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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
May 5th / 89.

My own darling pet,

I had commenced to answer one of yours & on reading it over, found you were to be treated to two answers to yours of the 20th so thought I had better not inflict you more than was necessary. The truth is, that I read your dear letters ever so often, that I know them by heart & it is only after serious consideration & by recalling what I last penned, I can be positive that they have been responded to. Your charming long letter of the 22nd pleased me more than you dream of. its contents have occupied my mind & kept it as busy as my fingers usually are while plying my needle & how many sweet thoughts are sewn in each stitch, how many pleasant dreams indulged in!!.. Your darling will of course regret that your life is such a busy one, but knowing idleness would not suit you in any way, that you are fond of work & would be unhappy without it, she must submit to circumstances & take things as they come.

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Your being compelled to leave me so often will be the hardest part of all, for me. I should have regretted your being in command, during my visit, knowing how many happy moments I should not be able to look back to, & as we will see each other so seldom before we are married, it is pleasant to recall the hours spent in your society, when I am so far from you. I shall never forget the evening you remained so late. Not knowing the state of

your feelings towards me, you cannot be surprised at my way of acting. You remember asking me for the pencil I had fooled with for so long? When you did so, I at first, fancied you might wish for it but the thought was immediately dispelled & “he is only flirting” flashed across my brain. I have it still & strange as it may seem to you, I like it for the very desire you expressed. I hope your idea of my being such a hard little girl to manage, has or will change somewhat. You will see by one of my last, all the nice things Mr. Cowie says of you & is prepared to make a friend of you, for my sweet sake. They are rather premature in giving me the name which I trust to do honor to & it must

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make you smile to think of having a wife & to hear any one called “Mrs. Steele!”. While very fond of [boating] & lovely trees, you are more to me than all I am to give up, so the sacrifice seems less as time goes on! – home is what costs – the pangs I feel are at leaving my own, so near & dear to my heart, but, as I cannot have all, I choose you, my darling. You can be everything that is charming & loveable & can be the reverse, when it is your pleasure. You know I sometimes found you very hateful & let you see it too, particularly when you said such cutting, sarcastic things as you now & then favored me with! You made up for it afterwards I admit & no fault could be found with my love, even by the most exacting young lady. Your little girl never seemed unhappy with you I trust, for she did not feel that way & never doubted either. You love me & I love you devotedly, so why should unhappiness be our lot? love is sweet & makes all bright & gay. we both have feeling & I have more affection stored up in my heart than is usually given to woman & it will be everlasting & true to my own darling pet, whom I love to such excess. If they men have been slighted by the people of Macleod, I am not surprised that they do not relish the idea of giving a ball – why give pleasure to persons, who do not return it in any way? There are to be races on the 24th – I trust the last ones will be given a thought by

some one who was there & will no doubt be present again, minus the demure little girl, whose chief delight & enjoyment was the pleasure of his company, a look from his dear eyes, & a word now & then; though she once succeeded in keeping silence for th ten minutes, in order to deprive him of the music of her tongue, just to aggravate him & see if he cared a wee bit!!...do you happen to know of any one who was so badly treated? If my poor words though they come from the heart cheer you, think what pleasure your expressions of never dying love give me! I read & wonder if it is really possible I am the one who has gained such affection. God bless you my own old darling & make me a good wife to the man I love so dearly!!..forgive the marks of ink which disfigure this corner of my letter, but my pen is to blame & to make them pass am sorry I

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cannot call them kisses – they look too uninviting even for that from me. Alice was not at all favorably impressed by Freddie D. & says his brother is far ahead of him in every way: he said one thing to her & told others a different story, so she does not put much faith in his veracity. Willie D. is considered handsome by some, but I may be particularly hard to please. Alice says he is better looking than Freddie. You would laugh to hear all the latter says & it amuses me considerably, knowing now what life in the Northwest is! – So you really succeeded in talking Lex tired! it surprises me but am glad as it enabled you to write me such a lovely, long letter. When I went to Montreal two weeks ago Mr. D. & I walked to the station & missed the first train by about two minutes – as we had a few hours to wait, we had time for a lengthy talk & by degrees I led it on to liquor & launched forth. he got my opinion freely expressed, as I generally do & was told amongst other things, I could not tolerate a man who indulged. he must have been sorry that your lot has

