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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
April 16th / 89.

My own darling Boy,

Your nice long letter of the 7th came to me today & gave me the sweetest pleasure I had since I opened my eyes this morning & tonight, sitting down to answer but increases the delight. I have enjoyed it more than I can tell, but as I have made you aware of that fact so often, you will get very tired of hearing it, so will pass on to something else. I am charmed to know my letters please you, though I cannot say I take time to give the sentences a pretty turn as I am generally too hurried for that. It is love which guides my pen & judging from the length of the letters it is a very eloquent theme, though I cannot by any means render it full justice. I am glad you are thought so conceited, it does not lower you in my eyes, my own pet, for when a man has it a little of it he is sure to do everything right. Mr. Freddie went West on Saturday & we did not catch a glimpse of him. We were not sorry, as he is not the kind of a young man to enjoy a Sunday in the country when he can indulge in all sorts of amusements in the city. Alice met the lad, but has not yet returned & given us her opinion of him. My sister & her Willie had a slight tiff, but she has forgotten it all long ago: she seems very much attached to him, but knowing I do not care for him, has never confided in me. So many are under the impression that the marriage will never take place! of course, I can not say much on the subject, but he says he never touches a drop of liquor when I know privately he does – in fact, came up Thursday last under the influence of it & looked fearfully stupid, repeating the same thing over & over again. She has not said a word to any one about it, but could not fail

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to notice. I feel so sorry for her – she is such a good-natured girl & had many admirers, having been the “belle” in Montreal during a season. She has not been out very much & is fond of it. She is very pretty & accomplished as you will find & seems blind to all his faults – he continually derides religion & that is another reason I dislike him. he is not a handsome man by any means – has warm, brown [spooney] (hateful word!) eyes, a mouth she considers pretty, but which I find has a disagreeable expression & gives me the idea of depriving himself of no pleasure which will gratify him in any way. it is partly hidden by a light brown mustache & beard cut short – his hair is light & complexion fair. not my style at all & were he the last man - - - - - but enough of him, he is not worthy of more talk. I cannot see myself walk, so know not how graceful I may be! as you have seen no fault we will hope there is none perceptible. I trust you will find your immediate surrounding all that could be desired in about a year from now – if not, let me know & we will try & improve. I hope my own darling, God will be kind & give us many long happy years together – when one’s life is all love how short time is & how rapidly the years roll on! – when hope keeps one so bright, what must the reality be? The book I am going to send you, you will like very much. Somehow or other it puts me in mind of ourselves & very many things are recalled to memory as I peruse it – one paragraph suits me just now, as we are on the subject – “Women grow old so much sooner than men. I have often thought it one of the sad conditions of a woman’s life, that she doesn’t grow old at the same time & pace for pace with the man she loves. Even if he be several years older than she when their love begins, she goes down the darkening hill so much faster than he, that she is old, when he is still young. A man of forty & a woman of forty – only think what two different creatures they are!” so you see my pet, how true it is, that although you are ten years older than I am, we are owing to the

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difference in our constitutions, of an age – our old age may be longer, but that is all – our youth soon leaves us! I trust my dear darling your life with me will be a happy one & that you will never regret marrying, even at forty! – a young lady had better take more time to consider a proposal just when it is given & she at full liberty to accept or decline than to hurry & answer in the affirmative & then reflect, only to say no! in the end - is it not far harder for a man then? when the thing is not decided, she can be very cheerful in appearance though sad at heart. I really believe my heart was more wounded than yours, my pet, though I seemed so gay. Yes I remember quite well our conversations about the flirt & spoke of it, in my last letter as you will recall to mind. I cannot imagine how you fancy me endowed with so much sense – it is my good heart which does it all! They say of me here, “Maye does not say much, but always has her own way” – if so, it is because it is the right one I suppose. I had not seen Lex since I was quite a child & found he had not changed in the least when he first came to Vaudreuil. his years were a serious objection & then I did not love him you see, so did not stop to consider one moment to give him his answer. he must have found me very decided & fancied he could prevail upon me to change my mind & would not take my refusal as definite. Came back several times & when that failed, imagined his pen might do it, but it was “Loves labor lost” sure that time. it must have been Mrs. Mac who told Mrs. K. that as they were very intimate then, never dreaming the day would come, when she would be his wife. Lex intended bringing & introducing you to them at Grandpapa’s had you come down in 87, but not to me, I do not suppose. Will tell you all about it, some time later on, when our conversations lack interest & you will be sure to enjoy the whole affair. When I came from Lethbridge in the afternoon of the day we first met, they told me how nice you were & how talkative. when you left, I felt I had to say something of you when asked how I liked you & I said “well, for a man who can talk well, he certainly has not made himself very agreeable” & I felt in my inmost heart, it would either be “war to the knife” or deep love & thank Heaven, it has been the latter. I could not account for the peculiar sensation I experienced in a way & you remember how I left the piano &

