

2008.1.1.1.1.17

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

[pg 1]

Vaudreuil
Feb 19th / 89.

My own darling Boy,

Your dear expected letter came today dated Feb 8th & my pet knows how very warmly it was welcomed. You were disappointed in not receiving a letter on the 9th but as I usually write twice a week, you had received the usual number previous to your “hoping against hope” as you say. There being so few topics of interest I think two letters are quite sufficient for you, as they are so long, & I cannot succeed in making them interesting enough to be read with the pleasure I should wish. I feel quite grieved at your news of Mrs. K.’s black eye, but it is a good thing the Dr. was not the cause of it, do you not think? How funnily I once saw her dressed for riding! no habit, but her usual garb, with the usual fashionable accessories laid aside. She did cut a queer figure I assure you & like myself, her hair had become loosened & was anything but becoming! I am bound to repeat tonight & trust I will improve as the moments fly & the talking around me ceases a little. Antoine is carrying

[/pg 1]

[pg 2]

on at a great rate & I cannot write in peace. Mrs. K.’s eyes are something like mine, all color mixed so I am surprised you never noticed them before – did you admire her mouth? The Majah is perhaps too tall to look well on horseback, her waist being rather long. She is very much thought of when in that position & was given me as a model a few times, or rather held up

as such, by mutual friends on several occasions Indeed! I do think it odd that persons could settle the most difficult question that sometimes comes to a woman, without due reflection – they rush into matrimony in haste & very soon repent. They find out they are not suited to each other in more ways than one, will not give in when wrong, & life is then a miserable thing to both – two lives ruined, when a few day's [sic] attentive consideration would have avoided all the pain & sorrow that invariably falls to the lot of such a couple. You know well, my darling a loving, warm welcome will always await you when duty has called you from my side, if but for a day only. Will you not be all in all to me, when I return with you to my distant home? Then to you I can show all the love there is in my heart, which to others might seem out of place. We love & will understand one another & no one can

[/pg 2]

[pg 3]

criticise the motives of the feelings that sway us. I have often said I was very affectionate though indifference can be so well assumed as to appear quite natural. You will learn in the future, that I spoke the truth, & I trust the day will never dawn when you may think me tired of your sweet attentions, my pet. I cannot imagine why they fancy you will allow your wife to lead you. You seem very decided; though you say little, you always have your way. do they beleive [sic] I shall rule you? do I look such a tartar? You know I am a very reasonable little girl, accustomed to live with so many different characters that I have studied them well in order to agree with them all. I find home a good school & when you pull well there, usually manage to get on with strangers. So you missed the wedding! Mr. P. must have been disappointed & you will not have many opportunities of acting in the same capacity, unless you put off for a year or so. You see it would be useless for me to give you a good going over if you failed to write, as the distance which separates us is so great that remorse for hasty words would have taken the place of anger, long before the letter arrived at its

destination. am I not a wise little girl? by being a martyr you feel bad & promise to be a good boy, with the firm resolution of offending no more in the future, then my point is gained without more ado. but, my pet, I love your letters so, that when they fail me, I am almost heart broken a day or so & feel so very blue, that even you would pity me! You must have been pleased with Dr. Allan for the way he acted. I saw something of it in the "Gazette" at the time – he is strange, the old man, is he not? I suppose his son Edwin is with him, attending to part of the duties which fall to his charge. I mailed you today's "Gazette" continuing a synopsis of the Commissioner's report, but you may have read it, ere that arrives. Never mind pet, you will know I think of you anyway. I do not understand why you care for my letters so much – they are poor effusions, my darling, but I am pleased they afford you a few happy moments. You must not be too much in the heat, my pet – it will make you melt & what would become of me? You were looking better previous to my departure & I hope when you have less worry you will improve in health – do you know you make me very anxious when

[/pg 3]

[pg 4]

you say you are not well & I do hope you will see the Dr. as you must not neglect yourself for my sake, darling. You are by now fully installed in your new quarters I suppose & will many a time picture a young lady moving in & out of the different rooms you occupy while smoking in the "cabinet of peace" with Lex & your other friends - do you find it hard to become reconciled to the idea of having another to care for, to depend upon you for all, of giving up many pleasures a bachelor may indulge in? poor fellow! it is a bleak picture I recall to your thoughts very often – hope it does not frighten you. You find my name pretty! I am delighted as the two names, the old one and the new, go rather nicely together, do you not think? I mean the new one which a year may give me. You receive a letters from me every Tuesday my pet, & Thursday as well, when the trains are not

delayed, as I always mail one every Monday & Wednesday evening. Had I remained longer in Macleod I should have taken matters in my own hands & acted on my own responsibility as I should not have waited to consult any one. Mrs. Mac must know that was a very happy time to me, though I can quite understand, being thought selfish at

