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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
July 30th / 89.

My own dear darling Boy,

Your dear letter of the 19th so eagerly looked forward to came to cheer & pain me today. Your short missive I forgave you for, knowing your next would make amends & I have not been disappointed. You must have had a very strong magnifying glass at hand, in order to find the group – being incredulous you will show me where we stand when you come & if you are right, will receive the prize in good time. Would a kiss be considered of sufficient value? What do you call giving it in public? if I should perchance go to meet you at the station would you wish to have it, when every one was looking on? I should think it far sweeter if unseen by others & so will you when the moment comes, my dear one. It pleases me to know the Wilsons will remain in Macleod, as they

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will be near friends & it is nicer for her sake. The Comr. seems to have no mercy on any one & moves people about like [ninepins] if the fancy takes him. I only hope he will not do the same to us – it rather frightens one, do you know to think of it. The compliments given by the German officer & so well deserved, will only make the men & officers of the Force more ambitious – it spurs one on when something nice is said, does it not, my dear? I hope Mrs. W. Fraser will not change her mind after having been in your district for some months. She is a nice person & very ladylike. still, even the nicest of them can be insincere, can they not? I am sure your side of the dispute with regard to the Indians who resisted arrest is the right one & you should undoubtedly succeed in winning your point. The Majah is very kind to be giving you advice & hints on the strength of your approaching marriage. Your bachelor habits need not be dropped on that account. There is no reason why they should –

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the only thing is having some one else to look after besides yourself & in consequence, more responsibility. still the trouble it will be, will in a measure be lessened by the knowledge of the confidence, trust & love which you will have now & the earnest endeavor made by your poor little girl to make your life a happy one. I can read every word you pen to me, my darling, so do not worry over it – you write me in a hurry very often I know well, so make no more apologies. Mrs. Mac wrote me a full sized sheet of foolscap, but the greatest part of her missive was about the way she was being treated by the Comr. She forbid me to say anything of it, but know you are discreet. She blesses McP. I assure you – she hopes her house will not be divided. if her's [sic] is, yours will be also, I suppose. very pleasant prospect to look forward to, is it not? The rain still continues, though the weather tonight looks as if it were settled for a few days. The hay crop is getting on very nicely. Papa's is very good, but he finds it difficult to harvest, owing to continual showers. I often wondered why my luck deserted me when I went west. I had always before been very lucky at cards, so it surprised me only the more. the old proverb of "Lucky in cards, unlucky in love" often came to my mind & it used to make me smile, when I was unfortunate time & again. Uncle Panet told me he did not think Elzear Taschereau intended returning to the west. Work was too hard for him – it may have had the good effect of showing him, how silly he has been & cause him to mend his ways. he is a lawyer & had a partnership in one of the best offices in Quebec & every opportunity was given him, but he was too blinded with a stupid love of pleasure, to profit of it. The rancher Papa met in Quebec was a person who had lived in Chatham, Ont, had studied at McGill & never visited Quebec before. That is all I can tell of him, though Papa says he seemed to be almost thirty or a little over. Mrs. Hubert met the [Sharples] who lives near Macleod this winter & found him very nice. Well, my pet, you say Orangemen have not a hate for

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Catholics – individually, there are exceptions, but as a whole they have shown how they detest them & the "Jesuit Bill" affair is but a proof of what I say. When on the way to Dunmore you spoke of all you would have done, had you belonged to the society, it rather surprised me, as I believed if not one of them, it was unnecessary. it struck me that you were one & were approaching the subject as delicately as possible, but when the moments passed & you did not confess it, I firmly hoped it was not so. Why did you not tell me then, my pet? it would not have made more difference then than now & the pain of the knowledge would have disappeared by now. You

should have had more faith in me then, my darling, & given me credit for my good sense & affection. I was asked if you belonged to the order & said, certainly not!. If my love for you brings you any trouble I shall never forgive myself & will always feel I stood between you & prosperity – innocently of course, but did it all the same. They

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sometimes make an occasion of this sort, an excuse for persecuting a man if they bear him ill-will, & leave no stone unturned to imbitter [sic] his life – think what my future would be, if added to the unhappiness of seeing you miserable, remorse for being the indirect cause of your misfortunes were joined to the rest!!! I remember quite well that you never said you were not one, & strange to say, Lex said nothing of it either. Of course, I have not studied the matter sufficiently to say whether it will make any difference with us, but suppose not. I gave you credit for your deep love & hearing of your affection & all you would do for the sake of this poor little girl, but increased my warm love, my own dear pet & made me feel how dear you were to me. God knoweth best & such as things are now,..... I do not feel annoyed only hurt that you did not tell me before & were things to change now, what would become of me? I gave my candid opinion on the subject when asked, little dreaming