took a seat near the Dr., feeling that as there was no magnetic attraction there, I could be natural & I feared my unusual excitement might be visible to all. Do you mean to say you thought of the difference in our religions at so early a day? it never struck me until you first told me of your love & chilled me to my very heart – I fancied I had been acquainted with you quite a while, ere I gave vent to my display of temper about your fire-arms & that the time was more than a week! I did think more of you than was good for me & fought hard against it. I like you, my own pet, to tell me all as you do in your letter today - it but gives me the right of loving you more, were it possible. You must have found me very cool, after the “unpardonable liberty” you had taken at Grassy Lake, but as I said before, I did not give the supper one thought & had you not kindly paid, would have left indebted to them, had they not reminded me of it. I do not mean cool in my manner towards you, but cool for not thanking you at the time. You felt bad when we parted, but knew your little girl would be true to you, while I did not know what opposition I might meet & have to contend against, for your dear sake. I fear I gave you a little insight into the deep love I bear you, when we were together that last morning in Dunmore & that my manner convinced you, I was forever yours – still, even the most particular person could not have found fault with my way of acting. You should not have minded asking me to wait until January. it is not so very long & will soon pass, my pet & knowing how much you will enjoy your leave, trust you will make it as long as convenient. You have so many persons to see & places to visit, not to mention an occasional trip to

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the little girl down East. Do you imagine for one minute anything Lex said of mixed marriages would have made any difference to me? true I was visiting in his house, but I would soon have made him understand, he had no authority over me. I was his guest & his niece by marriage, but he had no control over me in any way & I should have returned home, rather than suffer anything of that sort & well Lex knew it. What if the [illegible] are not in good condition when you come? They will not taste as sweet as they did

when caressed by the gentle breezes of the West. Mrs. W. H. did not impress me very favorably the day she called on us, nor did he, for the matter of that. I would not require a person of her stamp to teach me the ways of the country – Mrs. K. wanted me “to know what western life was, a thing I could not learn in the barracks” but, I told her, “the barracks suited one very well & the life there was all I cared to know of”. Women sometimes boast of the different proposals they have had, but when a man asks you to be his wife, I consider it is the greatest honor he can confer upon you – if you refuse, why wound his feelings, by publishing to the world that he has met with a refusal. it always grieved me & makes me feel sad. on the other hand, when all is settled I regard it a duty to tell your fiancé of the admirers you may have had: it saves endless trouble in the future & puts him at his ease, should ever an occasion come, as the one some time gone by. If he loves you, he will respect your confidence & think more of you. Perhaps Mr. Starne’s informer may have been Mrs. K. & to get the truth from me he may have said Lex told him of it. Lex does not think

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much of Mr. S. but sometimes when men grow confidential over a glass of something nice, there is no telling what they may say. Of course, had you made several conditions about mixed marriages I might not have been so easy to win, but giving me my way in all, decided me to unite my fate with yours, my own dear Sam. Mr. [Cowie] will not be very long in Banff, I believe – have heard nothing of him since. he will not hate you sure for he can tell a nice man when he sees him & knowing I love you will be sure to find you worthy of me in every respect. You have not tired me to death with your long letter, but as I have answered it, think I too will leave you – it is near midnight all around me are wrapped in slumber. I will kiss “good night” my own one, with the hope that your dreams may be of the sweet kind in which you sometimes see your own dear loving little Girl.

April 17th – Your’s [sic] of the 9th has just been perused & while the emotions it produced are still warm in my heart of hearts, I come to answer it. You cannot accuse me of neglect, my own darling. You are kept very

busy my own pet, & the rest you will enjoy when down East will be sure to do you good, as you will require it very much. I was not vexed, but hurt over the liquor question, fearing you had misunderstood me, a thing I should sincerely regret. Thanks, my own pet, for making me feel so happy in your love, though I have no money to bring my darling. So many look for it nowadays, that people become imbued with the idea that marriage cannot be happy without it, but, thank God! we know better. If I did not love you truly & with a love that will stand the test of time, were you as rich as it is possible for a man to be, I should never marry you – gold could not tempt me & I hope you believe the truth of my assertion. You may have been extravagant, but that was before I knew you, consequently I have nothing to say in the matter – of

