

2008.1.1.1.1.54

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
July 16th / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Today brought me your dear letter of the 6th which afforded me more pleasure than I can tell of! If every missive penned by a lover's hand received so warm a welcome, man could ask for no more. Your sweet words of affection make me fully realize the depth of the love I feel for you, my own one, & the moments cannot pass too speedily until we meet again. Ah! my darling, but I love you dearly & am ready to leave all for the happiness of being your's [sic] forevermore: is that too candid a confession for a good little girl to make? if so, pardon a fault committed for love's sake, all owing to your sweet avowals contained in your's [sic] of today. I hope the day that makes me your's [sic] will indeed be a joyful one for you & the beginning of a life of bliss for my own darling, who now has complete possession of the heart I so jealously guarded. Mrs. Mac does really

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speak well of my pet, but as you are kind & attentive when Lex is absent, she could not possibly fail to recognize it. she is truly a friend to you; although her words would make little difference to my love, it pleases me to know my future husband is a man so worthy of all my love & respect & esteemed by every one whom he comes in contact with. I did find it very peculiar that you were so nice to Grandmamma & so queer to me. That was another thing that led me to imagine your aim was to show me how little you cared even for my friendship, & would not attempt to lessen the cold feeling which from the first, surrounded us, by any but the most ordinary forms of politeness - sometimes, even that was refused me by my pet!. still, it gratified me that she thought you nice, though I knew it at the time, but denied it to my own self, fighting my heart bravely as I did at that time when you were learning I was not quite a statue. The very morning you spoke of me, I remarked to Alice "my ears are burning so, that Min & the Major must be conversing about me."

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I then noticed the date & it corresponds with the one you name. She (Mrs. Mac) only told me how much you cared for me & how happy I should be with the love of such a one to bless my life. Thank God! for it my pet, & I do so every day & pray Him to bless us both in the new life which will begin for us in some months from now. I ask for no better fate than Providence has in store for me, in making me your own & am content to die, rather than live deprived of you. Had I not, even before I had seen you, been prepared to like you I should have thought very little of the slights you were pleased to inflict upon me – that galled me more than anything & made me far more haughty & indifferent seemingly, than I had ever been to any one before, so great was my eagerness to hide the feeling you had aroused in my heart, you, a perfect stranger!!!..... I know I am different to many women, on account of my ideas of the way men should act – in fact, I am not always liked for it, still cannot help it & bitterly regret when I see a good girl link her fate with that of a roué in every sense of the term. Society men are as a rule, abhorrent to me – why! Some of them pride themselves in trying to let you know the way in which they live & have they not been terribly [cut] sometimes? I delight in it. I do not expect men to be all St. Anthony's [sic], still like to believe there are some better than others, as I am perfectly aware there are. Liquor is certainly the cause of most crime, for a man when under its evil influence, becomes a demon & has no control over his passions. You see so few, once they have contracted the habit, know when to stop – it grows on them & becomes more fascinating daily, in the end making them a total wreck! I never fancied you cared for it, so the fear never troubled me. I have so much confidence in my own true darling. I am well aware that many of my sex admire men who have seen life – it may be all very well for a moment's pleasure, but when it comes to the serious part of existence, one has to reflect long & earnestly ere one decides a whole future of happiness

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or pain for two. I am sure men who have made "women & wine" their aim, cannot retain the tiniest vestige of respect for the former, no matter how good & pure she may be & a woman of judgment realizes the fact but too well! Mrs. Mac did enjoy the drives immensely. Craig seems to have developed a liking for the sex I hear. perhaps he imagines they are not so bad after all, when his ideal of perfection has fallen a victim to a little girl, who with her many failings, will always endeavor to make him happy. Craig

when in the Mts. seemed to take me under his special care, because he thought so much of you & had a faint idea that you were being “caught in the net” – he found out for himself if I was in every way worthy, though he did not pretend what he was up to. A slave indoors & one out would be too much for me! The slave will in reality be your own little Maye, as time will prove. I am glad every one does not know how good hearted you are – you see they think my victory in winning your love is far greater when in ignorance of the soft heart you are blessed

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with!. You know now that I do not intend to put my threat of writing but once a week into execution – my heart is too kind for that my own pet, & well you are aware of it! Alice is twenty, but small & slight & has always been found old-fashioned. Mrs. Mac is fond of her – she talks away like a machine, is clever, bright & entertaining, sings, plays & dances very nice – altogether is nice, but like her eldest sister, has no pretensions to good looks. Your heartthrobs can be nothing compared to mine for,

“Love is of man’s life a thing apart,

‘Tis woman’s whole existence” –

a man has so much to attend to, that his love must come second in a measure, when with woman, it is all. Her dreams, thoughts, words & actions all centre around the one whom her heart holds dearer than all – no one but a woman understands true love in the fullest sense of the term & even the knowledge is not given to every one of them. Alice who met Mr. Freddy, says his brother is better than he is; of course, I gave you my opinion of one long ago & the other I know nothing of.

