

2008.1.1.1.1.78

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
Oct 15th / 89.

My own dear Sam,

I think my letter written on Sunday will be a very unsatisfactory one but you must forgive me for it. I could not collect my thoughts or make it interesting, there was too much conversation going on. Mrs. Mac went to the mail & brought me your dear letter of the 6th yesterday, of course giving me a good teasing afterwards by asking for news etc, but as her mother & Lex had favored her at the same time she got none from me. Lex will not let on to you how lonely he feels, but his letters say so – he tries to kill time of course, but will welcome his Min warmly on her return. I should really be very sorry if I misunderstood the words about separation making people appreciate

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each other; as I will so soon be one of the married, I cannot really believe it has the contrary effect, but of course there is no telling. No doubt Mrs. K. & her friend are quite well ere this from the accident caused by Dr. A.s careless driving. Words cannot tell how pleased I am to know you think so much of me & believe me different from the majority of my sex. I am not, but you see every man is inclined to hope that until he is disenchanted – for some that time comes very quickly; for others the illusions are a little more lasting. Mrs. Mac will tell you she found me looking much better than she expected & you may be sure I was delighted, for I feared you would find me a perfect scarecrow by the end of Dec. Our weather continues fine & we are enjoying it. I hope it will last awhile longer. I am somewhat decided in my opinions

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I admit, but my pet knows what he has to expect so will not be surprised at anything. Mrs. Mac hates the sight of Miss F. entre nous – she will probably be a little polite on account of Lex but that is all. She is very anxious to

have me up there & looks forward to my being her neighbour with pleasure. Mr. S. seems inclined to admire dark ladies, but the little imp gives himself airs & is fastidious. You see there are any number of courageous women in the world my pet & many are made, of the good stuff you say the British Empire is made of! If the in's [sic] and out's [sic] were known women possess as much energy & courage as they did in ye olden time! such a one is the person now Mrs. Barker for she certainly deserves praise for her pluck in coming such a distance & alone to meet her intended in a strange place & be married. I know I should not have done it, unless circumstances compelled me to do so & I should have taken care they would not. It was Gertie who told me Miss [Routhier] & Mr. Sharples were to be married – she said Willie who lived near Macleod, but evidently made a mistake in the name. I met Judge [Routhier] at Uncle Taschereau's in Ottawa & found him charming; he must have felt his son's bad behavior keenly & taken it very much to heart. You cannot wonder if I fret a little when I reflect upon the great change which will soon take place in my life. Were I a silly, romantic miss of eighteen, I would not realize so truly the many duties which fall to my lot. but being a true woman reflection comes before it is too late. It is not because any fault can be found with you, my darling, for I believe you love me deeply but you could help my busy mind sometimes getting the better of my good sense & affection by pondering on all the future has in store for me. still, I must candidly say it does

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does not diminish my love & trust in my pet, so it does no harm after all. You evidently sympathize deeply with poor, hen-pecked Mr. Pritchard – hold on, others may feel the same for you in about a year or even less. It is well Grandma is not in the room where the pistol was – that one is dangerous & enough came to me. You must have been very much occupied but now that the G. G.s visit is over you will earn your deserved rest & write up your report in fine style. I heard of the jolly time the bachelors had in your quarters after church & the light supper & coffee you enjoyed at Mrs. Mac's with Lex – go on, my boy, the bachelor days are nearing an their end & you may sigh for them sooner than you think or will let on to me. I am very fond of reading too but have not found sufficient leisure to devote to that pastime since my return from the west – my spare moments I consecrate to my darling. I made

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up my mind if ever I attended a Sundance it would be with my husband, not

wishing to be like a sweet blush rose all day long. besides, Dr. A. is not a prudent driver is old though so gallant & I would not trust myself for I am too precious to meet my death by drowning in one of your northwest rivers. You seem to have a poor opinion of him & being so prejudiced will make me think him a very, very bad old man. he may make up to his daughters friend – stranger things have happened! – I went to see Mrs. Mac off this morning then spent the day with a friend. Mrs. Mac seemed sorry to leave us & we all regretted her visit was so short. She spoke so highly of you, my darling, that they look forward to your coming with eagerness & will welcome you warmly. it did me good to hear her speak so much of you, for I felt that the time was shorter than it is since I saw you last. You seem a stranger to me yet,

