

2008.1.1.1.1.26

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil  
March 24<sup>th</sup> / 89.

My own loved Sam,

Your dear letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> came yesterday & completely disarmed a very wrathful little girl. I had fully made up my mind if none arrived before Tuesday next, I should let today pass without writing, the first Sunday I should have missed since I returned home. the more I thought of punishing you, the more I desired to write, if you can understand such a contradictory little woman, so in the end, the pain would have been greater for me, than for my own pet. however all is once more forgiven & forgotten, & the sun shines brightly again for you & I. It was a good thing you had such pleasant company during your long disagreeable drives when inspecting the different outposts you mention - time did not seem so long nor the weather so cold! Ladies seem to bring you luck when you have one for a partner at whist. I think I shall like Mrs. Wilson – though she

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is not pretty, she is very ladylike & unaffected, which is a charm in itself. It is too bad a couple of letters should come together as one is more than sufficient to wade through, particularly when one is cold & tired. Thank goodness, our snow is fast disappearing. We had fully four feet of it, in some places more, in others less. I will not be sorry to leave so much of it for some time; one get's [sic] a surfeit of it sometimes, especially in the country when we go out so seldom. You wrote of Julia, but did not mention

her husband's name, that's why I asked. I fear my permission will not be asked ~~th~~ to come nearer the pony, the next time you & I go out riding – it will not be taken for granted & not considered necessary, by my preux chevalier. I think a great deal of myself, my pet, but not of my looks – they are not such ~~that~~ as would warrant me any reason for conceit, so do not trouble me – I only regret that for your sake nature was not more lavish of her charms, so must endeavor to make up by kindness & goodness for all else that is lacking. You are more likely to get tired of all the sweets than I, as you will have the trouble of taking them.

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Of course, I do not know how Mr. W. was treated by the young lady he loved, so am not a competent judge; but as a rule, men are easily consoled & think one woman as good as another, if she possesses the qualities they seek for in a wife. a man generally fancies himself very wrongfully treated, if anything occurs to mar the sweet dream! – it takes so little, particularly when both are hotheaded & neither will ~~not~~ listen to explanations, of any kind!! he takes pity on the girl & attributes it all to want of sense, so will not worry over it longer than he can. may the next fellow have more luck! so passes on to the next young lady of his acquaintance whom he imagines will appreciate him better & that page is turned over. he may never know all she endures without one sign & how her heart bleeds, but that is a woman's lot & life. as Owen Meredith says,

“Time rules us all. And life indeed is not  
The thing we planned it out ere hope was dead –  
Best then we women cannot chose [sic] our lot”

If being true to you in thought & deed, loving you better than any one on earth, brings happiness, then you shall be the most fortunate man living, as far as possessing the affection of your wife brings enjoyment! – I hope you never will have cause to sigh for the old days when you & I are together, as

it would be a very bad sign. they would say – “another disappointed man!” – It is such a pleasure for me to tell you all the love I feel for you, that you must not wonder at the many times I repeat it – only forgive me, & pretend you do not notice it too much – if you were nearer, I should not inflict you to such a degree you may be sure of that. I never could tell you all this, viva voce, so profit of the time that still remains of the long months of parting & do all the confessing, when such a distance lies between us! – Your being so different from most men only gives you greater charm in my eyes, as I am unlike most girls. Mrs. Hubert thinks it will be nice for us when we meet again - we will be pretty well acquainted through letters, but there still will exist a timid feeling, I know not what, in me, when we are reunited. I cannot help it, so you will not be hurt if it should perchance come to the surface & be perceptible to your dear eyes.

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Had you met me before you might not have cared for me – my blissful ignorance was the cause of many a pain & pleasure as well, which only served to make things more romantic & perhaps to love you more, not wishing to [ask] for your love, but desiring it very ardently – ah! in fact, I am a very strange little girl, a puzzle to myself often, so will not try to make you understand what I cannot fully explain. Women have truly more to perform than men – so much is expected of them, which they sometimes lack the energy to do! – a breath of scandal is sufficient to hurt her, whether there be truth in it or not. Some are weak, very weak & put too much faith in man – poor things! do they not deserve all our pity? it is a subject which gives one plenty for deep consideration but as I am not well [up] in the matter ~~in~~ discussion I had better turn to something else. It is rather difficult for me to collect my ideas when I hear talking on every side – first, the baby then Antoine, not to mention the rest of the family who are far ahead of me in the art of conversation – form your

