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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
Feb 5th / 89.

My darling,

Your nice, affectionate letter of the 24th I received today to my great delight & was charmed with all the sweet things it conveyed to me!. I, like yourself felt a little remorse for having told you I found the headings in some of yours not aff-loving enough for it does not do to say too much – however, it was what I really thought & feeling a wee bit hurt, I told you. Though I sometimes felt inclined to use your christian name, I could not summon up sufficient courage to do so & when we were together, not having noticed that I never did so, I was sure you would not when I was far away, & so many other sweet names used to express the deep regard I have for you – but, it is all over now & that reserve is never likely to return again. Mrs. Mac must know how busy we generally are & having you to spoil a little, I have less time than formally to devote to correspondence, but she has forgiven me ere this, having received by last some

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days ago. Ah! my pet, you need never fear. Your little girl never was a flirt, not caring for that sort of thing & she will not commence now that she has the love of such a fellow as you are! I have all I wanted, all I desired & considered necessary for happiness, the love of a man with a great, big, generous heart who seems as if he would do anything in the wide world for me. You will have an idea of my bracelet from one of my former letters &

know how lovely it is & the pleasure I will have when first I wear it will be doubled, as you will be near to see & admire how well it sets off my arm. Others may be as fond of you as I am, but the love is not of the same kind, rest assured. Theirs is not the deep, ardent affection which made Ruth say "Thy people shall be my people & thy god my God". I am highly pleased that Mr. Steele has such a good opinion of me & trust it will be fully verified when he meets me more intimately & has more time to judge my character. So you did not attend the bachelor's ball! poor fellow! You already feel slightly fettered I fear, but the chains are not as yet too heavy to bear? What must the others have said? Particularly as you never missed before. Next year we

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both must be present & with your kind permission I must endeavor to be "belle of the ball". An old gentleman from Toronto who was on board the train from Winnipeg town, spoke to me of Mr. Macpherson in not very laudable terms - he particularly requested me, if ever I visited that city, to call, & was acquainted with your nephew, I believe, [sic] Mr. Elmes Henderson - strange how people become known to each other when travelling for a few days together. I regret Dr. Powell's departure very much - you must feel losing two friends at once & sincerely wish I was near enough to try & make up in a very small degree, for their absence. Has Dr. P. left the force altogether, or merely removed? You will find it easier in the future than just now, to be distant with some of your comrades - when you have a home & wife to attend to, they will not seek your society as much as they are liable to wish for it at present. but, it must be rather quiet sometimes & even a good cut, when well given, serves to break the monotony of a dull day spent in unsociable company. I am pleased to learn that Mrs. Neale is commencing to know the value of health & can deprive herself of any pleasure to regain strength. She has unfortunately taken a long time to find out the worth of that great blessing & taxed herself

entertaining persons who did not care or give an iota for her afterwards. That is the way with the world! If love is all you want from me, you have more than I ever thought myself capable of bestowing – day after day you wind yourself more closely around my heart, until it frightens me when I reflect on the force of my affection & think, if any thing or any person was to come between us, what would become of me? I told you all this before, & believe [sic] me when I tell you, I tested the love well, before I ventured to let you know I was willing to be yours. Indeed! My dear, I will not burn any of your photo's [sic] – good or bad, they are my pet & as such are very dear to me. The flames shall never caress them & their reception not be warmer than ~~d~~ mine, if I did take your advice & consign them to that awful fate you hint at! I think my letters better as “a nightcap” than “un coup d'appetit”, but fear they are too dry to be either very often, however, when you see the size of the place & know of how few we are, your kind heart will forgive me if they are not as interesting as I should desire. They sometimes are very sweet & perhaps better suited as dessert than anything else, so, you are right to have given them

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their true place immediately. The day I said “don't ask me” I saw more in your eye than you fancied & turned mine away for fear the pleading would prove too strong to be resisted. You did well not to “[sip] the honey” that day. The tu-lips were sweeter for some time after & far better appreciated by the two performers who took part in the ceremony: at least as far as I am concerned, as I had more practice & that makes perfect you know: true I had to commence, but the arm chair or “reserve” was the place, being more private than the broad, level prairie. Well, my darling, take the piano – all things taken into consideration, it may be a bargain & the opportunity may not occur for a long time. I should have preferred an “Upright” as the house is not very large, but, the square ones are better for singing & as it is in Macleod, & you are kind enough to wish to buy it, I accept your generous

offer & thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity in providing me with such a pleasant pastime, which I shall always be delighted to touch for my own pet & recall some p happy by-gone days. What make is it? I hope the toothache has entirely disappeared & that you will be free from

