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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
Sept. 24th / 89.

My own darling Sam,

I was more than charmed to receive yours of the 16th today & have perused it with more pleasure than I can tell of since its arrival. There must be some new arrangements in the mails, as the letters which autrefois came on Wednesday reach me a day sooner, in fact they all do since about a week – in that way I did not know you had missed a mail but of course, would have noticed it tomorrow when your dear letter would have convinced me of the truth of my fears. I was told Mrs. Reed was the belle of Regina for a year or more, so naturally concluded all gentlemen would be sure to admire her style. You would have me consider myself almost perfect, but I am not blind to my faults & failings, dear, if you are. – You may find “some day” that I have too good an opinion –

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of myself & regret your efforts to convince me of the contrary. You must be very busy indeed & will shout yourself hoarse. I have an idea of the volume & power of your voice, pet, & I shall never forget how its tones caused my heart to vibrate the day of the review in '88. Lex would persist in desiring me to study up all the movements gone through on that day, when we were camping – he brought a book bound in red out with him, but I in reality studied it more than he did, recalling the different orders with feelings none imagined me capable of!! I hope your duties will not fatigue you too much & keep you too busily employed to write me at least once more this week. Mrs. K. was strangely brought up & that, I suppose must prove an excuse for her peculiarities. She & I never got on well together & Mrs. Mac often blamed me for not being more friendly towards her, but though I tried, I could not overcome my prejudices.

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The single officers now in Macleod are not as nice as Mr. Huot is, I fancy

for one. Mr. Stames is fond of gossip & enjoys a spicy piece of scandal I know of old. Mr. McP. must be one of the same kind, only perhaps not quite as nice so between them all, things must be rather different from the original version of the story by the time they ~~had~~ have had their say. I think I know about as much concerning the Force, as Mr. D. can tell me, so his news I generally take for what it is worth, knowing that Mr. Freddy is his informant as a rule. The Governor is sure to be enjoying his trip – he is taking it very leisurely any way & will miss nothing worth seeing. You still ride “Prince”? is not that his name? I wonder if he will recognize me when first I pat him, after several months absence. I only hope he will not be so rude as to wish to leave my pony the next time I go riding, as he did the memorable day when you initiated me in the art & met with the accident which was but the beginning of a very happy ending, the climax of which is rapidly approaching, my darling. Did I say many nice things about a certain pet, when writing Mrs. Mac? may be I did, but, if so I meant all I said, rest assured of that, dear. I do not object to the word fellow – it is girl used as some persons use it which jars on my sensitive ears. Mrs. Mac reached Montreal safely – Beau told me tonight she was there, having come down for a couple of months she will visit us, but am inclined to believe, not immediately. So you think men miss their wives more than vice versa. Why, I should like very much to know? they lack the many little comforts their wives surround them with for one thing & they

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dearly love to fancy the warm welcome which awaits them when they reach the home nest. reason no. 2 – now, continue..... It must have cost Mrs. Mac a pang to leave her dear Lex for so long – see what is in store for you. You may regret having taken a wife so far from the N. West someday, when this little girl takes it into her stubborn, brown head to come down on a visit. reflect well, pet, before it is too late. Take care you are not paid back in your own coin, & that some terrible bête noir does not separate you from your wee wife & take as much delight in it as you do now in dividing loving couples for some time. Our rain ceased yesterday but we dare not hope too much. we shall soon meet daily in some months from now pet, will we not? the past will then seem a dream to more than one. As you say happiness is near us

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but even happiness is not found without grief to mar its sweetness. If you are what I wish, think & know you to be, no fear should trouble your mind

on my account. kindness is sure to keep my love as warm in after years as it is for you tonight, my darling & I feel confident I shall meet with nothing else from you – that is saying a great deal & each day, my confidence grows deeper. Ah! pet, but you have won a wealth of fond, true love in winning my heart! I know you love me dearly but not more than I desire & which I shall endeavor to keep all my life, darling. I am sure you know well I only agreed with Mrs. Mac when she called you a muff for policy's sake & to hide my own feelings with regard to you: had I not, she might have suspected & half the pleasure would have disappeared, for it interested me

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to puzzle lookers-on occasionally. I do dislike sarcasm but you can relish & enjoy it when not the person favored with it. Do you mean to say you are getting more regimentals from England? You are very extravagant my pet, are you not? I fancied you had received a number of the different articles shortly after my departure. You may be sure of a warm welcome, but the warmth will be mingled with a feeling of regret, for Papa & Mamma hate to see me go. The former says little but the latter will not let me mention the subject, though I try hard to familiarize her with it. My friend who knows I was hard to win has been married himself some years & he knows me well enough to be well aware that it is because I know it was wise to wait, that I feel so happy now. I am very well acquainted with my cousin Mr. Y. & know all his little weakness & failings rather well. I had ample time to test the resisting qualities of the bachelors before you came upon the scene, & at a glance saw you were worth the whole of the others put together. though I knew it well, I should never have let you perceive it, ere you showed your preference & affection for me, my own one. I do not consider you one of the Macleod bachelors, as you were not there when I arrived. Your good opinion I valued more than all else & they little knew how much I held to it, even when so ill the night of the concert. I knew you would be there & though I did not recognize you, my sight not being the best & the lights dim, my heart knew you & every word I sang was meant for you alone. had you perchance, expressed your idea that I should not sing, my speedy acquiescence to your will, might have surprised