[/pg 4]

[pg 5]

remaining up till "lights out", when my host & hostess desired to retire. however, it is past now & I will cause no further trouble that way, my pet, nor are you likely to either, if all goes well with us: do not say you were making a spoon of yourself. it hurts me to hear you use the word – it would not have been so nice for you then as it will be – distance, perhaps as well as separation, has made me dearer to you & you may love me more, than in the old days when you saw me for so long!. Mrs. Mac is anxious to come & it would do her good if Lex could be persuaded to bring her. She would feel happier afterwards & will miss him very much, if he leaves her alone. I am pleased Father Lacombe has not forgotten his promise of giving me his photo – who told him of our engagement & did he speak of it to you? I heard he was to go to the Northern Missions in March & might be away four years. Then where would the photo be, as the original will have gone from Macleod, before I return & so have no chance of visiting us in our home? I thought Mr. Macp__ had been guilty of something very serious when you wrote of him as you did – only one thing causes such grief to a man, as to break his heart! The Majah

[/pg 5]

[/pg 6]

may find him very entertaining for all you know & if he is very handsome, he may be considered quite a hero by some silly women – men like that very often are. You must have prayed very earnestly when you could admire the ugly ladies in church – are you not ashamed to be guilty of such

a thing? Men always manage to study a woman's looks by hook or by crook, when supposed to have their minds turned heavenwards - perhaps, Mr. Hilton was telling you something you knew before? Lex makes a mistake if he imagines I fancy he does not like work, but many a time I smiled when he came in, puffing & blowing as if he had been terribly busy, when I knew the Major's room had been his last resting place. I am sure if he has things to do, he will not shirk his duty. You may find the next trip in my company too long & not as pleasant as the one we have taken together – what do you think, dear? Would you prefer the last one over again? I know you love me deeply, sincerely & God knows how dear you are to me! Would you not like a change of air and scene such as you threatened to take once, when you thought your little girl did not care for you? Would it not have the desired effect at present? You deserve to be happy, my darling & I will try to reward such pure affection as well as I possibly can – my one aim in life will be your welfare. Well, my own dear boy, it is late, so I will Good-night. Very pleasant dreams & with sweet kisses which I am compelled to bestow on your photo, not having my darling near enough, I am your own little girl –

Wednesday. 20th. Another of your loving letters has again come to me, dated the 12th & to say how eagerly I perused & enjoyed it would be impossible. I am happy to know you are free from toothache & that you are having them well attended, as we are very apt to neglect the teeth to suffer later. My influenza disappeared long ago & did not trouble me very much – with such faith & trust on both sides, surely all will go well between us. We both thank Heaven for the love we feel for each other & seem grateful – if you tell your love I am sure I do also, & the more I hear you say it, the more I love to hear it. No! You did not ask for it, “with the reckless dash of a boy” but after mature deliberation & the answer was that of a woman, who has proved to you on more than one occasion, that she also reflects & looks ahead! You are plucky, so you need not try to pretend you are not –

[/pg 6]

[pg 7]

I trust General Strange will find me nice enough for his friend & that some day I may have the pleasure of meeting him. You must not say, my darling that you are not good looking. You know what I think of you, my pet, & to me you are all a man can ever be to the woman who is to be his wife. I am glad that the ladies do not take to you too much for I want you all, all to myself – if they did I might get green-eyed & that is not nice. The dream was sweet to me, though it had almost escaped my memory, until I saw your photo, the very first evening I arrived in Macleod: then it all flashed back & was imprinted on my mind, never to be forgotten! – the thought of it never seemed awful, as I really never fancied it would ever come to pass – afterwards, I fought against it, as you know, but all to no avail! My sister & I might be married together as nothing is decided one way or the other – still I think I will be the first - - -. If you express your love in plain terms, pray what do I? no flowery language could tell you the deep love I bear you, better than the simple words employed in everyday conversation. So you think this time next year we may be quietly settled. I hope so, but the love can but increase. You did find out what I thought of you particularly the morning we left for the Crow's Nest – had I not been proud, you cannot guess what I should

