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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
Jan 13th/89.

My very dear Major,

Your loving letter of the 3rd I received on the 11th & it will be only repeating the old, old story to say how warmly it was welcomed. I can scarcely realize it was in answer to mine of the 26th of Dec, as that seems such a long time passed away. how [me] looks forward to the mail every day! I do far more than ever before & when I am disappointed [Mamma] says "You cannot expect to get a letter from so far every day – I am sure you cannot complain" – however, I do feel disappointed sometimes & fear I am very exacting & expect too much, but you must not mind it. I have just answered Miss Steele's letter – she tells me she leaves Ottawa within the month – did she write you about it? She seems pleased "that you have at last lost your heart, as your

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life must have been a lonely one." I told her "it must have been a surprise to hear that you had been frivolous enough to give way to the tender passion!" My own darling, I will write as often as I can – twice a week will be the average number, perhaps oftener, but it seems to me, I must repeat a great deal – I dash them off in a hurry & they take such a time to come to you that I forget in a way, what each letter conveys. However, my own pet has always proved lenient & will be more so as we become better friends. Write me when you can spare the leisure – I love your letters & sometimes after I have read them over several times I sit & wonder "if it is possible & really true that it is Major Steele who writes me in that way." it is like a dream!!...My Father received the letter all right as I told you & was also very much pleased with the card. Are you the "sly old fox" running away? You know they said you were caught at last – I am improving in the endearing terms I use towards you, you will find,

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but I know you love me & consequently let my feelings get the better of me. besides that I love you dearly & let you know it. I believe you have a strong constitution, but that fatal fall upset you for a long time – if you think a trip here would do you good, why do you not come? All would give you a very warm welcome & are anxious to meet you, while I, my darling, feel as if it is was an age since we parted. Of course, I do not mean to take me back with you; that is a pleasure reserved for later on, but if you could spare time to come for a few days, you know how I should greet you with open arms. You have never seen a Carnival! Easter is a nice time, but this year is late in the season. Suit yourself – the welcome & love awaiting you, will be [just?] the same if you can possibly find leisure for the trip. Mr. Huot should follow your very wise example – he is so nice a girl would be a fool to refuse him – brave warriors are not met with every day!! I fear your love for me blinds you & because the letters are penned by me, you think they are worth reading – but pass them over to an impartial judge, you would then see how poor they are, but I cannot say I should care for any one to peruse the lines meant for your dear eyes alone!!.. I feel that you will be good & kind to me & always love me, while I “I’ll live & I’ll die for thee!” – can I possibly do more? I sang it for you many a time in the old days gone by & I hope to sing it many & many a time again, with you by my side, enjoying the music of my voice – but the home-love that has been in your heart for years is very hard to dethrone, & you can never imagine the bitter struggle that goes on in my poor heart, when you in your distant home come before my eyes. Your lonely lot, your love for me, mine for you & my great desire to see you happy & to be the one to have all your deep affection, plead for you. While on the other hand, the love I have for my father, mother & family, the parting that must come, the distance that will separate us, & all the dear home ties that

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must be severed when I become yours, make my heart sick. You must not imagine I am going back on my word, for the greater the struggle, the deeper I find you have become engraved in my heart. & if the question came as to who should win, I fear that woman-like the love I bear you, would make me leave all, rather than part – but I hope you are not displeased if I tell you of the emotions that sway me sometimes. You are near & dear to me & it is a privilage [sic] to know the most secret thoughts of one’s dearest friends. When there will be only you & I to be all in all to

each other, surely the harsh, unkind word or act will be un-known – I will do all I can to make you happy while I am sure you will do the same – You are too good & noble, have too generous a heart to be otherwise. You see the confidence I have in my own pet. They cannot find I have much of a will of my own (the officers) if they fancy you could not agree with such a one. perhaps they ~~fancy~~ find me just the contrary, though they had no occasion of judging me that

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way. I so hope the last photos were good – I sit & wonder every night, just before retiring, when I have your dear face before me & not very far from the twolips [sic] that are not rosebuds, if it can be true you are the man I am to marry! You seem so cold & proud there, that one could scarcely imagine you as you are, when you let the love you carry in your heart, come to the surface. I want you by yourself, though I am glad to have the group. I showed the group to my brothers without telling them which was you, & they one & all pointed you out at once. I asked one how he knew & his reply was “You said he was a good, honorable man, & he is the one most likely to suit you in every way.” not bad, eh? My own love, It is nice of you to get an album for my photo – that is not necessary for one – I hear you always in my mind & you are always in my heart, but it is to show you to others as you really are that I want another & alone. You must know all about the ring by now. I was silly not to keep it as it was. had I for one moment imagined

