

2008.1.1.1.1.77

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,  
Oct 8<sup>th</sup> / 89.

My own dear old Sam,

The first thing which greets your sight on opening this letter is my pretty face as I looked about twelve years ago. Knowing how anxious you were to have one of those photo's [sic], I looked over all my treasures & at last was rewarded for all my trouble & the wished for little girl is in your dear hands. Your charming letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> I received yesterday & have read it over several times you may be sure. So Lex went for Miss Fraser – I hope she appreciated the kindness in doing so. You have seen her ere this & can judge for yourself what style of a young lady she is – if not my last may give you some idea of my opinion of her. I am so pleased to know the coal oil is so good & trust it will turn out as well as expected. Surely after Lord

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Stanley's visit is over you will not be compelled to have so much drilling every day - they will be perfect after this & with a little practice will be apt to remember. It is useless for me to talk of the weather – rain, rain all the time & it makes one blue to hear the patter all day long & all night as well. We too get a fair share of wind so between everything we are not better off than you are. Indeed! you would have hard work to kiss the fingertips warm as sometimes they are like icicles. You had such a queer way of showing your love that until the races I looked upon you as almost a stranger – after the card party I fancied we might in the end become friends. I never indulged in the hope that we might ever be nearer, fate seemed so cruel to me just then! I would certainly have been very much surprised had my hand found the way into yours during our first drive, but how naturally & lovingly

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it lingered there during our last. I was happy near you & with you to protect me, dear. I met Mr. Parmalee some years ago & found him a very nice

man. Has Mr. Champness his new house yet or is it like all usual Government promises? he deserves better than the blue house, considering the stylish residence Dr. Allen has. I often told you dear that happiness with you is sufficient for me – as long as we are comfortable, I do not wish for more, so you must not feel sorrow at the home you have ready for me. With your love to bless me, I ask for no more. I have full confidence in you, my pet & believe you fully deserve it. You have given up smoking? how long the hours must seem sometimes & how you must envy the others now & then when they are enjoying the calumet of peace, surrounded by clouds of that fragrant smoke. So you cannot write me the something in particular concerning Mrs. Mac & I am too dull to guess what it is, so I suppose being in total ignorance I must do the next best thing to knowing & wait... the day may come when you may honor me with your confidence, my pet. She has not yet come nor written to announce her arrival so I anxiously await her to get all the Macleod news & gossip. She thought the mere fact of being married gave her liberty to assert her authority on several occasions & she forgot she was so little older than this poor culprit – however, I shall never keep her up late again waiting for my Major to take his departure, that is sure, & am determined never to remain late when we go over to spend an evening in the future. You know little of all that was said on that particularly evening, for you would not qualify it as tame I fancy if you did. As long as she did not say anything of us, I feel less grieved at her giveaways whatever they may have been. Mrs. Mac is as a rule particular but she often speaks without reflection & the moment the words are uttered she realizes what she has said. Mrs. K. having

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known her so long, evidently has the knack of drawing her out unawares to Mrs. Mac. I regret it very much for her sake. You say I would not have told – are you very sure of that? I might have chosen a different style of confidante, but have told all the same. In a letter written by Grandma to Gertie she tells her “she was so lonely the Sunday before. Lex was away & she did not see the Major in time to ask him to dinner, but he had promised to come over that evening” & she was anxiously expecting you. You see both knowing how Mrs. Mac feels about it, the little arrangement made when I was up there will not hold good. We were to dine there every second Sunday & vice versa, but that I am determined will not be – we can spend the evenings there, then they will see enough of us, I am sure. I know Lex owes you a debt of gratitude in some way from the manner in which he used to speak of you to me, but never openly did he tell me what

it was. I know

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as well that he has confided more to me than to her, for in conversing with her I have seen it – Lex loves to be thought perfect by one woman & naturally wishes it to be his wife. She is not as discreet as she might be, I know & you have had a few proofs of her thoughtlessness – I will get around you some day, my pet & you must tell me all about it. I will look sweetly at you, so sweetly that you will not resist my pleading to know all & will confide in me. I understand the onerous duties attending the Governor's visit will prevent your writing as usual but will be merciful & not expect too much that week. The Majah! merited the answer I gave her for her remark was a very silly one. I saw through it & retaliated a little. Mrs. C. Wood was speaking one day during our trip & somehow or other the conversation turned to marriage – she in the course of her remarks said

