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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
Sept. 18th / 89.

My own dear old Boy,

You cannot imagine what a very pleasant surprise your dear letter of the 8th was, coming as it did a day sooner than your letters usually do. It came Monday morning amid unceasing rain to brighten a very dull day! You seem to have a weakness for the Kootenai Lakes, but as the surroundings are so pretty, I am not surprised at it. I trust a trip there is one of the things in store for me. With you for a companion I should be sure to enjoy it. I would not have given my opinion of you to my mother in a letter, at least would not have given her sufficient hints as to what I truly thought of you. There were too many always here last summer & my letters were supposed to be family budgets in which I would not have given myself away for the world: the change was consequently not so great as you may imagine. You remember

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when you changed at all events in appearances & to me. until that time, you were a sealed book, much as I tried to read & understand, but the problem proved too much for my poor brain, until you kindly came to my assistance by unbending a little in my favor. It is strange if I proved exactly the impression you had of me – that seldom[sic] happens, one is as a rule disappointed. were you not in some way or other? you had heard me queerly spoken of & it is a wonder you were not prejudiced against me. Mr. Beard was in the Canada Atlantic Railway & that is not much of a line. He is getting a pretty fair salary & as Uncle is helping him freely I think he may be able to get on all right. Can I not keep a few questions to ask you later? if it is my pleasure, my slave, what have you to say? if you are hard to [pump], you know the old proverb “where ignorance is bliss & etc” – well, I can put that into practice so we will be about even, will we not? it is not of any importance & certainly has naught

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to do with any secret of yours, so do not trouble yourself anymore about them: you have methinks, lurking some where in your heart, a small vein of woman's curiosity, but of course, known under another name. Antoine is getting along all right & does not seem to be too lonely. it is a good thing boys are like that, for girls sometimes make themselves ill fretting about home. "The darling of your heart" is anything but pretty in the group. I had been ill & had not recovered my usual state of health & you know that always shows plainly in a photo: as the majority were good & we could make no other appointment, they had to be taken, though we chose the best of four proofs. It must be the mixture of Scotch, English & French, not to mention the Canadian element in my composition which makes me such a peculiar young lady. I rather like the English myself, sometimes, but that is not surprising. I did not know whether Grandma would spend a night in Dunmore or not & even yet am in ignorance of how quickly she travelled. We spent a day in Toronto on our way up, so she did not care to see the place once more. She is very active & will help Mrs. Mac bear the many cares fate has thrust upon her. I cannot think how they placed all the furniture brought up, knowing the size of the house. It pleases me to know that you were not told I was looking so thin, for it worried me for fear you would be disappointed when you came down. I do not know the cause of it, but attribute it to our strange summer, that I have been ailing since the season commenced. I feel stronger now & will, I hope soon regain all I have lost. Lex has more faith put in his excuse of [boards] & etc this year than last, as he has not a very incredulous third person to convince at present, & a look from my eyes usually caused him to stutter & stammer so, that he gave himself away ere he ceased speaking. Mrs. Mac was always

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was always saying Lex had so much to attend to, but she could not hoodwink me in any way as found out in a short time. Your sympathy being so strong for the awful work in store for Lex if he were called upon to help, makes me smile, & I shall relish calling you to my aid when the beautifying of our little nest commences, my mate! Lex will then come & carry you off to sit on [boards], but in reality for a quiet smoke. I am up to your tricks, pet. Mr. Z. Wood, must be lonely, but he can have a little of his old life; men as a rule enjoy it after being married some time & he will think all the more of her when she returns. Your dear missive of the 10th arrived yesterday & I have perused it with delight several times since. I cannot recall my letter of the

4th sufficiently to remember why “you should think it one of the dearest of mine to you”. If my words were “I can’t trust you” then my lips gave utterance to thoughts not in my heart. Sometimes I fancied you such a fraud or flirt, that I

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should not allow myself “to think such thoughts of you”, but an indescribable feeling of truth seemed to surround you in my heart & if, in my surprise I gave you pain, you must forgive me – my heart was beating so, that I could scarcely talk at all & so many thoughts crowded into my mind at that moment that I hardly know what I answered. I was sure “don’t ask me” was what I said, so you see how muddled my recollections of the whole scene are. The night at cards, when I said the words, I meant you to notice them & in a measure, give you an insight into the true state of my heart, without seeming anxious for you to know it. You had said you would not mention the subject until I was on the eve of departing, so I feared you would put your threat into execution & deprive me of many a moment of bliss I might enjoy. Mrs. Hughes is a very fine woman who may not have the bluest of blood in her veins, but is quite good enough for her husband, I assure you. A man should