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the jeweler would have stretched that one. I should have waited until later to have it done, in that case, my better judgment failed me. I never thought there would be any trouble about it – had we only been able to buy it together & not been compelled to trust to a third person, all that worry of mind might have been avoided. My journey was fraught with a few disagreeable incidents, but I got over them all right & your return to Macleod was in pleasant company, so you see your superstition was unfounded I am glad to say. You say “you are getting worse every day” – what is it that troubles you? You say your heart – are you really in earnest, or is it merely fooling? – tell me, for you know before I left, you complained a few times about it – Mr. Huot must pity you for thinking so much of a frail woman!!! Tell him there are many more like me & far nicer too – you never met any like me! - that is, none who happened to strike your fancy. Were

you not in rather a susceptible frame of mind after your lonely march through the mountains & the sight of a young unmarried lady prove a boon to your existence just at that moment? That may account for it & your imagination do the rest: then of course those tête-a-tête rides helped complete the illusion – then you fell a victim & I was caught in the web a willing captive – was Mr. Huot surprised to hear you say the religion I profess was no obstacle? but no! he must have known all was arranged between us & well understood, before things must have come to a crisis. I know Mr. H___ is discrete or else he would be apt to tell the others I had cast a spell over you & to show the society of [belles] as they would poison. Your Quebec friend must have an idea that I have to stand on tip-toe too: if the card is a faithful picture, it very often happens, though few care to own it. Your force knew of it, before I did myself, if you recall Craig's words & Sergt. Scobie's hints as to your [movements?] during our absence in the Mts. They had some knowledge of your character you see, while I dared not even think you gave me a second's thought. The Sunday night we returned, two or three things struck me, & made my heart flutter, but I banished the idea just as quickly as it had come. It is so kind of you to wish me to have a saddle! if you prefer that I should have it here, send it by all means – do just what

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You please about it & it will please me. oh! my darling, I wish you had wings in order that I might see you sometimes. You are so far from me! – I wonder if you are as often with me, as I with you – I follow you every hour of the day & say "it is such an hour, now he is doing this or that" – of course, not knowing a woman's duties it is not such an easy task for you. My Aunt, Mrs. [Taschereau] of Ottawa has been having a very successful operation performed on her foot by Dr. Roddick, of Montreal. She fell on the ice two years ago & the Dr. who attended her then did not set the limb right & she has been suffering & lame since – however, she is on a fair way to perfect recovery. I am glad, being very fond of her. You will say this a very long beginning to arrive at the end of a story, but I mention the fact, because Dr. R. praised you up to Auntie, & said he had known you well in the N. west in /85: congratulations come to me from every side my own pet & useless for me to say how delighted I am. You are such a [famile] with your own sex that there must be some charm about you – a man so well liked

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by his fellow men, is sure to be all that is requisite to render a woman's life very happy. A young friend, in fact a connection, was shot on the C.P.R. train when nearing Winnipeg last week. I allude to George de Beau. [jeu] – Dr. Baldwin is one of the surgeon's [sic] in attendance – the worst is feared. he is an only son & not a bad kind of a boy – we are all so sorry, as we were very intimate & fond of him. He was rather partial to that curse to mankind liquor, & may have been a little under the influence, when the affair took place. it is so far from his home, as he resides in Coteau du Lac – poor boy!! he was going to try his luck on a ranch somewhere up there. Mrs. Macdonall knows the family – ah! that cursed liquor! – is it not at the bottom of every crime & the cause of almost every trouble? do you wonder that I loathe it to such a degree? By the by, does Mr. Freddy Drayner bear the title of Capt.? if so, is it not since he is an A.D.C.? he had no right to it, previous to that, had it he? is he a senior Inspector? You will wonder why I am so curious, but his brother & I have had a few sharpers about it now & then. He made himself out on the same footing as Lex & the rest of the Superintendents.

Pray excuse my having cut this line off. There was a blot on it & to my [sorrow?] there is one on the previous page – will you take it for a kiss? although I hope a kiss would not be a blot on your existence. I expect & look forward to a letter from you by tomorrow's mail & hope not to meet with a disappointment. You have more spare time than I, are more accustomed to writing, so you must write when your duties permit you. Oh! my darling, how I wish you would come soon! it is very un-reasonable of me to do ask you I know, but it would please me & perhaps do you good. You would certainly return with the idea that there is more of the frail human nature common to women [about me &] than the angelic one you have been pleased to surround me with – it would have a very good effect, even if it did but that. You see what the enclosed slip says – of course, I have nothing that would give me a place in the ranks of the first – so I lay a few more claims to the latter. a treasure is more profitable than a jewel, I think & trust you will

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find I am right later on. My father said the other day "You were very lucky to get such a good girl for a wife" but a father's love is blind sometimes as well as a lover's. As I said before I only hope you will never have cause to regret the day when I become your very own, "for better, for worse, until

death us do part" I pray God every day to make us worthy of each other & to bless the new life which will then commence for you & I. Surely He will not refuse to grant my request!!.

They find I have been with you long enough now & keep calling me down to come & join in the music going on. I must not be selfish; besides you must be tired with all this talk & will have a headache & heart-ache by the time you have finished perusing this long letter. Well, my own pet, I hope to hear from you soon – write long letters – they help us in our knowledge of each other's character as much, if not far more than many interviews – am I not right? God bless & keep my darling safe to the love of his own little Girl,

Maye.