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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
Feb 10th / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Your nice letter of the 24th reached me on the 6th. I commenced reading over the letter & found I was about to answer the same one over again, so will proceed to that of the 29th & humbly crave pardon for even hinting that you neglected me. it was cruel to cause you one little pang, when you are so good & kind to me. my love alone makes me so selfish & being deprived of the great pleasure of seeing & conversing with you, I desire to read your dear letters every day: never again fear that your dear effusions tire me. I love you so & not having you near I love them next, being your sentiments of affection for your little girl. I do not know what portrait I like best – I take up one after another & kiss them, imagining each more like my darling so far away. Surely Mrs. Mac has by now received the letter I wrote her on the 20th, as the one I penned you on the same day has been acknowledged. I rather like Mrs. Macfarlane; she is kind hearted & seems

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to like me; when I met her, she was always very pleasant & received me nicely when I visited her. Ah! You dear old fraud! pretending not to know who the fine fellow she spoke of is! if you do not, I am sure to be equally ignorant, so trust you will do your best to find out & let me in the secret, if you succeed in discovering the person. I am delighted to learn you have

the other ring – it is but another proof of the high esteem in which you are held by your fellow men & charms me only the more with the dear one, whom Heaven has given me to love forevermore. If you have lovely weather, my last as well as the papers will have told you how we have been afflicted. Antoine left Thursday morning, accompanied by one of my Uncle's [sic] to attend the Carnival, or rather what remained to be seen. They were at the station for three hours, expecting to start every minute, when that accident occurred. Luckily they had left the first class & gone into the smoking car, else I do not know how they might have come home to us. The Pullman, two first class cars & an empty one back of the Pullman, were smashed into small pieces. There were some hurt but none killed; the passengers were breakfasting at an hotel near, having spent the night at the depot. Antoine got a great

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fright & has not ceased speaking of it yet – it was far more serious than the papers lead one to believe [sic]. I thought Mrs. Starnes' father cut her off in his will & I believe [sic] such is the case. he had his reasons for so doing, but might have been a little more lenient, considering his own great faults. Do you not remember how often Mr. Wroughton told you, you should not flirt & etc? was he not defending me & were there not breakers ahead? heart breakers, if all did not go well. That is the reason he was called my champion. The Carnival was not half as nice as in previous years. The dailies I send will tell you. I fear, my pet you have very poor letters to learn from. I wish I could write some worthy for you to read with pleasure, but my talent does not lie that way, so what is left for me? I must inflict my friends as I have done for years, & trust that love will make up for all deficiencies in your dear eyes. I do not think you need ever fear I shall deceive you. I love you so much, have such faith in you, my pet, that were anything to separate us I believe [sic] it would break my heart. I think you worthy of all the affection I give you & it pleased me so, to hear you say one day, that

even being acquainted with me, had ~~even~~ made you feel a better man. When a woman's whole heart is given, that she tries to be good & true can anything be more consoling than to know that she has in a measure, had some little influence over the man whose whole life she is to bless or mar? I recall to mind our second ride & what you said, but feared to beleive [sic] too much, in case you did not intend me to think you meant all the nice things your lips uttered. Sometimes the lips say one thing, the heart means another, as I did on several occasions. God bless you, darling, for giving me such deep, true love & I will endeavor to be deserving of it in every way. Your nice, long letter of the 31st I warmly welcomed on Friday & having been two days without mails you can fancy how my heart bounded at sight of it, as I feared to hope too much, owing to the inclemency of the weather. My poor pet, you seem to have felt anything I said of neglect very much & in my turn, make me feel very mean at being so selfish, when knowing all the duties you have to attend to—How little one knows what a change a person will make in one's whole existence! I am sure you never imagined that ere we parted you would have

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given me the best part of your life the first evening that we met! I know not why you think so well of me, for there are so many far ahead of me in every way, who would have given all to win your love. I have only my heart which seems too small now for all the affection it harbours. I am happy to understand you recognize the full value of the feeling I have for you & nothing can make me change & no sacrifice, however great, would stand in the way, where my pet is concerned. if that is true love, surely you have it, & the cup filled to the brim, almost to overflowing. Sh So you are not the lucky recipient of those pretty eyes any longer? I am sorry for both your sakes, for you were not fire-proof some few months ago!! Supt. Neale is one who will invariably turn things to suit himself & would not scruple to charge twice what he paid a thing, if it so suited him. Of course, you know

what you require almost as well as I do, so if you see anything you care for, do not question me about it. in fact, the sale has taken place now, I beleive. [sic] Mrs. Mac wrote me on the 1st & mentions iron bedsteads – one, is enough, as I think a plain black walnut [set], makes a room look better than an iron bed & different bureau & stand. You have a very practical little girl, to deal with