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reflect well before marrying & realize that it is not for a day only. The infatuation soon wears off & reflection comes too late: then the cowards vent their disappointment on the innocent victims and make their lives unbearable!!! she loves her husband very dearly they say & it breaks her heart to see him neglecting her for the silly butterfly who perhaps, may soon weary of his attentions & be as nice to the next on the list. I called on Mrs. La R. once with Gertie & the way she spoke surprised me greatly. I thought little of her since then & all I have heard has not impressed me in her favor. I regret Mr. Barter did not come as his visit would have been so pleasant for you – “better luck next time”. Freddy D. is not French & can hardly lay claim to being Canadian – he was born in India – his father was English & his mother’s name was Fisher – she was a Quebecker of course. I live over the different days into the anniversaries of which we have now glided with feelings of the greatest pleasure, while at the same time I hold these dear, as they are the last (when I still am Maye H.) autumn days I may spend here for some years. What on earth did Mrs. Mac give you [rubs] for? I am sure you are always nice to her – had I anything to do with it, my pet? Grandma being with her, should put her in good humour. she

was fatigued, I suppose & as you are to be her nephew, thought she might give you a benefit. It is very strange what you tell me of the warnings you have, but it does not frighten me. I have read of such, but had never met any person who could give his own experience until I met my pet. I gave way in a measure to prettier & younger ones in the home circle, but I intend to hold my own & assert my sway, when I have a little kingdom of my own to reign over. It is kind of your family to say nice things & wish us well, as I am so unknown to them. Your reputation has preceeded you so the case is very different in that

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that respect. It is a wonder Mr. Murray did not pay you a visit. Surely the country is sufficiently attractive now. I shall have quite a long visit at home while you are recruiting & will keep busily employed, you may rest assured. I have no leisure for fancy work at present & but will have then & intend to profit of it, as our house must be pretty nice for two such charming people. Mrs. Mac will sell her own furniture & keep Grandma's no doubt – two double bedroom sets cannot be used in a house of that size, can they? at least, if she keeps the dining room in the left hand side, as when I was there. the small room upstairs cannot contain a large bed, I fancy. The trifles which annoy me are not much may be but, an end will be put to the cause of them when I come up. Mrs. Mac is impulsive & sometimes may regret it. She complained this Summer to her

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mother that very often she felt very weary & never could find a moment to rest, having too much to do. Sundays even would not allow her to enjoy a siesta as she always had to prepare dinner. Knowing how very often you partake of her hospitality, it annoyed me & I told Grandma you never went unless especially invited. You must not be angry at me for telling you & must not change your way of acting, for they might suspect me & I do not wish to be the cause of any disagreement between Lex & yourself, so be sure & do not get me into trouble & act as if you did not know of it, for you have very few Sundays now previous to your coming East. You know Mrs. M. is fond of complaining & gets all the sympathy she seeks from her mother. She tells all her little trials & makes a great deal out of things which would more than likely escape my notice. She was the youngest & in consequence, was made a great deal of by her parents, particularly her mother. Living with her in her own home gave me an insight into her character, which I thought was there but was uncertain of it. it is too bad

she does not weight her words & keep her secrets more to herself, for after all, what can one expect from strangers. scandal forms the topic of many a conversation in Macleod, & each one vies with the other as to who may have the largest budget of news. in consequence, every person's sayings & doings are retailed to their fullest extent. She, Mrs. Mac, is a good, pious woman, & I often wish I were as good, but she puts too much faith in persons, while I have not faith enough. Grandma may warn her to be more careful. I did not think you had noticed her selfishness in any way & imagined –

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it might be due to a vivid imagination on my part. She is very kind-hearted & thinks every person's friendship very disinterested, while I, on the contrary weigh the pro's [sic] and con's [sic] too much. trust me, I shall not be indiscreet as I speak my mind too plainly to you, my darling pet, to be guilty of such a thing. Knowing Ritchie seems to have my interests at heart, I feel sure you leave the care of the piano in good hands & that he will take good care of it. We had rain for three days but the weather cleared up towards evening & I hope, it is settled for some time. Miss Panet & a friend from Ottawa spent two days at Uncle Henry's & intend leaving in the morning for home. Well, my own dear one, I am beginning to feel tired so think I will "kiss my love good night". Heaven bless & keep you, darling until we meet once more. With much love, trusting you will

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excuse this letter, written in a very great hurry, I remain as ever, darling,
Your own warm-hearted,
loving little Girl.

I see upon reading over my letter that there are serious mistakes, but I am disturbed pretty often, so hope you will forgive me. A sweet kiss from

Your own,

Maye.

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