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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
Feb 3rd / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Your nice long letter of the 23rd Jan was received on Friday the 1st & I will leave you to imagine how warmly it was welcomed. Mine of the 31st will have given you an insight into the state of my feeling at the time, & of the deep dark cloud which the sunshine of your loving missive caused to dissipate. You will see that when I do not hear from you, how very much disappointed I am so I trust that duty only will prevent your writing as often as possible to the little girl so far away who loves you so fondly. How anxious I am to know how you are my pet. I fear when you do not write that you are ill & the last letter proves my fears were well founded this time. I hope you have been entirely free from all aches & pains since you wrote & that you shall not suffer from the same thing for a while: toothache is one of the worst ills we are subject to as it seems to cause pain all through the head. I cannot speak from experience, having never really suffered

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from it, but I have felt a twinge of it several times lately & will go to a dentist in a month or so, before it makes a martyr of me. Careful, am I not? Just what I expect you to be, my pet. I understand very well all the good reasons you give me & which prevented your favoring me. You must have been very busy & then the pain, sleepless nights & etc! I am reasonable, my dear, as I hope you will find. You must tell me when you are ill in order to

have my sympathy. Though we are too distant one from the other with such a bond between us, it will serve to alleviate the trials we are obliged to undergo: so tell me, darling as you have done & as you must do in the future. You will have received the letter written on the 16th I believe, in which I humbly express contrition for the one of the 13th for being so selfish as to wish to see you & will see for yourself that I need say nothing more on the subject. I know full well the cost of a trip like that & how careful one has to be when he has come to the conclusion that perhaps life in couples is preferable to single bliss. Then one realizes how expensive a luxury a wife will be. If you had met me years ago, you might not have

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found me to your taste, so you see God knoweth best!! Now that you can appreciate a woman who will do all in her power to make you happy & ready to do her duty that you are noble & good in her eyes & who so thoroughly understands the blessings in store for her we meet – is it not better so? We know our full value. Even you I fear think far too well of this frail little girl, & surround me with too much goodness. I have had trials & temptations too, but who is free from them? There was always my kind angel to shield me, as you will learn later, but, I am not too good for you. If such should be the case, why my darling must become like me & then how well fitted we shall be. I often told you that I do not fear to trust my whole life into your hands & know you will be kind to me. I cannot say why, but you always inspired confidence in my breast, & I knew that with your love to shield & protect me, I should be safe. Your two photo's [sic] I have also received. I like them as they are like my pet. You are a very great dude, I assure you & must compliment you on your fine feathers. Is the medal one given you because you had the courage to ask a woman to be your wife? Or at least had sufficient bravery to desire the tartar for a partner? I never knew you had one. However, when you come east, you must go to a photographer who will do you justice & even flatter you if necessary.

We have examined you through a magnifying glass & have criticised you & when I say you are not a handsome fellow, they get quite angry & tell me I do not know a good-looking fellow. I am quite pleased you may be sure & am anxious for them to see you. I hope you will not feel hurt at my telling you this, for my darling knows how much I think of him & has too much sense not to know the spirit which makes me speak as I do. It may be the mischief you say that lurks in my heart. I am very faithful in writing & am charmed that you like my letters. They are rambling sometimes, I find, but must put you in mind of the writer. The love they carry though not expressed in high [flown] words is nevertheless very sincere & comes right from my heart, which is so wholly your own. Others would not see their contents as my darling does & would not make allowances for them, not having the same link between the writer, as exists between

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us. Your affection makes you very lenient, my own pet. Mr. Drayner told you more than the truth, I fancy – his brother will not, I believe [sic], be ready to be married at the same time as you will. Not as things go now. Of course, they may change before the eventful day, but, I do not think so. They are engaged just a year today. Where will we be when the same time will have elapsed from the 25th of Oct last? I hope you were able to attend the banquet & ball & enjoy them – did you think of me when going through some of the dances? I will tell you why I cannot realize who writes me – you have always seemed apart from all others & been surrounded with rather a shade of romance in my mind. Your indifference, at least as I thought, my dream, which was always before my sight & which I would not allow to influence me, all tended to ~~see you~~ make me regard you in a different light to others. They generally let me know the state of their feelings soon & gave me very many opportunities of judging the strength of their love. You were different & in the end I could not believe & feared it was merely imagination. You can now see the power of love, when it bends

a woman as it has done me. I could not resist

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its charm & was unknowingly led on & you had full possession of the treasure I had so selfishly guarded, ere I was fully aware of it - however, had we not agreed on the one subject which alone could have divided us, I should have stifled the deep love you had already won & you should never have known of it's [sic] existence. That is where my pride & haughtiness have served me well & been true to me. I remember so well that during the concert in Lethbridge when singing "Waiting" you came into my mind. I saw you & sang for you alone. Mrs. Neale told me afterwards "she never had heard me sing so well": they little imagined how far away my heart was!!.. I really cannot understand the mysterious bond which seems to have existed ere we met. At the concert in Macleod, the lights were very dim & you were in civilian dress which you had not worn before me. I am short sighted as you know, so did not recognize you. Notwithstanding that, I saw but you & when I told Mrs. Mac after the concert "Major Steele was not there" – she said, "did you not see him?" I answered, "No! I saw only a tall man in civilian dress, in such a place & I fixed my eyes upon him & saw him only." Mrs. Mac laughed & said "that was the Major & he looked