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opinion of what you will have to put up with, when you come to visit us! – A few good sensible women, would soon change the tone of a whole town, if they had the courage to allow no unworthy man to enter their homes: particularly when they are at the head of the society of the place they live in. You are better far from me, my pet, you think? You would not neglect your duties for your little girl, I know you too well for that, & we will have to part now & then, when you will be unable to bring me with you, though I trust it will be seldom, as I shall be so lonely without my own darling Boy. I cannot imagine what made me so dull as not to know it was Woolly you meant, but he was at the time so very far from my thoughts, you should not be surprised at it. Woolly promised me all sorts, but failed to keep his word – he wished me to give him hope where I was positive it would never exist, so declined to comply with his demands – he then faded out of my life, & I heard shortly before going to Macleod, that he was there – you can fancy the meeting! – he felt so humiliated at his position that he could scarcely speak. in fact,

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merely touched my hand, never addressing one word to me, though he said many things meant for me, which the others failed to remark. I hope your old friend who saw you at the races was agreeably impressed by the lady he says you were with – it may have been the other ladies or Mrs. Mac. he alluded to, not I at all. There is very little pleasure to be found outside our own family circle & no inducements to take me out: it is much gayer in the summer season, of course. I do not wish to leave home for any time, as I will be leaving it for good some day, only to return for a visit now and then. My looks you may find I have lost when you see me again – I will however do my best to look nice, if that is a comfort. I can think of nothing

else to be done in the house previous to my going up. Whatever changes, besides those mentioned, can remain until after, as I must be kept busy when I go back with you. I wrote this far before dinner & have been tempted to destroy this & write another, only having so many others to write, I venture to hope you will excuse this & the very numerous repetitions & badly expressed sentences. You will sometimes, I trust, accompany me on my visits East, so that we will not be obliged to part. I do not expect to come every few months you know, so the other partings may not have the same effect as the first. You may not mind it so much next time, & be very glad to get rid of the little girl for a few months at least: you might get very tired of me you see, when you have me near you all the time – if I fancy there is any fear of such a thing, I will leave on very short notice hoping absence will awaken slumbering love. Lex will no doubt take Mrs. Mac out very often & enjoy it. Every opportunity he had of giving her a compliment about riding, he did so – especially when you spoke of me. I used to laugh so sometimes – he keeps [warning] one so much, that it makes me nervous & I used to thank Heaven you were not that way: it would have spoilt half the pleasure of the rides in my opinion. Even the greatest gallantry cannot induce you to ride with Miss Maye Harwood any more – as things go, that next occasion you have of escorting that person, she will have changed her name for one you know even

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better & will I hope, prove all the more attractive to you. Are you not sorry you did not meet Miss Myers before you met this little one? She is far more imposing, being so much taller & heavier than I am & would look grand moving about your home, attending to all your wants & pleasures. Is she visiting any of the rancher's [sic] wives around Pincher Creek? She must like the country since she desires to remain – if she has money she will find no difficulty in securing a husband – few men do not look for some of the "golden ducats" as well. You were an exception to the rule & I hope will not

regret it. It is disagreeable today pouring rain. My sister Louise is happy though, as her dear Willie is here, after an absence of six weeks – she was so delighted at thought of seeing him. I asked her what she would do, were she in my place? it seems sometimes as if I were dreaming – engaged to you & never to see you or have the gratification of entertaining you. it is hard, is it not? do you wonder now your letters are such a comfort? I look

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forward to them with such intense delight that when they fail me, I am inconsolable, my own darling Boy. Grandmamma will be pleased to return to Mrs. Mac. She does not like the style of life she is compelled to lead, always having been fond of quiet home life, surrounded by everything she could desire – one short year has brought very many changes to us all!!!.. I am sure you must be surprised at my having asked you when you could come down – my wishing to know so far ahead! I told you why in one of my last & when you see what busy bee's [sic] we are, you shall understand. They say, that the Bishop of Montreal has obtained leave from the Pope to abolish Lent & that we are to fast all Fridays throughout the year instead – it will come into force next year & will be preferable, as it will not be so fatiguing. I commenced to fast & kept it up for two weeks, when all my good resolutions were knocked in the head, not being strong enough to continue. The sun is peeping out, & the evening may be fine after all. Well, my pet, I hope to hear from you on Tuesday & am charmed to know you are feeling so well. If you were only near me, my darling. I seem to long for you so much sometimes & would give so much for a look at you. "I think if I find a

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resting place in heaven I shall want even then to [have] near you." so it seems hardly possible to measure the extent of my love for you, my own one. God bless you my pet, & keep you safe for the dear little girl who loves

you so much. With many sweet kisses, ever

Your own

Maye.

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