

2008.1.1.1.1.31

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
April 14th / 89.

My own dearly loved Sam,

As I told you in my last I should reserve the two last sheets of yours of the 2nd to answer today. I come to perform the pleasant task & have looked forward with delight to the leisure moments which enable me to have my usual chat with my own old pet. My sister was very glad to see her dear Willie you may be sure & he surprised her by coming up on Thursday evening – she having been quite ill from the cold which troubled her, he seemed anxious, so came up. “Absence & etc” is all very well for a time, but one would like to see the object of their affection sometimes & not let the old adage do it all: while I believe in it, I would give very much to feast my eyes on your dear face now & then. If you are egotistical I would like to know if I am not also? am I not always speaking & telling you of myself? You see I deem it a lover’s privilage [sic] to know all about his little girl & supposing everything interests him, tell you all. One lady will be sufficient for you to command, will it not? I will do my very busyest to keep you busy & make the bachelors pity you for the mistake you will have committed for in taking a wife!!! You take good care to let me know you can refuse as well as grant a favor, but remember it takes two to play at that game & you may find your match in this little one, as the time she told someone “if Major Steele could flirt, he had met his match” – do you recall to mind the day I told you of it, when out riding? Where the most intense love can exist, I believe the bitterest hate can dwell as well, so am not surprised you can hate as strongly, only I hope such will never be my fate. Mr. Bell was the rancher who sat next to you the night of the Macleod concert if

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my memory is faithful. I recalled your speaking of him afterwards. Mr. [McNath] I saw several times when going his weekly errands in the barracks during the vegetable season - his niece must have been charmed with you & I know how nice you can be when you please. I had fully made up my mind not to expect any letter from my darling until Tuesday, when yours of the 4th came on Friday to my greatest joy. Words can never tell how gratified I was to read the dear words you had written & I will not attempt to define my feelings as I held the dear missive in my hands - how many pet names & sweet things my lips uttered with my heart filled with love for my own dear boy. This but another proof of the deep affection you bear me & which has blessed my life forevermore. Mrs. Neale can be very amiable when she pleases & would not fail to be so when you were bringing her to the Creek. She is nice & was kind to me when Mrs. Mac was absent in the beginning of Sept. I am glad in a way that you were compelled to return to Macleod from the Kootenai, otherwise I should not have had the pleasure of reading your letter: on the other hand, it gave you ever so much more driving & consequently fatigue - as you will have time to get over it before you are married, I will not pity you too much! I would not mind your having photo's [sic] of your former lady loves. Your not having married is a proof that the love was not caring enough, while that you felt for me being last & more true would likely overbalance all the others, so if you have any you would like to keep, do not put into practice what you advised Mrs. Wilson to do. I shall be charmed to know the taste you displayed in the past & if you are as difficult to please as formerly, so treasure them by all means for

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my pleasure, if for no other reason. It is strange how similar our thoughts are sometimes! – I have often wondered what you would think of me after we had been married some years & whether you would love me just as much as you do now - if I do not change very much which I do not think is

possible, I can answer you fearlessly & say that I shall love as deeply as at present. I have thought of the step I am to take & weighed the pros and cons & can truthfully confess I do not fear & will not regret it. The one who is to unite my lot with his I deem in every way worthy the deep regard & love I have given him & do not think he will give me cause to regret. I too am anxious that all should go well between us & very many pleasant day-dreams it has been the subject of. The somebody Mrs. Mac wrote to was Lex – true it was after their marriage, but they were more like an engaged couple. I think I feel far more than she, so she should not wish me to drop you even for once, but is content now, as I have written her. You must not speak of your pet being frightened any more. I will not be so, I promise you, for your sake - as you are bashful I must give you courage; but I can assure you the ordeal will not be what you think & well you know it too. You seem to take delight in teasing me about being frightened. Why? it will be when I have to meet all your family that timidity will get the better of me & I will require all the encouragement you can give your little girl, in order that I may be a credit to my own darling. My heart is all Steele now, but for all that is very warm & inflammable & as the fire burns brightly I cannot but feel the heat & know it is there. As you have promised to be prudent, I am not so anxious about you as I was – familiarity with ~~g~~ dangerous things often makes one reckless, & as you so many times have to ford the rivers which surround Macleod, one gets accustomed to them & forgets the risk. I before told you what life would be bereft of my darling & I shudder when I think of it even. You should not be long away from me, for I should soon be near you. it would break my heart to lose you, my own one, but my love is such that if I were compelled by circumstances to give you up, I should do so.

“Some measure love by gold,
By endless time, by boundless sea;
But I – I love thee well enough,
To leave thee, love, if needs must be.”