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for though your dear letters are there, it is a sight of your dear face I long for & a sound of your voice I sigh for. You cannot perhaps understand the difference it would make, but time will prove it to you. On my return this evening, I found your dear missive of the 8th awaiting my perusal & enjoyed its pages, although it is short. Mrs. Mac told me how perfect you ~~thought~~ think I am, but do not I pray you, think me so, you will be so sadly disappointed. I have the hardest work to write. Louise came home this evening & will persist in telling me of all Mrs. [Cuvillier's] lovely presents, so if several mistakes meet your eye do not wonder at them. I might be more demonstrative perhaps, but could not love you more & am glad you are content with my way of showing my love. Poor Mrs. Mac said yesterday that she thought "you & I will be far happier than I ever could have been with Lex" & I fully agreed with her saying "there was no man living I could love as I do you," so she is confident she is all in all to her Lex at present. I will go to Montreal towards the end of this month or the beginning of Nov. I have so much to do that I scarcely know which way to turn. Mrs. Mac profited of the short time & gave me as much news as she could think of. So you may not go & show yourself off in Banff? it is too bad for the trip would be pleasant & you might rest a little away from the cares of your position for a few days. You might go even if it does put your trip East off for some weeks – you would not mind that much, being sure of your little girl. If your leave is short, your relatives will I fear be deprived of the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Steele for you will be unable to take a run up to Toronto even for a few days – does Mr. Elmes H. reside there? What on Earth can Mr. Wilson have said about me that can be of such consequence & who did he say it to? his opinion I do not care a snap of my fingers for, but strangers

whom he may mention me to, may judge

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me from what he says & be strongly prejudiced against me. You are near to defend me now, but may not have been placed in a position to do so when the words were uttered – how has it turned out so much the better for you? of course I know every person will not see me with your dear, kind eyes, but let them be just & give me my due, as they do others. Every one knows of Mr. La. N.s treatment, so her husband could not help but notice his wife flirtation with the Col. le beau H.s as he is often called. Certainly I remember saying Miss Jones was much older than F. D. – his brother said she was a girl of almost twenty-seven or eight & he at the time was twenty-two & that was one of the reasons Mrs. D. wished the match broken off. I merely said what had been told me & supposed it was true. Willie D. is thirty one & his brother is about twenty five or six now he says. I saw Miss Jones' marriage in the paper, but was not sure if she was really the one he had been engaged

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to. Mrs. Mac spoke of the Sunday dinner & said they were always pleased to see you, as you came sans ceremonie & when you felt like going to church you went, just as they did & would tell you when ~~you~~ they were going. Do not say too much about [spooning] – you have no idea how good you may be at it yourself some day. She means well I believe after all, so we must not be too exacting, for her heart is good. You may have felt you should have been here with me – is that not so? Mrs. Mac told me of your different purchases & says she may have other things to dispose of – it is hard to decide about so much, when such a distance separates us, my darling boy. besides, it is difficult to say all one requires, but I asked Mrs. Mac to send me a list of what she can remember you have on her return home. She went to Prescott where she intends remaining until the end of the ~~weutek~~, then returns to Montreal for ten days I suppose leaving for home the last days of this month or the beginning of the next – her visit has been too short to be perfectly enjoyed but we have made up plans to return together at no very distant day! You will soon weary of your little wife's attentions & be glad to get rid of her for five or six months perhaps, so we will leave you both to fall back into your old ways for a time, & then may be you will not be glad to us when we return? What a heartless girl your choice has fallen on, my pet – a year ago tonight was the evening you remained so late & I got the talking to. Mrs. Mac thinks you did not think less of us for

acting as she did, but she certainly succeeded in making me feel very mean. I then knew how highly I valued your good opinion & was very unhappy for a couple of days. then my soldier boy launched forth his praise & words of affection & made me feel happy once more by causing me to think I had been restored to my former place in his mind & heart. I was looking at the

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pencil I so lovingly caressed yesterday & the thought of the pleasant scene made my face a rosy hue. The year of waiting seemed long to look forward to, but it is very short to look back on – it has passed more speedily than I ever imagined it possibly could & the reward of your patience will soon be in your hands. I feel as if I was going to have a cold but trust my fears will not be realized as it is anything but agreeable. My Aunts found Mrs. Mac looked delicate though we said nothing of it to her so mum is the word with you. Louise had a nice visit & was absent two months, going to the theatre several times, a thing I enjoy as a rule. Well dear it is late & feeling tired I will kiss you “Good Night”. Heaven bless you my darling & guard you. With sweetest love & kisses, hoping to hear from you very soon, believe in the deep, warm affection felt for you by Your own true-hearted little Maye.

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