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pain for a while. What between the fall, the heart, & the toothache, you have had a very miserable time of it since Aug last. I imagined when perusing the two first sheets of your letter that something had put you out of temper & am happy to know that the toothache was the main cause of your being so cross, as it is very apparent that your sweetness was restored on the 25th. It makes me sad though to know that you are so lonely & wish I could remedy matters for your sake – one thing sure, we are two months nearer our meeting than when I left Macleod on the 4th of Dec. does not that console you? Time will pass quickly, my pet & the awful day will be here before you realize it. Every day Mamma says something of your kindness & of the consolation the knowledge of that trait in your character affords her. as if she thought you would ever be unkind or neglect me, she never would consent to my going so far from home. We have had twenty degrees below zero yesterday & a fearful snow storm raging all day. So you see the difference between the weather here & what you are enjoying. I feel sorry Mr. Wroughton missed the baronet's daughter, & trust he will meet her soon. She may be his fate. Who knows?

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did he seem pleased at the prospect of duty in order to have the enjoyment of her society? You see my own pet, how faithful I am in writing even when I feel that the best thing would be not to write, feeling stupid & letting you read it between the lines, but you give me a thrill of delight when you say

the missives are nice. My cold is somewhat better this evening & my ears burn so, that I fancy my darling must be thinking or speaking of me, today being mail day & one of mine must have reached him. My baby brother, Antoine, who is a terror as Mrs. Mac will tell you, took up one of your last photo's [sic] this evening & looking at it for a few seconds said "well [I see], Major Steele has been to a picnic." I said "Why?" "because he has a loaf of bread under his arm," mistaking your fine helmet for that every day stuff of life. You can well imagine how we laughed. He goes to the Carnival tomorrow & is well nigh out of his mind at the idea of all the grand sights he is to witness. He mistook the beautiful scenery & trees for real ones I suppose, so concluded you too had been enjoying a trip to the Mts. He is my pet, my little one you know & has been ever since he came to us: he is a pet perfect imp, up to all kinds of tricks & mischief. I would have gone to the Carnival had you come but did not care for it otherwise. Well my darling, as it is late, I will bid you good night. God bless my own one so far away & give us both the graces necessary for happiness when together. Many sweet kisses I give the substitute as I say "pleasant dreams to you." Wednesday. I must finish this letter before the mail comes, as a terrific storm rages today & we cannot go twice to the village: then not being sure of hearing from you, it is better not to wait for I might miss tonight's mail. Well, dear, of course you know more than I, the different prices of furniture & whether we gain by buying in Toronto or Montreal so, do what you think best. I will have any number of instructions to give you before you leave Macleod, but I hope you will not be frightened by them. You must be very busy attending to all your duties. When too much occupied, do not worry if you have not sufficient leisure to devote some time to me – just let me know the reason, & I will understand, as long as it is not declining love, I will be content to wait.

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I have a lovely heliotrope blossom which I would give anything to send you.

The meaning of it is well known. The perfume delicious, but of course it would be less "than a faded flower" when it would come to you & very silly of me to think of sending it when the weather is so cold. Poor Antoine is very much disappointed at being compelled to remain here today & has watched since early morn to try & find a small change in the storm, to enable them to reach the station but all in vain!!! The storming of the palace will not likely take place this evening, & the living arch on Monday turned out a perfect fizzle: a bad beginning for the Carnival, when so many strangers are expected! Did you ever meet a Miss Prevost, in Ottawa, sister to the one who was in the Force? I hear she rather had a soft spot for my darling once, but that he did not seem to care a straw for her. See, how things leak out after so many years – it was when you were in Ottawa in '82 I think. Miss Herbert also remembers seeing you, but you did not seem to recall her, when I spoke of them: she was introduced

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& met you several times. They are all anxious to meet you. Dr. [Sweetland] is to marry his step-daughter, Miss Sparks very shortly, if it has not taken place by this time. how is that? his third wife & youngest of all. I think him horrible & would never marry such a man as he is. Uncle [Taschereau] desires me to go & visit them, but I would not leave home for anything, being my last winter with them all. later, it will not be the same. When I come it will be merely on a visit. I hope you are very comfortable in your quarters & have everything snug. You must take care of yourself for my sake, my own pet. Were you to fall ill, what should I do, so far away? When I am near & can give you all the best care & little attentions which love makes so sweet, then be a wee bit ill, to find out if I can be a good nurse, if you wish. Until then, refrain! Well, my own darling boy, I will leave you now. Remember me to Lex & Mrs Mac. With very many sweet kisses which you will have permission to take when you like in the future, trusting your aches & pains are all gone, beleive [sic] in the deep love felt for you

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by your own little Girl

Maye.

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