & I have heard of a good many cases in the neighborhood. I hope you escape. I trust that the soft air of Spring will bring healing to many.--

I have been reading "Madame de M..." lately.

I am much interested in all that concerns you. So do tell me of your plans. Whilst I occupied my house it furnished only a shelter. I have been the gainer by renting it. The times are such that I suppose you would hardly like to sell your farm. I wish you could rent it to a pleasant family, with whom you could make your home.--

After the severe storm of yesterday it is delightful to see the sun. I hope it shines in Bridgewater & helps to cheer my little cousin's sad heart.

Yours ever  
Sophy.

Postmarked Bangor Feb. 18



May 17th

Dear Friend,

For the last ten weeks I have been very ill--  
one half the time confined to my bed. The acute  
pains I experience are in part due to my disease,  
& in a measure attributable to the inclement season  
--I was glad to hear from you & hope you will write  
again & excuse my silence I am wasted in flesh &  
strength & wholly unable to respond to my friends--  
I sincerely beg God's richest blessings may ever  
attend you & will say fare well precious friend--

Ever yours  
S.

Postal card postmarked Bangor May 17







Bangor June 13th

My dear Cousin,

Many thanks for your kind, affectionate, & comforting letter. I cannot bear that you sh'd think me suffering much, when I am comparatively so comfortable. Since my last operation, a fortnight ago Sunday, I have been free from those fearful neuralgic pains which threatened to annihilate me, & have rallied to the surprise of all my friends. Tomorrow I am to be tapped again, & foreseeing that the prostration consequent would prevent my writing at present I send a few lines this morning, although as you may imagine, I am not very vigorous. Fourteen days is the most I can put between the operations & having 25 lbs of fluid withdrawn each time, I only wonder that I survive at all.--

I do not like to complain of the weather, but the softer air of summer I think have much to do with my relief from pain, & I am sorry to lose one of these long June days for they can be made up to us in no other month.--

You did not tell me of your plans. Are you trying to carry on the farm? I can easily fancy how the loss of your dear father, & mother too, comes each day. I rejoice that such sweet & blessed memories are vouchsafed you-- I am glad that you have so friendly a pastor. How is his wife now?

I cannot talk with you about books, for I am able only to read short articles. I see the numbers of "Littell" & always find something valuable.

I received a long letter from Concord yesterday which is always a great refreshment.--My nurse at present (I have had three) was born in England. She has nursed in this city 30 y'rs. She is a sort of Miss Partington & quite amuses me. She has had great experience & I value her. Accept my truest thanks, dear friend, for all your sympathy, & excuse this apology for a letter which betrays my weakness both of mind & body. O! I am so tired. Good-by darling. From

Sophia.

Postmarked Bangor June 13



Bangor June 12th

DATING 1876. After Mr. Dunbar's death; before  
Sophia's.

My dear Cousin,  
I am suffering much, when I am comparatively so, as  
forebode. Since my last operation, a fortnight ago  
Sunday, I have been free from those fearful neural-  
gic pains which threatened to annihilate me, & have  
replied to the surprise of all my friends. Tomorrow  
I am to be tapped again, & foreboding that the pro-  
cedure consequent would prevent my writing at  
present I send a few lines this morning, although  
as you may imagine, I am not very vigorous. Your  
last day is the most I can put between the opera-  
tions & having 25 lbs of fluid withdrawn each time  
I only wonder that I survive at all.--  
I do not like to complain of the weather, but  
the softer air of summer I think have much to do  
with my relief from pain. I am sorry to lose one  
of these long June days for they can be made up to  
us in no other month.--  
You did not tell me of your plans. Are you  
trying to carry on the farm? I can easily fancy  
how the loss of your dear father, & mother too,  
each day. I rejoice that  
such sweet & blessed memories are vouchsafed you--  
I am glad that you have so friendly a pastor. How  
is his wife now?  
I cannot talk with you about books, for I am  
able only to read short articles. I see the num-  
bers of "Littell's" & always find something valuable.  
I received a long letter from Concord yester-  
day which is always a great refreshment.--My nurse  
at present (I have had three) was born in England  
She has nursed in this city 30 yrs. She is a sort  
of Miss Partington & quite amuses me. She has had  
great experience & I value her. Accept my kindest  
thanks, dear friend, for all your sympathy, &  
excuse this apology for a letter which betrays my  
weakness both of mind & body. O! I am so tired.  
From  
Sophia.

Postmarked Bangor June 12