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my pet, have you not? but being so far, we have to write about everything & not knowing all your plans, I tell you what I think. but, you need say nothing of it, please. The little reserve you mean, will be far larger & more sacred than the one of former times & you will like it better than the old corner with the larger arm chair. Of course, the other “Xmas” at home will depend upon you, but I trust you will spend it with us. I hope they do not put my letter on top when bringing you the mail, as my [budgets] must frighten you, when you have such a number of official letters to read & my hand writing must be rather familiar to the orderly [room] clerk by this. Mr. Drayner saw a rancher from Calgary last week in Montreal – if I mistake not, his name is [Listonal], or something like that. he spoke very highly of Major Steele & said “he was afraid of no man in the N. West”. Mr. D. added, “I mention him to no man who can find a bad word to say of him – everyone speaks in the highest terms of him”. Now, my own pet, is that not nice to hear of the one whom I love so well? You may have tested the heat of the little stove once or twice & in consequence can judge of how much heat it could contain & give under very favorable circumstances. My father says I am good, but his love is different to yours, my pet. he knows my character very well though,

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& his affection so true, that he thinks me better than I really am – love blinds one to many faults!!. As for Lex’s saying we are [Spooney], just let

him look at home first. They both are, but being their guest, my eyes were closed. Say nothing of course, but later, I will retaliate – he doubted the love I had for you & considered me selfish; thought I was but leading you on, to throw you over, when I left. Wishing in a measure to let him see the true state of my feelings, I gave way, just a wee bit, in his presence. The consequence was a everything but what was intended & things were taken in the wrong way. Shows you how inconsistent a man can be! I was nettled & the day will come yet for me, when I can speak of it. Now, my tongue is fettered! – he of course, does not imagine the depth of love I can give never having known it, but you my darling can fancy the extent of it, perhaps. Mr. D. asked me what I found to say to you. Well, I replied, “I do not see him you know, & what do you find to say to Louise?” – She spent the week in town where he saw her twice a day, on an average, returned last night & he accompanied her – he did not reply, but blushed a little. My darling, I am too true a woman & too good a Catholic, ever to give you one moment’s uneasiness; so you need never imagine you will have cause to nourish jealousy; if you do, it will be unknown to me & when you speak of it, as a sensible man is sure to do, you will find out, you were in the wrong I hope. I once told Lex in laughing “that I had some songs I only sang for those I loved” & one day he asked me “if those “I sang so nicely for you were some of them?” – I told him, “it was one of the only gifts I had & I made the best use possible of it, by trying to win the love I craved for.” The sweetest songs I kept for you my pet, & I sometimes felt shy at singing them even for you: but what was sweetest of all to me, was the day I confessed my love & sometimes allowed it to flow out in words set to music & which I always tried to sing with the expression necessary to convey my impressions of the darling who was often my only listener. We have just had two ladies calling. They desired to see your photo & found you much to their taste & congratulated me very sincerely on the charming conquest I had made. My cold has entirely gone & I feel more like my old self now. I hope you are not suffering in any way now – if so, I will have to hurry so as to be on hand to nurse you back to health again. but, wait, you have had enough of it lately for some time to come. I am sorry you suffered so much,

& wish I had been near to share the pain –

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I told Mrs. Mac when I wrote her, that I could give you very little news, as you knew none of the friends I had here. So my letters to her are more interesting to the public, than the ones I write you, intended for your dear eyes alone. it is to tease that she asks you for news. She is a good woman & Lex has been very lucky to get such a wife. She is admirably suited in every way & I hope they will be long in Macleod after I have made it my home. My darling boy, I am pleased to know you y will be happy & look forward to the welcome awaiting you on your return, when duty calls you away from me. I went to communion this morning my pet, & you were not forgotten in my fervent prayers. I say what to me is one of the sweetest prayers we have. Three “Ave Maria’s” every evening before returning – it is now so dark that I cannot see the lines. The “Ave Maria’s” I say for my darling’s welfare & hope that, without knowing it, he feels the efficacy of the my heartfelt prayers. How nice of you to get me that piano! another would have waited some time before getting me such a luxury at the beginning of our ____ what shall I call it? it is kind & I thank you dearest. I shall endeavor to repay you by singing & playing while you enjoy your

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pipe of peace now & then. You must let me hear you sing some day when you will not be too [illegible] any more, & then we will see if our voices cannot be made to blend, as well as our love. it would be a pleasant amusement which we would enjoy, I know. Mrs. Mac says you want Alec to buy some things in Montreal – well, my darling, do not be too extravagant – a wife is expensive you will find, but does not cost too much for some few years. That perhaps gives a fellow a chance to get on without feeling it at first. I suppose you still continue having church parade. I think often of you

about that time & fancy I see you, my darling, at the back of your men, looking as stiff & proud as possible under the circumstances. Well, my dear Sam, you will commence to find this dull, so I beleive [sic] I will leave you for tonight. Very many sweet kisses I would give were you near enough to appreciate their pressure & taste them well. I can only imagine how they would be received & join my very best love to them. Well, my pet, write me soon, I love your dear letters so. With much love, I wish you a fond good-night & pleasant dreams. God bless my darling, & fill his heart with love for his own little girl, who loves him so dearly.

Maye.

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