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lovely." I do not know whether I have told you this before, but if so, it may please you to hear it again. You cannot imagine how sorry I was to hear of the absconding of that clerk, particularly as it causes a loss to you. I regret it on Mr. Wood's account also & feel sure, it will be a well remembered lesson; but it is too bad you should suffer for any neglect of his. I am glad you have sufficient confidence in me to tell me your troubles & trust you shall continue giving me such proof of you affection, for who desires your happiness & welfare more than your own little girl? I do the same with you

& if any trouble came to me, I should turn to my darling for all the sympathy he could give me. You think you do not deserve the name of Warrior! I do, & will call your arms into requisition often to fight & protect me. You proved to the world at large what good stuff you are made of on several occasions & consequently won a name for courage & energy. I was sure you would continue playing whist during the long winter evenings though I was not near to give you the invitation which heard by others would have seemed commonplace, but which meant so much from me though you pretended not to know it! I am glad Mrs. Mac longs for me & trust she will not tire of me too soon, after I return to Macleod. Do you think there is any fear of such a thing occurring? We miss the baby so much. She is at an age when they are cute & interesting & I find it wonderful the amount of love they bring with them with their sweet, talking ways. She will be absent a month at least. My sister Louise returns to Montreal tomorrow & will be on hand for the Carnival. Nothing would tempt me from home now, as Mamma seems to be always with me. The separation which looms in the distance is making itself felt & she often refers to it in a sad tone. They fancy me better than I am, & will I fear, miss me very much. They will love you dearly for my sake I know, even were you in any way deficient in the qualities which make you a noble, honorable man. I like the photo where you are seated better than the other. You so often glanced at me with that expression on your face. is the uniform you wear in the full sized one, your new full dress? it has not all the decorations you have in the other's [sic] you sent first. My darling old fellow, as I sometimes ventured to call you, what warm love you have won from me! I can scarcely beleive [sic] that so much affection could slumber for so long, to awaken into life so suddenly!! one never

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knows when first the mysterious finger shall touch the string & cause it to respond to the feel by a wave of harmonious sounds which will beautify & sweeten one's whole life!! I do hope you will be happy with me & never

regret the day you spoke your love – if you do... God help me... it will break as true & affectionate a heart as ever throbbled!. Well, my pet, let me come back to every day topic's [sic] & tell you that I have a bona fide attack of influenza. I do not know where I can have taken it, but it is tantalizing, if nothing else. Be sure & send me the paper containing an account of banquet & ball. I will enjoy reading of it & you tell me who your partners were, how they looked & all that. The link which binds us is shining & glittering as I write & puts me in mind of the day you put it on my finger – it is safe & mine forevermore. I am sure Mr. Campbell must wonder what we can have to say that we correspond so regularly. how is his love affair getting on with Miss [Hendrie]? & Mr. Barnes? does he ever mention me? poor moth! Who was afraid of too much light, so you imagined. Mrs. Steele must have smiled when you desired her to get the bracelet & have thought you far gone – it is so kind of you to spoil me so much, but I will en-

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deavor to return it a hundred fold in the future. It is very quiet here – no one seems to have any life in them & we see few people. It was exceedingly gay this summer & as the roads are to be macadamized by July the influx of strangers will be far greater, as the Vaudreuil roads have been spoken of from time immemorial!. The terrible rain they had all last summer has caused them to open their eyes & realize that Grandpapa Harwood was right after all & he worked for over thirty years to attain that, & they were too stupid to understand. We have fully three feet of snow on the level. You would enjoy a nice sleigh drive with me, would you not? I went out with Papa for a long time yesterday & enjoyed it immensely, though the roads were heavy - he is very fond of it & having good horses, it is pleasant. Well, my own darling, I think you must be tired of me by now. You said in yours “that if you wrote such long letters I would not have time to answer” – no fear my pet – you come first & being so far away makes me pity you & I fear my dry missives must fatigue you somewhat. I will now say good night.

A very sweet kiss I send you, my own pet, but would prefer being near enough to go through the ceremony myself, just to see if I can remember how it is done. Write soon & often

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my darling to the little girl whose love is so warm for her dear old fellow!
With another kiss Ever

Your
own loving
Maye

Excuse this, my old excuse of talking holds good I trust. First it is one sister then another & so on. How do you like the enclosed few lines?

Your
own Maye.

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