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of the confession my words would cause you to make. perhaps, after all, it is better so, for between the parting & the knowledge of the fact you have told me of, my heart would have had more to endure than it could have stood. The truth does not come upon me so suddenly, as ever since you wrote asking what I would have done, it has dawned upon me by degrees & I was almost convinced before your letter came today. You need never doubt my affection, for I never believed I could ever love a mortal as I do you, my own dear pet. The force of my affection is a surprise to myself & awes me sometimes, yet it is well repaid by the confidence you have in me & which I, in a way, do not deserve. Your long talk has not tried temper or patience, only I fear has been very badly responded to. I detest drink as much as ever, though it pleases me very much to be able to say my brother is mending on that point. Your little girl is strong minded & determined I fear, & you will think you have indeed fallen in with a Tartar. Mrs. Mac's letter was not one that could cheer me up, as it only tells me what an ogre Mr. H. is, when he wishes to be hateful. She is well pleased with her wardrobe & repays me for the trouble of shopping for her. She mentions the

coal oil claims as if I knew of them, but will not let on I heard of it, when I write her, unless you permit me to do so. Yes, Mrs. Mac is right when she says Grandmamma fought your battles & approved of your politeness to her. Papa received the photo you sent & desires me to thank you very much. I told him "you evidently were frightened he might forget you were coming for me some day, so sent him a gentle reminder now & then, to let him know you had not forgotten his consent". I hope your trousseau will prove a perfect fit – it must amuse you to think you are going to be married & make you feel strange? to me it still seems a dream, though the time is quickly flying. Winter will almost be here before you come, but your welcome will be a warm one just the same. I must tell you a joke before leaving you for tonight. I went to low Mass on

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Mass on Sunday, accompanied by Uncle Panet. on coming out after church, I was rather surprised at the many eyes turned in my direction & the many bows I was receiving on all sides. it seems that seeing a strange gentleman with me, people came to the conclusion that my pet had come down to see me. Uncle, who has always been very ugly was actually thought good-looking on the strength of being mistaken for you. I laughed plenty of over it when I heard it, I assure you!. Well, my darling, midnight is coming & I feel tired, so will fondly say good-night. pleasant dreams, my own one & forgive me if I have said anything hurtful. I love you so very dearly, that I cannot deceive you in any way, so speak plainly to my darling for his sake as well as that of his own dear little ~~few~~ girl.

July 31st. No letter from my pet today but, he may be too busy to pen me a line, so I come to continue this commenced last night. You must have smiled at my telling you all I should have

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done had you been a member of the society which I have [always disliked], when unknown to your [little girl], you were one all the time. still, [you] are now aware of what I think of [obscured] & I really regret I have entwined myself around your heart – my poor pet. I may after all prove the bane of your life, instead of what I so earnestly desire to be. no one living ever surrounded you with more love, confidence & noble qualities than I have done & if my warm affection brings you misfortune, how I shall live to regret the day I consented to be yours. I am glad you have told me, for I would rather know it now than later & I trust you shall always have perfect faith in me. I may have displeased my darling in alluding to the subject, but I could

not possibly allow it to pass unnoticed, even though my own dear pet wished it so. I do not feel annoyed only pained, & it is caused in a

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great measure by the thought that you would not trust me ere this. As I said last evening, I do not think it will make any difference to our union, as knowing what you were, you have consented to all I demanded of you & all our church desires. Thank you so much for your good opinion of me & I will always strive to make you entertain the same views until the sad day dawns, when it will please God to part us, for he alone can do it now! – You will find your little girl has rather a determined character in many ways, particularly in the opinion I entertain of men. it may be true, but I judge them by what I know of them personally & seldom by what others say of them. If I detect anything mean in their actions, they never raise in my estimation again...I know none of us are perfect still, I cannot help it. What on earth can you find to say of me in the long talks you mention? Mrs. Mac is charmed with Mrs. Mathews & says she is very pretty & stylish – it pleases me, as she feels blue pretty often, judging by her letter. Your friend in Kootenay wants to keep you warm, but tell him you have something better now – though there is nothing of the spirit about me, still I can keep a flame burning, if you tell me the truth about the state of your heart, my treasure. Mrs. W. [illegible] [obscured] a long one, but she is accustomed to it & is a sp[obscured] equestrian. I have never seen her mounted, but she is a dainty little lady & must look well. Fancy only four months left to wait now, my darling, then we shall meet & clasp hands once more. The time is flying & will appear even shorter when I have a great deal to do, previous to your coming. Well, my pet, my letter will I hope, not be coldly received & that the sentiments I have expressed will be well understood.

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You know how dearly I love you & that every beat [of] my heart will be true to you [till death]. With a heart overflowing with affection & many sweet kisses, believe me, Ever

Your own warm, loving

far-away little Girl.

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