

2008.1.1.1.1.42

Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,  
May 21<sup>st</sup> / 89.

My own dear pet,

Your letter of the 12<sup>th</sup> came today as well as that of the 14<sup>th</sup> & gave me the most infinite pleasure. I am grieved that you were so much disappointed at the non arrival of my letter, but delighted you know it was not owing to any fault or negligence of mine. I would not miss writing my darling for anything in the world & leave everything aside, in order not to deprive myself of my greatest pleasure. no matter how busy I may be during the day, I reserve my evenings for my pet whom I love so dearly. I am sure you must enjoy driving & have as much as you care for!. a trip to the Kootenay lakes I look forward to with eagerness as it will be charming with my own pet near me. I met Mr. Cochrane at Mrs. Neale's & found him nice, though young; he must be pleased to have his sister go up & she will like the country, I have no doubt. I know Miss Hollingshead, though not intimately. Louise knew her better & was in fact

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a friend. she is lonely & will make quite a sensation when she arrives – all the young men will vie with each other in their attentions. I particularly fancy Mr. Wroughton will admire her – she sings nicely, is young & charming. it is well for me I went up first for I certainly would not have had a darling old fellow to be writing to this evening had she first appeared on the scene. I am certain she will make many victims, owing to her beauty, especially –

give me your candid opinion of the young lady when you meet her. How exquisite the feeling of being sincerely & deeply loved is, my own one. You never can imagine how full my heart is, when I read your loving, sweet words! I am surprised you missed church for me, as you usually are very regular in your attendance, but I am sure you have full pardon as it was owing to anxiety for me. Mrs. Tracy I always found much more refined than Mrs. Bradley. I thought the latter common when I first met her & astonished Mrs. Mac by telling her my idea of her. She, I believe imagined me prejudiced! – The races may turn out more enjoyable than

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you expect. I hope they will for my dear pet's sake!. Your letters are sweet to me, my own one & I prefer taking up your old letters, & reading them over, to perusing a story – is that not proof of the interest they have for me, for I am exceedingly fond of reading?. Your love for me would only tend to attract me the more, for it appears in every line my darling pen's [sic] to me, God bless him!!. When I opened your dear letter of the 14<sup>th</sup>, I knew my letter had reached you & that you were happy once more. You are too careful to wound my feelings & when you do I shall write immediately & have it out with my darling, rather than be in suspense for any length of time. When any trouble comes between us, it worries me fearfully – being so far apart, correspondence takes an eternity to reach you & keeps me on the qui vive until your answer comes. I am perfectly well now, my treasure, & hope to remain so. I felt very ill, though I said little of it, even at home. If your life without me were what I know mine would be bereft of my loved one, then I know not what would console you – such pictures are too heartbreaking to contemplate & the subject too sad for you & I. The pencil is still in the pocket of my work apron just where I slipped it that evening – if you are a very good boy & care for it after you have the owner, then I may give it!!!. Had I been very hot-tempered my very love would have tamed me & made me docile, eagerly awaiting the arrival of yours, to justify me in loving you so dearly. I am pleased you restrained yourself & did not break the furniture, when Lex was with you. I can imagine how aggravating it is

sometimes to have to entertain some one, make yourself agreeable, when you are dying to be otherwise employed. I did not think it would take so long to alter the house, but it will make it much more comfortable for my pet. I know you bear me in mind all the time & do all you know will please me. I hope to prove how much it is appreciated "some day". Cherry looks lovely & bright, my pet & I like it very much. The only objections I had to it, is its liability to scratch – walnut is more durable in a country such as we are to live in. fancy! You & I – it seems like a dream to me!!.. You must enjoy yourself although married & do not believe me capable of asking you to give up

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any pleasure you care for. I am not all & do not imagine I am sufficient forevermore – a man likes company & other society sometimes – he gets enough of his wife at home & an unselfish woman, though most devoted & loving, knows such is the case. Mr. D. seems to think the "Tartar" not so hateful since my engagement to a person not quite unknown to you. he thinks there must be some good quality in me, when I could attract a man of your stamp. he has not told me so, but I can tell from his way of acting since my return from the West. I begin to fear you will be too good to me, my darling & allow your little girl to impose on you sometimes: when you feel such is the case, draw a light rein. she will notice the difference & take the hint!. Lex should not wonder at your fondness for sun-light – when it is to be had, who would seek the shade, particularly where a home is concerned. our rooms are large & have lots of sun so I am accustomed to it & would miss it very much. he should be more discreet & say nothing, letting you be judge of what interests you so much. It is for mutual comfort I wish the house changed & made more convenient for your little girl. you will see & understand when

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we are fixing up our nest. Does "my champion" ever say anything of me? he must enjoy hearing you teased!!.. Thanks for your message from Mrs.

Mac. I am happy to know she is pleased with the shopping I did for her & trust all will be to her taste. it is more difficult to buy for others, I find. I know Lex's character after conversing with him for a few moments. the first evening I met him, we all went down to my Uncle's, Col. [Hammond's]. my aunt & Lex's sister are sisters-in-law. she was with Lex at the time. when leaving there, he had already given me a few hints about his feeling for me, he caught my hand & in doing so pulled off the mitten I wore. I laughingly said "take care! for you will get the mitten" – I blushed at my audacity afterwards & feared he would find me very conceited. my idea was "if he cares for me, he will see through it. if not, it will escape him" – it did the latter after all though he met with the fate mentioned. Mrs. Mac may rest assured no one will dispute her right of possession & can safely consider him hers. I would not have had him as a gift even!--- He thinks the world & all of you & I should not speak of him in that way. I respect & like him