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it was well known that no girl came to the west without receiving an offer of marriage & that people usually said she came looking for a husband, or words to that effect. Mrs. Mac replied that “if Mr. Harwood thought for one moment that would be said of Maye, he never would have allowed her to come up & in fact, that she had had a good many proposals before”. Mrs. Wood answered that I need not expect to escape, that they would say it, whether it was true or not. that was another thing that nettled me & made me feel I don't know how, added to your well-known reputation of a flirt. Mrs. Zach was talking in the same strain & defending her sister against anything that might be said & that had been said of me - revenge being sweet, I took it on the spot. You see how little I know of the Bible, my pet & what a difficult task is before you. “Salt of the Earth” is an uncommon expression so I of course wished to know where it was quoted [sic] from. I can be discreet, I admit, but you may not say that later, after you have my full confidence & know all my faults & failings. I am as usual busy & my fingers scarcely keep pace with my thoughts as I stitch away – when you see the result of my industry I shall expect a compliment remember & think I well deserve it. Gertie says Baby finds her new home small & spends most of her time at the windows looking for us each in turn. we miss them all, especially the dear wee pet, with her sweet, pretty voice. Mr. D. did not make his very wise remark to me – he knows better than that, for I would slap his ugly little mouth for him if he dared. I despise him so I wonder what a pretty girl like Louise can find to care for in him – it is not perhaps what

you men would consider a serious remark, but it was a very uncalled for one & one which no gentleman would have made, even under the circumstances. Grandma must be frightened out of her wits at the high wind & be more anxious than ever to seek new

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quarters. Mr. Wood must miss his wife so it is no wonder he is staid – she has been absent quite a while now & it must be lonely keeping house alone. Mr. Starnes evidently thinks I am going to be a terror & the others share the same opinion – had Mr. S. been the victim he might quake – being so small I could shake him, but you are too big by far for me to indulge in that pastime. I thought you would visit Toronto on your way down – that was your intention last autumn, although it did not please me too well to know you would not come to me first. Indeed! it would be terrible if you got only a couple of weeks leave – fearful to think of, but if perchance such a dreadful thing should happen, you will know by my last that the event cannot come off before Xmas, on account of Advent: in consequence your leave would have to be put off a couple of more weeks. I trust however things may not turn that way, but if they should

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I am sensible enough to know you must attend to your duties & would be the last to desire you to neglect them if it could not be otherwise. I remember the talk of Mr. Bowell's engagement – it is silly for a man of his years to think of remarrying, but he fully believes "it is not good for man to be alone", it is quite evident. Women are such dear, sweet creatures anyway, one cannot wonder at a man's infatuation, even after three score years. I will not continue this any longer, reserving your dear letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> for tomorrow's gossip. Heaven bless you my own darling, & keep you safely until we meet. Good night & sweetest dreams –  
Oct 9<sup>th</sup>. This morning when I opened my charming grey eyes the sun was shining brightly & it made my heart quite gay, but alas! tonight it rains as much as ever – I had a note from Mrs. Mac this morning in which she tells me she comes to visit us on Friday & will leave Tuesday

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to see Lex's mother in Prescott. You cannot imagine how deeply I sympathize with Mr. Reed in his great loss; though I never spoke to her, & did not care for her I know how deep his grief must be. Certainly you have been candid with me & told me truths others might pass over in silence, but