In that case, death would make you all my own once more & in death we should be reunited. If our long drive tired me, you could rock me to sleep, &

a short nap would be sure to restore me. No! Loneliness would never do for me, I have been with too many persons for that. So many brothers & sisters have brightened our home, though one by one they are leaving the home nest & battling with the world. I regret sometimes to see them all growing up so quickly - it makes me feel old you see. Especially if the eldest girl, as we are so much in the house & have not the same duties & pleasures as our boys. I never fancied my champion's heart had been hit at all, until Lex told me one day. I do not know whether the latter feared for me, but he gave me timely warning & put me on my guard by enlisting all my sympathies for the champion who took such an interest in my cause. He will of course meet his fate "someday"

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& wonder as the others do, that he ever fancied he had been in love before – it is the right way, no doubt & is well that it is so: I remember your hints about "marrying in haste" but never imagined you were serious for one moment, so did not give them a second thought. Well, my pet, you will make me confess that I read over your report of '88 ever so many times & enjoyed it very much. You know it too, but are [bound] to have me put it down in black & white, just to satisfy you, you dear old pet. My father also derived much pleasure from its perusal & takes great interest in all your doings. Mr. Freddie Drayner has been praising you up to his brother & the time you were so ill & came out on the bridge & faced the crowd has made you memorable. he must have spoken well of you, I am pleased to say. Is Col. Herchmer a much larger man than you are? I said no! I saw the Col. Several times & he looked smaller to me. A deserter from the M. P. who lives in Three Rivers told Mr. D. "that if the d_ were here before you, you would "fight him as you were afraid of no one, or anything" – he then asked me, if I was not frightened of such a big mate? with the coolest look, I answered "not at all." The deserter I mention was to have been arrested by Freddie but he got papers signed by Sir. A. [Cann] which made matters all right. I cannot say if the thing occurred lately or not. Mr. Freddie has been having a very lively time of it & will be well when he returns to his post once

more. You may come in the autumn

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& you know how delighted I shall be to see you, but the event will not take place till January. You see, Advent intervenes & as we have decided upon that time, let us not change, unless circumstances oblige you to put off until later. You are surely entitled to three months, as you have not been down for so long & I trust you will have no difficulty in obtaining your request for you fully deserve it. What charms travelling with you will have for me – it will be so nice to have some one to attend to ~~you~~ me & show ~~you~~ me all kinds of attention, I love it, you know. So you do not think you can improve on the alterations I desire in the house? Well, perhaps not, only I may venture to suggest a little more - that is it, you will say - so like a woman, never satisfied. I think the cellar requires ventilation, as things do not keep very well in it. a window would do it but if you can think of no way, just leave it to me & when I go up, I'll find a way of doing it, you may be sure. Every letter I write seems to contain some request, but, I suppose you must consider that a proof of my sincerity when I take so much interest in all that concerns our future reserve. Writing to you is such a pleasure that it does not fatigue me in any way: if I did not love you, I should not do it. See pet? You think me a model Aunt – why I have been a model sister as well & trust to be a model wife. Our baby is as bright as ever & now quite well. She tries so hard to talk & before two months have elapsed will

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have mastered the two languages pretty well. she attempts both, you know – like her aunt, nothing daunts her. You must tell me all the nice things Mr. [Currie] will say of me, when you meet, for you are sure to become acquainted with each other. My old admirer here, was speaking of me to my brother in law – he said all kinds of lovely things of the high esteem in which he held me & wound up by saying “I had not one fault.” how is it people can be so blind? it is now when about to part with me, that they find out all my nice qualities, but it is better that way, as the impression will last

you see. Your letter is perfectly legible to me & I can make out every word, so you need not worry your head over that, my darling. Whose sympathy should I long for, if not yours? My love is sufficient to wish you to be near me all the time & I long so to see you again. You must not be surprised at it, my darling. When you know me better, you will perhaps understand the depth of the love you have won from me. Poor Mr. Huot has lost his old grandmother Mrs. Nelson - tell Mrs. Mac for she knew the old lady. Mr. Huot spoke to me several times about her & was anxious to see her – is he to remain in Mr. Begin's place altogether, now that the latter has returned, though minus his bride? We are having nice weather, though no flowers or grass has charmed our eyes so far. The bay is clear of ice, so the weather will get warmer now. Alice is still in Montreal, but we expect her home this week. She is such a chatterbox that we miss her. Wait till you hear her rattle on & never tire of it. I am silent compared to her, truly, I mean it. I hear Mrs. Kennedy is quite fine at the balls & no wonder, when dressed in such fine plumage? She must be delighted at having received the bride & groom & my Maude will speak of it for a long time. The Dr., her father, is so fond of boasting I always found & Cotton's visit will be a 'theme' to enlarge upon for a while. Mr. Campbell has entirely recovered & the little dinners go on as before, small but select, you know. As Lent is almost over, your card parties can begin again. I have managed to get through pretty well & have not got too thin over it – true, I had to give up fasting & that was something. They say the Mass they are preparing is very nice & for male voices only. The Bishop of Montreal stopped ladies singing in the Church some years ago – the only season we can sing is during May & June – too much flirting went on it seems, so that was the end of it all. there are such silly people sometimes, nothing is bet beneath them. My thoughts play me false today my darling & I cannot write an interesting letter, but forgive me for it & I promise to try & do better next time. Things are so quiet here – one day after another it is just the same. The Summer is preferable, as there are more about us than at present. I will leave you now, my darling & enclose a little heliotrope blossom ~~with~~ which may have lost all its fragrance ere it reaches you – try a little water to revive it, & be sure & tell me if it comes

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back to a little of its old freshness. With very many sweet kisses I will kiss
good night. With warm love, Ever

Your own dear

little Girl

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