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very much, though I never could have loved him..... I shall never forget the day of the first prairie fire after you came into barracks. You passed & though I was just entering the porch & had seen you look that way, did not pretend to see you. I grieved over it all day & regretted it sincerely, for I knew you had noticed it & felt sure you had come with the intention of being questioned about the call, which I knew was a new one to my ears. dearly as I loved you, rather than let Mrs. Mac suspect, I deprived myself of the delight of a short talk, with my pet!. how often I have watched you, unseen by any one, from the window of the room I occupied! how I used to long for a sight of you, my darling & very many times my wish was gratified. My friends write me also & desire to know when the event takes place. They still continue warm in their praise of my own true love. I told Antoine what you said of his being lucky to have such a nice godmother & he was quite tickled over it, remarking, his eyes flashing very brightly "I am inclined to believe your Major is jealous!" – not so slow, is it? Never mind, my darling, you will soon have one ready to make cakes for her pet & hopes he will enjoy them as much as he would have in his early years. Indeed, my pet,

your letter gave me a pleasant half-hour today & was perused several times since. I had no idea my letter written on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April would grieve you so much, else it would never have been penned. You have the privilage [sic] of giving advice to me, owing to the bond which unites us & yours I should take & expect. it would be differently worded!!.. There is far more romance in our acquaintance than persons not quite so finely constructed imagine, but where would be the pleasure, if it were known to all? it it is its very secrecy that gives it the halo which surrounds it – we know it, that is sufficient!. You are considered romantic by those in fault at present, while I am thought the very contrary – independent, matter-of-fact & selfish are some of the attributes given to me by one of them. Mum! is the word about the joke concerning the pistol – it must keep for a long time yet. Mrs. Mac thinks I am of very little use in a house when my darling is near – she may be right & I plead guilty to the sweet charge of preferring his company to anything else, when such a thing is possible. it is near midnight so I will leave you for tonight – a

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sweet kiss I would give “my loyal old darling” were he only near enough – with the thought of it filling my heart & my lips as inviting as I can make them. I will softly say, or rather, kiss “good night”. God bless my own true love. May 22<sup>nd</sup>. I will add a few more lines to this long letter, though it is altogether in the shade compared to my own dear pet’s. The memory of the many loving words your secret missives have generally contained & as time goes on become more frequent, affords me unlimited delight when employed at the many duties a country life gives one! I often sigh for a glimpse of your dear face & this long absence deprived of a sight of my darling is a severe test to a warm loving heart such as you will know mine to be. I do not think you will find it very difficult to manage me – did I not love you, it would be very different & I would make life a perfect \_\_\_ to a man I did not love dearly, even if married to him. but when I am ready to lay my life down for my own treasure, surely the sincerity of my deep, true affection cannot for a moment be doubted!.

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I showed your photo to Mr. Cowie when he saw me on board the train & he seemed very much pleased with your appearance: he was quizing [sic] me & enjoyed it, I assure you. he was only surprised I had not been engaged long ago & was charmed that I had at last met a man worthy of me. I remember so well the evening you told us the Comr. had offered you leave. when you said it, the thought flashed through my mind "what will I do without him, when he is already so dear?". I of course never imagined your heart was at all susceptible & was angry at myself for caring for a man who did not care for me. I thought I should never see you again & you would fade out of my life & I pass entirely out of yours, as if we had never met. When you confessed on Mrs. Mac's questioning that you had no reason for coming down then, but might possibly come during the winter if things went well, I fancied you loved some lady we knew nothing of, as you were seemingly so indifferent. that puzzled me more than ever & since we confess so much, I may as well own up to feeling very heart sore though no one ever would have thought it. I often was hiding behind the curtains in the diningroom [sic]

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watching my darling as he crossed the square & would not have been seen by him, for a great deal – was it not childish of me? Lex always used to say you were fond of late hours, so am not surprised midnight sees you still writing to your own little Girl. I will not give you too many kisses when we meet for you would tire of them even ere we are married & that would never do, would it? I had not stepped out of the wagon on my return from Lethbridge when the first words I heard were "Major Steele came last night & Maye, he is charming!" uttered by Mrs. Mac, fully endorsed by Grandmamma who said "he made himself so agreeable & his conversation is so interesting" – a paragon!!! sure, was my unspoken thought – you can perhaps imagine with what feelings I awaited your coming, though I never suspected to see you so soon – the rest you know. It would be nice for both

Mrs. Mac & Lex to take a run over to B.C. for a short visit later on. she would I know enjoy it & hate to see Lex go alone. If Grandmamma remains in Macleod this winter, Mrs. Mac will dislike leaving her for any length of time so may give up her trip East in consequence. if she does make up her mind to to [sic] come, it will be early in the autumn, in Sept or Oct I fancy, so she may not have the pleasure of travelling in your company after all. She will be deprived of a very pleasant companion, I can vouch for that. So Mr. Elmes is susceptible, is he? he did not seem so to me & was so attentive to his future Aunt that I was charmed, not believing he had eyes for any one else, but I find out I was mistaken! You will be sure to meet Mrs. Cheveier as she will call if nothing more, when we pass up together. She wanted me to visit her on my way home, but as I was dying to be rid of the secret which bound you & I, I would not accept her kind invitation. She plays & sings very nicely & is fond of me. Well, my own pet, my letter is pretty long. my brother was teasing me a short time ago & said I had better invest in a typewriter if I intended writing such budgets until you came for me. They wonder where in the world I get what I talk of & suppose my letters must be rather dry. I shall say au revoir in earnest this time. with my warm, sincere love all yours, trusting you are well & taking good care of yourself for the sake of your little pet, with a great big kiss I wish

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you pleasant dreams my loved one. Write soon to the little girl who is fondly ever,

Your

own loving

Maye

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