[/pg 7]

[pg 8]

have done nor will I tell you now. My first song at the concert “Dreaming” I sang for you only, but you did not imagine it. I did not know you were there, but a certain faint tugging at my heart strings warned me that some of it was gone. I will have to beg my friends to cease praising me, as you expect perfection & find only a frail woman, full of faults & failings. I am sure you will like both my father & mother & not be surprised at the ardent love we all have for them. I should regret to see your hair change, as I dearly love passing my hand over your dear head & would feel sorrow that the hand of time had left its trace there; but my darling, that would make no difference

in my love, which is all your's [sic] forevermore. You must not say "if your little girl were with you, you think it would be better" – do you know you make my heart ache & my eyes fill with tears at the long distance & the months that must elapse before we can meet again. My love is so strong, dearest, that when you say anything like that, I feel it keenly. Thank you so much dear, for arranging things in our future home as I wished & the task, imposed by love, will I trust make time fly more pleasantly. Our mail leaves at six in the evening – that is the reason the letters take a week, having to lay over in Montreal for a day, either up or down. You are a darling to get me such a nice saddle & oh! how I long for another ride with my pet. You little know how

[/pg 8]

[pg 9]

anxious I am to see my darling again. Capt. [Corton] goes to Toronto & Stratford, then right on to Regina. I am glad she is the bride, not I this time. God bless my darling Sam! With very many sweet kisses, Ever

Your own darling

Maye.

[/pg 9]

[pg 10]

Vaudreuil
Feb 21st / 89.

My dearest Sam,

I today received yours of the 14th very much to my surprise, as I expected it tomorrow only & to tell you what a treat it was would be utterly impossible. This note will I trust meet with as warm a welcome & I will be quite content. Having written you twice this week, you will not anticipate the pleasure of seeing my now very familiar hand writing. The old gentleman knew Mr. Macp_ rather well, being in the same line of steamships as his

brother, who resides in Quebec. he spoke of all the family & knew Sir [David] intimately. You think it bad enough to take me away from here. do you not know that the bird is very willing to change eages for cages for a while? If it were not so, I would fight against it & you should not have had such an easy victory. Mamma says to tell you “to be a good boy & not to be too anxious to get me – the time will soon fly over & then you will have me forever.” She seems sad over it some-

[/pg 10]

times & it makes me unhappy, though I feel the hold you have on my affection increases daily. So it is a mistake about Miss [Prevest]! Well, they would insist that they had met you; that is why I spoke of it. Miss P. is married to Dr. Brodeur of Montreal. By the by, have you any relation in the latter place? I said I did not think so, but some persist in saying you have. When Col Hughes speaks of Major Steele, you will not say it is his imagination, can you, my own dear? he is not the only one of your sex to praise you, for you are well known, my pet. I knew of course what the helmet was & did not think it odd. My military taste is highly cultivated by now & I am quite at home where uniforms are concerned. Your photo's [sic] suit me, my pet & are liked by all, but I must not tell you all the nice things said about you, for you will get terribly conceited. If any one saw our letters, what would they think? not that love was lacking on either side, my own dear. I am glad you can prove to “the fellows” that such a thing as love does exist, so many of them being incredulous, when that tender passion is supposed to be. Money is generally what they say is the cause of many marriages. I am so pleased you are feeling better & trust will remain so. I am always anxious, as you have been ailing for some time & must take something to cure you – now, remember, my pet, no fooling. if you do not, you will regret it, love. Yes you may have commenced having changes made in the house, I should like two shelves in the large wardrobe; I cannot recall whether Mrs. Mac has two or not. I tell you of this, when it comes to my mind in order that all can be done together, without too much trouble. I hope you will be happy & comfortable. You can use the piano. I give you

free use of it & hope you will practice up, that you may sing for me soon. I have sung a little more for the last few days, wishing to let them hear my voice now & then, but still you seem ever near me, when I sit at the piano. Well, my own dear, it is late & Papa desires to mail the letters. Not wishing to give you too great a surprise, my letter will be shorter than usual & I must reserve something to say in the one I write on Sunday. With very many sweet kisses, beleive [sic] me, my own darling, Ever,

Your own loving

Maye.

[/pg 11]