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Mr. Reed seemed to be liked, as on the way up, when we stopped at many places, friends got on to congratulate him on his appointment & wife. The assault you fear will not amount to very much no doubt – she may never have remarked this little girl, owing to her new-found happiness - brides sometimes are absent-minded, they say. We have not suffered much from heat lately; having thunderstorms every day. The nights are pleasant & seldom prevent me from reposing well. I dreamt of you pet, the other night, but only remember the end of the sweet illusion, which was when you were bidding me good-bye, after paying me a short visit. The grief I felt at your departure awakened me..Indeed! I often found it exceedingly warm, up in the little room I occupied when in Macleod – sometimes there did not seem to be a breath of air.... Louise has been in luck lately. Some years ago an

aunt, her Godmother, left her a beautiful necklet & earrings. There was some trouble about it & she had given up all hope of ever getting it, when it came last night – it is lovely & makes me quite green-eyed. Mr. D. gave her an exquisite pin some weeks ago – a gold butterfly with ruby eyes, silver wings, encrusted with turquoises – it is lovely. he is very fond of jewellery & so is she, so she has & will have plenty of it. They are as good friends as ever. he is certainly behaving better since the estrangement so is winning his way into favor rapidly. He is not my style however..... I should be more happy to see you than you can imagine & long for the day to come when I shall meet you. I think you almost perfect, my own darling & will, until I know you underserving which I will know, not be for a very long time. I heard a little about Mr. Springett's trouble & feel sorry for him – he is paying dearly for his folly. Mrs. Mac speaks of the saddles & tells me that “to tell the truth you officer's [sic] have had so much riding that you do not care for it” – if that is so, you put yourself out very often to please me, my own pet. Say nothing about it, as I should not wish her to learn I had spoken of it.

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July 17th. I finished my letter rather abruptly last evening, but my sisters just then came up & were talking so much, I had to cease writing, without even wishing you pleasant dreams, my own darling. Your dear, sweet letter of the 9th lies open before me, ready to be answered & it is a task I perform with the most intense pleasure. As you know ere this I am well now – the attack I mentioned though severe, did not last very long. you see, my pet, I am kept pretty much occupied & fatigue will tell upon a person sometimes. I wish them to have pleasant recollections of me, when I am far away & do all I can that they may miss me, when I have another home with my darling lord & master. When surrounded with all I have loved so well until now, to turn to you for consolation must prove how much I think of my dear boy – later, you will be the only one who will heed all my little trials & worries & console me. I feel sure you dreaded the “genuine american [wiggling]” and did your best to get things in order for Mrs. M. When Lex came in the first day of the races & said you might drive out in his

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wagon, I was a little surprised, coming to the conclusion that Mr. Bently being a great friend of yours, having been away so long you desired to meet his wife. I never for one moment thought I had any attraction for you. You no doubt do not remember the first time I told your fortune – it was a few days after your arrival – all the officer's [sic], that is Messr. Starnes,

Wroughton & Huot were there as well as Mrs. Neale. We played "Hearts" for a while, then drifted into fortunes – I told all the others & Mrs. Mac said "Major come & have yours told". You refused – she persisted so much that I haughtily told her to desist. "Major Steele does not wish it & I do not care to tell it" – immediately you approached & cut the cards at the suggestion of some others. I was furious at Mrs. Mac for insisting & at you for coming in the end. I do not recall the whole of it, but remember quite well telling you "a fairest f haired lady would have a great deal to do with your fate. You would fight hard against it, but would propose to her sure, whether you liked it or not". Your eyes took such a strange expression that my heart began to beat & I flushed crimson. Your pet

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exclamation O, pshaw! came to my aid & I laughingly attracted the attention of the rest from me to you. I fancied from your face I had perhaps touched a sensitive chord, not knowing what your life might have been in B.C. or before you left for that place. Lex afterwards said to Mrs. Mac that she "should not have asked you, that such nonsense did not amuse you. You were far too serious for such trifles". all these incidents only served to make me beleive [sic] you looked down upon all the sex & thinking you so different from all other men, of course imagined you would never fall in love, particularly with such a one as the little girl who has the happiness of possessing such a warm place in your dear heart. When I told your fortune that night had I for one moment fancied I was reading your fate at the time & my own as well, I never would have said all I uttered. so far was it from my thoughts – it was the lookers on who put two & two together & so indignant was I that I refused to tell any more. Even Mrs. Mac's. A day or so before we left for the Mts, Mrs. Mac said "I am sure if the Major could come with us, he would propose when we were there" – I asked if she was crazy to let such an idea enter her head & never gave it a second thought. As I have confessed before, when about to leave you for a few days I found out the true state of my heart & was sick at the id knowledge of the separation in store. You saw there was something wrong – thought the pony episode worried me, that was not all. I can see you now just as plainly as if you were before me. that morning you had on your sombrero & a blue tie, the first time I had seen you in that style of dress & you cannot imagine how it pleased me & how nice I found you looked. You had always worn your military clothes & the light riding pants & dark coat became you so well. A very silly little girl you will find me, I suppose, but women remark all these h small details. Mrs. Mac told me how nice you looked the night of the

concert in civilian dress, but the pleasure of viewing you as you were that evening was denied me until after you had proposed & been accepted. Lex was away selecting a suitable place for a detachment somewhere near Dunbar's ranch, if I remember well. You came in dressed

