

2008.1.1.1.1.72

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

[pg 1]

Vaudreuil,
Sept. 22nd / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Your dear short letter of the 11th reached me on Thursday last & received a warm, hearty welcome. You cannot imagine what disagreeable weather we have had! six days of incessant rain & the wind is blowing a perfect gale today – it reminds me forcibly of the coldest weather I experienced during my visit to Macleod & I must say, I do not like it. it usually is quite warm at this season, consequently, we were unprepared for this snap. A large log fire burns brightly in our old-fashioned chimney place & tempers the house, still my finger-tips are somewhat cold, though my heart beats warm & true to you, my pet. Well, my darling, the races were going on this time last year & you & I were not the very best of friends, were we? Just a year ago last

[/pg 1]

[pg 2]

evening we had our first talk, when we drifted so unconsciously on to the very delicate topic of love. We have become quite familiar with the subject now my dear, though I at that time was convinced it would never be known to either of us – it sometimes seemed as if an insurmountable barrier separated us!!! On the Saturday afternoon our lady friends remained down town on our return from the course & when about to enter the wagon you looked at Lex, who was seated in front with Mrs. Mac & said “if Miss H. will allow me, I shall sit here” at the same time stepping in & taking a seat near me. it was our first drive together side by side & the next was my trip to Lethbridge on my return journey home – what a complete change had taken place in those few short months! – though I cannot say the feelings were much warmer when the last was taken – only the knowledge that they need not

[/pg 2]

[pg 3]

be hidden any longer made the drive more pleasant. Mrs. Neale will be

charmed to reside in Ottawa as more than likely Capt. Neale's duties will compel him to reside there, will they not? If you fancy I look well in the group, you will be sadly disappointed – I told you the reason before so will not repeat it, pet. But I have made up my mind to have more taken when I am in better health previous to my departure for the N. West, as I must leave something for my friends to remember me by. You like the small photo taken when a school girl. I shall look & see if I have one & shall send it on for you to contemplate & study my many good & bad qualities. Well, darling if you are not happy with me no one shall regret it more than I; but we must be happy, if complete love & trust bring happiness. Papa was saying the other day in response to some remark of mine "You lack no confidence in your Major" & I told him "I thought & hoped you never should give me reason to think it misplaced". You may have time to visit your friend the manager of the bank in Toronto. You told me you intended visiting that place, perhaps before coming here even. Lex still continues his quiet smokes with you dear, I see & he will run over oftener now as Mrs. Mac has company. Mrs. Mac has evidently been confiding in very indiscreet people of late: women can insinuate so much in a very innocent way apparently & do more harm than if they said the thing outright – they are so unkind too & will make fun of one of Mrs. Mac's good-hearted, confiding nature. What are the stories anyway? can you tell them? there must be something in particular, else you would not have remarked it. I am anxious to be near you, pet for so many reasons & also think my presence will prove beneficial to

[/pg 3]

[pg 4]

to Mrs. Mac as she may tell me more than others. However, Grandma is near her now, so she will be all right. I as a rule look on nearly every one as a casual acquaintance & make few intimate friends. I have a feeling not easily overcome towards strangers. I seem friendly but keep them at a distance as it were. If Mrs. Mac sadly requires a lady's advice, what is wrong? You have succeeded in puzzling me, pet & have really aroused my curiosity. You will I fear think I made "much ado about nothing" when I spoke of the trifles which annoy me. I told you they were trifles, but I could not let them pass unnoticed. I love you so dearly, pet, that I had to tell you in the end, trusting to your discretion dear, as to the way you should act not to let on that you know anything about it. Mrs. Mac writes her mother

[/pg 4]

[pg 5]

about every little thing she does or says during the day, so of course, she

gets all the sympathy she wishes for. As Grandma pities her for every little task she has to perform, she laments the slow servant Mrs. Mac has to put up with, & the tasks which in consequence fall to her lot. I am sure the house you are preparing to receive or welcome me to, will be as nice as love can make it, then love will continue to make it cheerful, bright & gay, my darling, I hope. the dull grey it was before, made it cold & cheerless looking & it required a deal of warmth to make it pleasant. I told you about the trifles in my last, then regretted it, fearing it might cause a coolness – but you were beginning to think it more than it is, so in a way, I fancy I was right to tell. You are no doubt very busy at present, my darling boy & you may find it impossible to

[/pg 5]

[pg 6]

write me as often as usual this week. I shall understand the cause of your silence if such is the case. I hope Mr. S. is better by now – he is a queer little creature & gives me the idea of a very disappointed man, though so young. I heard before of Mrs. Zach's cautious conduct – she made up her mind not to swell the ranks of the “old maids” & should, I suppose be admired for her wise conclusion. Her description of her sisters [sic] disposition amused me immensely – after discoursing about her for a long time she wound up by saying “she cared for no man but Zach, & you see Mrs. Mac, she could not marry Zach & I marry him too, could she”? “that would have been very nice, said I, but to make your sister happy, why did she not marry Zach, & you marry somebody else?” She looked daggers at me & said nothing for a few moments. I could not help smiling. She dislikes me I know it well, but I do not care a snap of my finger for her. If you think her a busy body, she must be or you would not say it. Where does the expression “Salt of the Earth” come from? you have used it once or twice before. you think me a true hearted girl – well, I believe I am & hope time will only serve to convince you of my truth. You also think me discreet – sometimes I may have failed a little in that good quality, but it has always been one of my greatest endeavors to guard my tongue, though it is a very long pointed one, if you remember seeing it sometimes. Mrs. Mac always made fun of its length in the good old days. An old Grandaunt of mine, poor old grandpapa's only sister died on Friday. they are all gone now. Mamma feels rather sad over it as it recalls her great loss of some eighteen months ago. she will be

[/pg 6]

[pg 7]

buried on their old family lot in Williamstown next dear Grandpapa, whom

she loved so dearly. I am as you say very busy, but I really must say I think I get on better with you far than were you near. my eyes would never rest on my work & my fingers would I fear, be very idle too, so if I ever want to finish I must hurry before you come greet my sight. Gertie is preparing to leave us. She goes on the 1st of Oct & hates the idea of living in town & with so few around her, after being here for so long. I console her by asking her to put herself in my place, so far from all, but, I know pet, it will, if such a thing is possible only make me love & cling to you more. It is very quiet here – all the strangers have gone, frightened by our disagreeable weather & cold, raw days. The Autumn is surely upon us, though

[/pg 7]

[pg 8]

we can look forward to a few nice days, ere the winter sets in – once that is upon us, a change will be near for you & I, my own one. Louise is still in Montreal, so we do not see Mr. Drayner. I cannot say I miss him very much – he has gone down a little in my estimation lately owing to a remark he made & very uncalled for indeed! but he takes delight in such things, so I should not be surprised. I hope your trouble in preparing for Lord Stanley is not for nothing & that he shall enjoy his visit to your district very much. the large country of “magnificent distances” will astonish him no doubt. Well, pet, my letter is badly written but my fingers are rather cold & I cannot command them as I would. Heaven bless & keep you, darling until we meet once more. With very many warm sweet kisses & fondest love, ever.. Your own loving little Girl.

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[pg 9]

I have searched everywhere for the photo & though I feel sure I have one cannot find it. patience! my dear one, it may turn up yet. In the meantime, believe in the warm love of

Your own

Maye.

[/pg 9]