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you more than words can tell. I had few occasions on which to display any pluck, but might prove equal to whatever demanded of me, if put to the test. Your joke about Mrs. W. F. is not new to me. Lex told me of it long ago & it rather roused my curiosity to see the hero of such a charge. She is rather a

nice little person but has not enough to occupy her, to keep her out of mischief. She gives me the idea of wishing to impress you very favorably about her good family – am I right? – Well, pet, it is late & as your dear letter was so long, I will leave several pages to answer tomorrow, as I do not expect any missive from my pet until the end of the week. I fondly kiss you good night, my own darling & trust God will bless & keep you safely until I have the exquisite delight of clasping your dear hand once more...

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Sept. 25th. You cannot imagine how shocked I was today when upon glancing at “The Gazette” the first thing that met my eyes was the paragraph announcing Mrs. Reed’s sudden death: it is fearful & shows one how very uncertain life is! – He must be heartbroken, married but a little over a year & very fond of her I have no doubt. She was in good health when in Macleod, was she not? though she was slight, she did not seem a very delicate person. I feel so sorry for him & he has my very deep sympathy in the great trouble which has come to him – his happiness was short, pray God ours may not be!. Lex has Grandma to look after him & he is in pretty good hands. Mrs. Mac took dinner at Mrs. Hubert’s last evening – they found her just the same as when she left, but looking better. She intends coming up here the first days of Oct. You must indeed be a very early riser when you found sufficient

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leisure to write me another sheet, ere the mail left. Miss Fraser’s words all seem to begin with the letter Q & puzzled me somewhat, that is why I thought of favoring you with a sight of her penmanship. She & Mrs. K. will talk I assure you when they are together – had she not wished to ask the question she wrote of I should not have had the pleasure of hearing from her. I have not seen her for some years, but her mother was a great friend of the McG.s & I was at school with the lady in question, when quite a child. You evidently are under the impression that Mrs. K. might have spoilt me in some way had I been too intimate with her. she must have noticed how little her kind invitation flattered me, but this son of a gun (as she nicely spoke of me) preferred barrack life, to learning what western life really is, under Mrs. K. tuition. Miss Hubert is determined to leave me behind, but you little know how the startling news of my unexpected engagement, put an end to understandings of several years duration & decided persons to come to time. it would have been terrible for Maye to go first after all!!! – She is very pretty & he is nice enough too – you will likely meet them some time during

your trip this way. Gertie, Richard & Baby leave us on Tuesday. Beau will continue coming up for some days longer, in order that Gertie may have leisure to settle everything before he goes to her. [Unwin] resumes work on the same day – he has been here since May & I hope his long vacation has done him good & opened his eyes a wee bit. The family, in consequence will be larger than four until I leave them, as Louise will return about the middle of next month. we shall miss them all very much, baby being so interesting now.

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I would not care to take a trip on the new railway – it is not a very extensive line & passes inland through a number of small country places. What ancestor of mine did you read about? My teeth do not trouble me, but I intend having them well attended to, before I leave as dentists are too far from Macleod to trust to them. I have never had a toothache & will not suffer from it, if I can help it, you may be sure. Mrs. Mac has fine teeth, do you not think?. The MacG.s all had, so have the Harwood's [sic], so it is not surprising if we have good one's [sic]. John's are lovely, so are Louise's & Beau's. I have been thinking of sending up my picture of the family & the house to you, pet, but fear as they are rather large, they may get broken in the mail & that would be too bad, as they will make pretty pictures for our home. We have had a dozen of each & being twelve in number each have one, which you

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may be sure will be dearly prized by all. If in some years we all meet again, we shall have more taken when I hope I shall appear to better advantage. There is very little news every one being busily occupied getting ready for the winter. I never go out, as I have too much to do to leave my work for pleasure. Uncle Panet was quite flattered at being taken for you dear, & in my mind, well he might be: it seems he intends favoring us shortly, as he enjoyed his last visit so much. Grandma wrote Mamma a day or so ago & mentions Mrs. Mathews "who seems to be very nice & desires to be quite friendly" is she one of those to be avoided? Very likely, as she is not one of the two exceptions you ~~men~~ spoke of in one of your last letters. Well, my own darling you will find your little girl has been in a very talkative mood these days, & perhaps too busy are you to have the leisure to peruse this all at

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once, so I must have mercy upon you & cease for tonight. God bless you, my own pet. Write me as often as you can for you know how dearly I love the sweet missives you pen to me. With a heart overflowing with affection for you, darling, believe me, ever

Your own true, loving

little Girl.

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