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in black. You were told that evening by Mrs. Mac that you were indifferent – do you remember now? it was the first time that you showed me the affection you felt for me & seemed to hesitate for fear you should frighten me. We had been talking of you during the day & I had said you were very indifferent I found. I never thought she would give me away as she did, but it did no harm after all. When leaving that evening, I told you how nice you looked, though it cost me a great deal to say it, fearing to offend you. I found out once more how much I loved you & what a fine fellow my pet was; seeing him clad in the way most familiar to me, seemed to bring him nearer & made all seem more true, for then I knew I was not “dreaming”. Had I, until you spoke known you cared, all might have been different. so secure was I that my love was given unasked, that I never put myself out to avoid you, though pain was usually what followed. It annoyed me to know I

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thought so much of a man who seemed to do his best to cut me, every chance he had. Then my love made me independent, for I strove to hide it in that manner, sure of being successful, for a haughty way suited me several times before & always proved a friend. You are well aware pet, I never refused you – my only answer was “don't ask me” & you did not. My opinion of myself is rather good, but the first time you told your love you actually took me by storm – it was so unexpected & was brought about by my teasing you a wee bit, about not minding if you cared for a girl & she did not care for you, you would go & forget her. You recall all now, do you not? I wished to give you hope, but not too much, desiring to question my heart well first, when I asked you to make the fourth. The more I saw of you, the easier it would be for me to know how much I thought of you, my darling, so my motive was a selfish one as you see. Had I made a goose of myself you would not have found me

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half as nice as the way in which I ventured to tread softly on delicate ground. I knew if you came, you were in earnest & that my answer must soon be decided. How sad your account of your first engagement makes

me feel! – think of all the happiness she missed, because she failed to win your heart & she may have loved you very dearly, my pet. I have been blessed with your love & can realize what her loss has been. Her death must have grieved you, for say what you will, does there not always lurk a soft feeling around the memory of one you loved, or fancied you loved in the days gone-by?.. So my darling does not wish to put off his trip? Well, of course he knows best & it would be to suit him, if I did so – I am perfectly aware of all you have to attend to in summer & in consequence your trip, if in that season would be a short one. I know you have several persons you wish to see & require time, so will be ready for you in January. Sometime, sooner or later if you desire it. I am so anxious for you to come in order that the family may personally judge of my darling & tell me what they think of the good taste & judgment displayed in my choice. If in the wrong, should I not plead for forgiveness? Every one should do that, my darling, though I trust I shall not have to do so often, as I will endeavor to do all well. I regret to learn of the accident which befell the Woods & trust it is not as serious as at first anticipated. I shall write Mrs. Charlie to inquire how she is. My mother told me to be very careful & I promised I would saying “My Major will look after me well & take me out himself I hope, as often as he can”. I shall never feel as safe as with you, my darling. I am delighted you gave the Indians a tongue lashing & imagine how well you can do it, when willing. I have not read the book you mention “Songs of the Great Dominion”. although not personally with the author, Mr. Lighthall, I believe, he has been in our house – we have quite a joke about them & always call them “The Pirates” – if it is not by the one I mention, Mr. [McLennan] published it. his writings are familiar, as

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he always writes for the Montreal “Gazette” which is our daily paper. It seems to me my love could stand any fierceness & even if yours were fanned, it would not appall me. I never believed I could really have such warm feelings in the heart I sometimes feared would never learn what love is, but the moment had not come & the right person had not appeared, when I was in such doubt, my sweetheart. You are very quiet & staid when with ladies & we could not fancy there was a speck of fun in you, you look so sedate. I saw it often though, particularly the evening you horrified Lex, by putting your head on my shoulder & leaving it there – I did not dislike it, so let it remain for a short time. I see you often as you appeared to me on different occasions & always recall everything connected with my own sweet pet, with the most intense gratification & pleasure.

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I have had a very busy day. Dear Mamma is not well so I have had her duties to attend to as well as my own. I only wish you were near enough to taste some of the lovely bread I made. I am perfecting myself in the art of baking & also in buttermaking. though I may never have to do it, there is no harm in knowing how, in order to be able to teach others, if necessary. Baby has not been well either, but that is not surprising – she is so bright & cute, the dear wee tot that she is! She will soon be two years old. How rapidly the time is passing, my darling – July will end before we realize it has been with us & four months only will remain to elapse, ere we meet again my own one. Does it not seem like a dream to you, that you are going to become a [Benedict] in so short a time & make you ponder well before you take the fatal step? Well, my own true love, my letter is a long one

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& you will imagine it is to be never ending. All are retiring one by one, so I begin to percieve [sic] I should follow suit. It is rather late – I really require to snatch a little beauty sleep if I wish to retain as much of your affection as possible, for I am getting rather thin I find. Au revoir my own sweet darling – with warm love & kisses

Ever,

Your own warm hearted
loving little Girl.

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