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course, had your life been anything but what it should have been, it would be a very different thing! if my love is worth anything, you know how dearly I treasure you & am ready to do all in my power to make your life happy & deserve your affection & esteem. I too am proud of your faith in me & know it is not misplaced. Perhaps you can imagine what a prize you were considered in the matrimonial market, when persons were so ready to discuss your actions & anxious for you to make your choice. strange! it should fall on me! I want no one's admiration but yours my pet & trust I shall always merit it. I am not one who pines for what I cannot have & when I have you always, know I must leave others. one thing consoles me greatly – it is that I will be very much missed, particularly by Mamma & Papa & many a tear the former sheds, unknown to me, she fancies, at the idea of my going & says, the house will seem so large without me. Yesterday we were together putting away a lot of winter clothes & I said “Well dear, when I put away my coat again, it will be in my own house” – that is the worst of it, the bitter parting which must come but do not speak of it.” was her reply. I hope you will not let Mrs. Mac & Lex persuade you it is best to leave home for good when we leave together first – that is what they would like me to do, but I would rather see them again, ere we take our flight to the far west

& can bear the pain of saying good-bye once more, in preference to that. You are a perfect darling to attend to all my wants in every way & I feared you would find me a worry, bothering you with all these little details, but then if the house is ready & I have only fixing up to do, we will have things comfortable in a very short time. I only hope you will not be disappointed in the treasure you expect to get when I come to you, my own one & trust I will increase in value as time goes on. I feared the house would be filled with mice & am happy to know I was wrong – are they afraid of the big man, do you think? I will not tire myself, rest assured of that & having no less than three sewing machine's [sic] in the house, will be able to make up our house linen in a short time. how many dreams will be sewed with each stitch & what tales they might tell!!!... You see I spoke of it, not knowing what you might think & am pleased to know you do not think less of me for the suggestion. I will have no machine when we are in our own home & it takes very long to sew by hand, so you understand the difference it will make to me. I do not think you will succeed in making me talk in my sleep, as I have never done so. You can plead guilty, so the fun will be on my side. Poor old Grandpapa Macgillis owned nothing at his death, as he lost a large fortune endorsing for his friends & speculating. it was Grandmamma's father who made that will & he was an old goose, in my opinion – not very nice of me to say, but true, nevertheless & I will never believe it was all for the best. Why not have things equally divided & save trouble & discontent? Grandmamma is very well off & the four youngest come in for all – ah! My own pet, I do not require gold to make me happy & as long as I have your love & care want nothing more. it is not for myself I should like it, but I will not tantalize you with such talk. You are all the world to me & will be.

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My parents do not love me more than the others, still I am very fond of them & knowing my heart & the amount of love therein contained better than any person, you can form an estimate of the affection I feel for them. Tell Mrs. Mac I give her far more news than I ever favor you with. She

knows every one & you are a stranger to all – what interest's [sic] her would prove the contrary to my own old pet & our own private affairs are sufficient for us, so she must be laboring under a delusion. You can tell her though that Harry Phillips Phillips has been arrested in connection with the "Andy Maloney" Case, she may have read of it, & is to stand his trial on a charge of stealing jewellery & that strange developments are expected. also that Miss Duhamel was married this morning, a hurried affair it seems to me; a very unusual thing to be married in Holy Week. I do not mention much to tell her, but if you fancy anything will please her, answer her, but be very careful, she is not always discreet. You can understand me, where she would not, my own pet. When Mr. D. came up as I told you of in the beginning of this letter, he was not very much under the influence of drink, but sufficiently so, to disgust me. he told me those N. West fellows required a great deal of looking after when they came East & if I did not think I should find

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it difficult to take care of you, but I told him "I had such in you, that I could trust you to look after yourself & did not fear any harm would come to you". Our weather is just lovely, though we have no grass or flowers yet. I am proud to be so near pretty Julia & fear the comparison people will make will be much to my disadvantage. You know I always found her lovely & my sister Louise, who met her one summer in Riviere-du-Loup, also. Some friends of ours who have lived for the last year in N. York, returned some time ago & paid us a visit yesterday. They have taken a house for six months here & are a nice little couple with two young children. How rapidly Lent has passed. I can scarcely realize it is almost ended. My own pet, I must leave you now as the hour is getting late. My Easter letter you may not receive until the 29th as Monday, being a legal holiday, my brother in law may not go down, consequently, it will delay my letter, as the mail leaves here at night only so remains in Montreal till Tuesday evening. My darling, I hope you will have a joyous Easter & that it will be the last spent alone. Your little girl so longs to see her pet once more. With much love &

many sweet kisses, which will

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have accumulated to a fabulous amount by the time we meet again, believe me as Ever

Your own Sincere & loving

little Girl

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