I love you far more for it dear, & feel as if nothing could ever make me change. Time will but strengthen the bonds of affection between us, I trust & as we know each other better make us more lenient. You have not seen me intimately enough to detect any glaring faults, but I have many which may try your patience, my pet, but you must forgive me for them & tolerate them for the very depth of love I feel for you. Lex brought the "Red book" for show I feel sure for the only time I saw him read it was the first day when at Pincher Creek. That I should take pleasure in perusing it must not be wondered at for the memory of the review was still fresh in my heart & the picture in my mind very vivid & real – a great big soldier boy occupied first place & was the most interesting person on the field to a haughty little maiden who looked on apparently so indifferent. I should be flattered to have you think so well of me as to imagine I should look well in a helmet like the fair crest on the Dudley Arms – we can try some day but I fear I lack the heroism you will attribute to me. She was a true woman & daughter & it makes me very proud to think you fancy me capable of such noble conduct. still I fear few women exist now a days who could perform such actions. You must have been rather frightened lest the barracks should burn the night you mention – it was that building that Lex thought was burning the night of the fire last year when we were silly enough to walk all the way downtown at one in the morning. The bugle call awakened me out of a sound

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sound sleep & while wondering what was wrong, as the call was one I had not heard before, I heard Lex rushing Mrs. Mac around to find articles of dress – I never thought of meeting him, thinking he had gone, so out I came just as I was & met him on the stairs – both being rather en dishabille I stood still & roared out laughing. I rushed back into my own room & while lighting a match Lex came in with one in his hand. You can imagine how ludicrous the scene was & I laughed heartily much to his disgust I fear. There being no danger, it amused me all the more. So we thought we might as well see the fun. Mrs. Neale, Eva, Mrs. Mac & your humble friend started off, took in everything & every one without being seen, except by Dr. K. who insisted upon walking back with me, though I did my best to prevent him. What would you call your charger, if not Prince? Do you not think the latter worthy to carry my king?

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I owe a great deal to him too & will spoil him I fear when I return & can do it

without causing comment. I will begin to believe it is true “that our officers in the M. P. do not care for riding having had so much of it so when they can get out of it”—that almost convinces me you rode with me last autumn because it gave me pleasure, not for any you derived from it, my darling. I think wives miss their husbands most, especially when fearful that a great big man might come in – that would be the way with me I am sure. I improved in health when west, but have not been as well since my return, as previous to my going, strange to say. “Quis separabit” is a good motto & Heaven help the one who does it, so say I. The reward for your persistency shall be myself, what more could you want? I pray God every night that He may bless us & give us a long happy life together,

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& surely my heartfelt prayer shall not remain unanswered. You will be such a swell when you come that I shall be awed & forget to stand on tiptoe to be..... kissed I suppose. I know you once were very extravagant for four hundred dollars a year in smoke is something in my mind. What good did it do you? none whatever, though it is a passing pleasure so many indulge in. I do not see what you could find to admire in me the night of the concert, for I looked anything but well – feeling so ill, my voice was out of trim & I could not sing with my usual freedom & expression. There were many strangers present whom I knew would criticize the singing, the bird & everything about her & I was not mistaken. Mrs. Wilson attending church brings her “untamed” with her – what shall I do?. will it not be sad to see me go one way, you another? of course as long as Mrs. Mac is there we can perhaps go together but if she leaves..... however, the future is in other hands than ours, so we will trust in.. You are considerate, for by rising early your clerks have more liberty in the evening – it is a matter of surprise [to] me how you can do with so little sleep, for I know you often went to rest very late & were up betimes in the morning. I thought Mrs. K. on visiting terms with all the ladies of the place – the way she spoke the time she asked us over to dine, astounded me, so much so that I let the Dr. perceive it & quite intentionally too. She is better than the “Macleod Gazette” for gossip, as she retails things Mr. W. would prefer unprinted. she let me hear her once talk of a very private matter & if the person had known how all had been detailed to strangers... in fact, she only seemed to put me more against the Dr. than ever, that is the truth of it. As you must be very busy while this letter occupies your attention it is very cruel of me to continue writing any longer

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Miss Hubert's reception was a grand success I hear & she was the recipient of over a hundred lovely presents. I did not go down – nothing of the kind tempts me but the family was well represented. We will hear all about it from Louise who comes up on Friday. Beau is busy packing his trunk for he leaves tomorrow to live with Gertie. The family is growing smaller by degrees.... Well, my dear old pet, I really must cease my chatting & give you peace. With warmest love & many sweet kisses, believe me Ever

Your own true-hearted loving

Maye.

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