

2008.1.1.1.1.27

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

[pg 1]

Vaudreuil  
March 26<sup>th</sup> / 89.

My own Loved Sam,

You can perhaps imagine how anxious I was for today's [sic] coming, anticipating the pleasure of a letter from my darling & he has not disappointed his own little girl. Your nice long chat with me I thoroughly [sic] enjoyed & trust St. Patrick will always enable you to treat me as well in the years to come!. It is charming of my pet to devote so much of his leisure to the exacting young lady he has honored with his affection!. I believe you miss the short conversation which sometimes took place before lunch, when I was near you, so usually spend that time in daydreams - happily for me, I occupy a warm corner in your dear heart, so am in a measure consoled by the thought that even if "I am last to sight, to memory dear". I fully understand that you write when you can, but if you succeed in making a woman who is very much in love, a reasonable being in some things, all men will envy your power & seek to learn your secret. You must forgive my allow-

[/pg 1]

[pg 2]

ing you to know how utterly disappointed I am when the mail fails to bring a message from your heart to mine. So Mrs. Mac knew I had sent two missives to my pet? it is no wonder she finds I do not favor her as often, but she should remember days not so very long gone by, when she wrote just as many as I do at present all to the one person as well. I have a good

number of correspondents & were I as faithful to the friends as I am to my lover, I should wield [sic] the pen from morn till night. I am delighted that the bronze [tint] has the kindness to hide the blushes that should cover your cheeks when my name comes on the [tapis] - if roses only come when you are ashamed, I fear it is very seldom, as I never remarked you in the plight you mention. You have given me a very accurate description of the man with the musical voice. I regret to learn he is so old, still as he has found "The only one for whom he tarried" some time ago, the sorrow is not such as to be beyond a little consolation - how is it that men like you so much? I wish I were as great a favorite with the same sex!. It must be too much May(e)ing that has affected my dear old pet & distance makes one lonely - the month will soon come now, dear, & you can converse about me all day long & no one be a bit the wiser. You will be spoiling me altogether & [end] by persuading your little girl that she writes a passable letter, when I

[/pg 2]

[pg 3]

know positively that it is only the veil love has drawn over your eyes that blurs your usual keen sight. However, it affords me great pleasure to learn you cherish the effusions such as they are & I will endeavor to do even better in order to earn the praise bestowed. Why do you say they are heartbreaking, my pet? is it because the feeling of affection will not be restrained & lurks about ready to be seen or felt at every moment? I often take the resolution just when going to write, of not saying one word of love, but alas! my heart is too much [elected] to resist fire & once lit, the quantity of material is so great, that it burns for ever & for ays. Perhaps, in fact, were I nearer, my letters would not seem so nice - it is the long, long distance which casts a halo around them & makes them appear to advantage!. You can now imagine how dear your's [sic] are to me, & how much I miss them sometimes! - it is strange how closely allied happiness is to pain & how very often they come together, is it not? You need rest after battling with storms, so I hope you will remain in barracks for a while - then

you must be very prudent when crossing those treacherous rivers, for my sake, darling – think what life would be, were I bereft of my pet!! I will help you when you have lots of writing to do, as I can write a large legible hand when necessary, so you will not have to lose your beauty sleep, when you have an assistant always at hand, ready to work & all for love. The heart of my soldier boy is brave & true I know – the former he has proved on many occasions, the latter will I trust be added to his motto & that he may find his little girl worthy of all his truth is my sincerest prayer. You will often drive with me nestling close if you wish it, my pet. I am very willing to keep you company whenever you care to take me with you, which I must candidly confess, I hope will be frequently. I am inclined to think Mr. Wood would rather enjoy catching you in the act you mention, shake his head in pity & say to himself, - “he has caught it badly” – you must be getting accustomed to awaken from that style of dreams by now – wait till the reality comes, - you may sigh then & wish it “but a dream!” – you must be teasing my poor champion beyond endurance. I wish I were near to defend him. he may find her very charming after all & change her opinion of life, as much as mine was, about the country & that is saying a great deal, I assure you. The pleasing will be as much for me as for you, for you may be sadly disappointed in the estimate you have formed of this little maid – a “sensitive plant” sometimes requires more attention and care than a man has the patience to give & is left to droop & pine away from neglect. I do not for one instant believe you would act so to me, but such has been known to happen! What you tell me of the couple who married does not

[/pg 3]

[pg 4]

surprise me – that is the way they do things in the Northwest! still, I am glad you were not in such a hurry, for I never could have made up my mind on such very short notice – that is making marriage too much of a lottery, in my opinion! Mr. Pritchard’s appointment may have the good affect [sic] of increasing his wife’s affection & if things continue to improve, she will love

him very dearly, ere you are aware of it. Sure the Majah's devotion will soon completely restore Mr. W. to his usual good health – a wife is such a blessing sometimes!!... So you prefer your Canadienne to the Baronet's daughter, notwithstanding the difference in weights & measures? well, I should be thankful to know "you are good & true". There is one thing, sure; no matter how naughty I may be, you are too far away to chastise & would not take the trouble to come such a distance to give me a lesson, so I am safe. My heart was sore for many reasons the memorable day I returned your riding whip, & in that way, endeavored to give you a wee glimpse into the mirror where your face was so often reflected & contemplated with delight. You found me cold; I was frozen by the icicle who walked to the side of the wagon & let his brother officers see, how little he cared for the occupant of the back seat, he was happy

[/pg 4]

[pg 5]

to share later on. No! No! Your report was of no interest to me! but, I almost know it by my heart, for all that – instinct, no doubt. Freddy has come down & remains until April 12<sup>th</sup> – he then goes with Mr. Royal to B.C. for a trip. I do not know whether he will be honored or not but trust we may have the pleasure of meeting later on, when he comes to his brother's wedding, for instance. To say that I am not sorry that nine long months remain to elapse ere I see you, my darling, would be deviating from the truth & I do not wish to deceive you - however, since the time you mention suits you, it does me. I should have liked your first impressions of my country home to be very pleasant ones, but January is so bleak & cold, that it looks anything but inviting. Summer & autumn are the season's [sic] when Vaudreuil puts on her gayest robes & it is considered a very pretty place, as our house is surrounded by a large number of trees, it looks very cosy when the trees are in full dress - but, circumstances are such, that it cannot be otherwise & I am glad. You have told me when you can really get leave – it would not do for me to await the tarrying bridegroom, so I will not be ready before the

month you say - in fact, the New Year will be somewhat advanced no doubt, ere the

[/pg 5]

[pg 6]

ceremony takes place. You would get three months leave for all that, would you not? or would you take me away for good immediately? ah! no, you would not, my pet, would you? You need be in no hurry with the alterations, having ample leisure ere you come East – if you think of any improvements or suggestion's [sic] do not fail to carry them out. "Two heads are better than one," any day, particularly when both are wise ones. is it because it is such an effort to write me, that you must doff your coat? it may be that your heart grow's [sic] warmer, too! – Well, my darling, as three of the family went to Montreal this morning & I rose very early my eyes are gently drooping & warn me I had better seek repose. Alice has gone for a short visit & will I trust enjoy it. Our dear little baby has been quite ill for a couple of days with a heavy cold & you can imagine how anxious her poor mother is, not to mention the others. I hope she will feel better tomorrow. She is so bright & winning when well. I will leave my pet, now & send loving greeting & sweet kisses from his own little girl who loves him so fondly—Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup>. I expected I might possibly have the pleasure of reading one of your dear letters, but likely the river's being so high, interfere with the regularity of the mails. It is strange that Mrs. Neale should not go with her husband since her health is restored particularly if railway travelling makes the trip to Edmondton [sic] easier. Mr. Cowie has given me something which I shall value very highly. his wife dead now over fifteen years, was my mothers [bosom] friend. her brother drew very nicely & when my mother & Mrs. C. were children just in their teens, sketched their photo's [sic] in pencil. Mrs. C. had Mamma's & vice versa. Mr. Cowie had it framed very nicely & sent it up to me on Monday last. he knows how treasured it will be & is the only one of my own dear Mamma at that age! he always does things well & this last proves to me that though he did not

write to congratulate me, no ill feeling exists now – we had become anything but friendly within the past year or more!. he also sent three novels as well. Your poetry I enjoyed very much. The truth in the lines only making them nicer! Baby seems better today & is more like her old self. You will wonder why I tell you, but she is dear to me & so must be that to you – at least you must pretend so, even if you do not care. I fear we are in for disagreeable weather; the sky is dark & grey looking & has a very bad effect on my spirits, filling my mind with gloomy forebodings & all kinds of heartrending thoughts. This epistle being so closely & finely written may be difficult to read – if so, tell me & I will not try your patience to such an extent again. it tantalizes a man to have to wade through so many pages of small writing & you may have said many a word very low, which you would

[/pg 6]

[pg 7]

not like me to hear were I near!!! Be sure & tell me please, so that I will do better next time. I wish you were near me today, my pet. I want sympathy from my pet & no one else – he is too far to give it, so I must wait, but it is weary waiting sometimes! – You are going to cherish & shelter a very tender sensitive plant; I fear you may be frightened at the prospect now & then & wish you had not let your heart get the better of your good sense. We heard robins a few days ago & the crow's [sic] some time since, gave us promise of an early spring. I hope so, for bright, warm, sunny days suit me best! – You would call me a little blue bay were you near enough I suppose, & trust you forgive me for giving way to my feelings a short moment ago – it does me good though, so you must not scold your little girl & if I do not turn to you once in a while, where can I look for sympathy? a few loving words often make life very bright when one loves very dearly, as I love you, my own darling boy. it does seem so very long since you & I parted in Dunmore, but thank Heaven, the cold winter is over, & time will not seem so long, when the summer comes again.

“Sorrows humanize our fate:

Tears are the showers that fertilize the world.  
And memory of things precious keepeth warm  
The heart that once did hold them” –

[/pg 7]

[/pg 8]

I am charmed to hear Mr. Campbell is better & that the dinners will continue as of old. You may have an opportunity of meeting Mrs. [Colton? Cotton?] since the end of her tour is to be a visit to Macleod. tell me your impressions if you see her, will you not? Lex must be happy with so much to do on hand. Give both Mrs. Mac & himself my fondest love & tell her I am sure her flowers must be far ahead of mine now, the weather being so lovely up there. My watch is a splendid time keeper & has not run down once since you gave it to me. I sleep with it right at my head, so near that the music of its ticking is my slumber song every night, & sweet thoughts of my own dear boy lull me to ~~sleep~~ rest. Mr. Drayner spent Sunday & Monday with us – he made himself quite amiable, but I suppose that must have been because he had been almost six weeks without coming. I am very wicked, am I not, my love? he is fond of Alice & is nice to her, but does not care for either Mrs. Hubert or I. With your affection, my darling, I want for nothing, so it matters not what he thinks of me. Well, my pet this has proved a task of patience, so I will not try you any longer. With very many sweet kisses which it seems to me

[/pg 8]

[pg 9]

increase in number & fervor as time rolls slowly on, beleive [sic] me ever

Your own loved

little Girl

[/pg 9]