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fallen on such a Tartar!! To hear Freddie talk, you would imagine him the first man in the Force who has all the responsibility resting on his shoulders

– do you think it will require very much tact to manage you, my pet? I must study you up well at first so as to know just how to act. Of course, some will consider my husband a fortunate man, but he will tell me later if I really deserve all the nice things thought & said of me, by my indulgent friends: knowing me intimately, he will be better able to judge whether it was merely a [glamorous] cast over them, by some kind fairy, in my behalf. Mamma has not yet finished reading “The Ladies Gallery” the book I have wished to send you, but as soon as she has, will mail it – you will I think enjoy it. I did, for it recalled many things said & done during last Autumn, which will always be very dear to me. There is the same difference between Papa & Mamma as there is between you & I, only they married very much younger. They have always been very happy, so that years need make no fears

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arise that love cannot disperse. I remember quite well the evening you mention, about Hames saying a man should not marry at forty & how very nicely you led up to it. I remarked it at the time & thought of it afterwards. I had no idea of your age & when I said it, was testing the ground. I thought he might be wrong (in words) but in my mind I would relish being the darling of some one there, had he but known!!! Trying on your ring was not so bad, but when I raised my eyes & saw the amused look in yours & the smile you were doing your best to repress, I did not know what to say or what you might think of me & for a moment was taken by surprise. I fancied myself a perfect stranger to you when first we met, though I knew Mrs. Mac had told you of my absence the evening of your arrival. My dream, which was always before me, made me different to myself at least, though invisible to others. When Grandmamma left Mrs. Mac & Lex went also, leaving me house-keeper – I was sure I should have the delight of seeing you, even if but for a few moments, but fate was against me. I saw you cross the square, a couple of times, but never knew the loving eyes who watched your every step. What doubts assailed us both, but thank Heaven! they are dispelled. You seemed more sarcastic towards me than any one

else, & I could not understand why it was so, coming to the conclusion more than once, that you like many others, thought me proud & sought to give lessen my opinion of myself by cutting remarks – ah! You used to make my heart throb much faster & bleed too, many a time, though you did not perceive it by my manner, which usually was calm to your eyes – inwardly, I rebelled & hated you sometimes, from the very intensity of my unknown love. The day after the concert, when you called; were asked to return in the evening & told Mrs. Mac you would on condition you had the lady you desired for a partner, I felt elated & by careful maneuvering, succeeded in playing at the same table. Fearing to let you know the true state of my heart, we cut for partners & I fell to Mr. Stames – our success did not please your lady friend, so a little strategy on my part secured you as my vis a vis for the

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last games, then came our first conversation you refer to. I think Lex gave me away about the [firs-amis]; he was so amused hearing me rail at you, he wished to know what the trouble was, so I told him. You are sure to be liked here so have no doubts about it. anyway, I love you dearly, that will make up for all else I trust. The lips will be out of practice I fear, but being willing & not too cold will soon make up for last time & become quite proficient once more. Lex must think me very discreet, as you too will fancy, when you know all he intrusted [sic] to my keeping. You may, perhaps be surprised too!!. My darling, you know full well your letters are treasures to me & I love them next to yourself, pet, being your thoughts penned by your own dear hands. Your love is sufficient for me, my darling, & having won so much of it, have given all I have to give, to endeavor to make up for what I have become the happy possessor of, your dear, true heart. I only hope you will always have the same faith in me as now & that I may always be worthy of it.

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I am pleased you agree with me about returning here again before leaving

for good for my western home – it is but natural I should wish to see them last of all, when I go: the next time I come, it will be as a visitor only. It is nice of you to tell me of your family & I trust they will approve of your choice – was Jack Murray ever a merchant, or engaged to a young Montreal lady? I once met a nice little fellow of that name from Toronto too & he was engaged to a Miss McDonald. She went to Ottawa during the Session, met a friend of his, flirted & finally fell in love. The friend was but trying the young lady & after amusing himself, reported the state of affairs to Mr. Murray, who immediately broke the engagement. She then met a St. Paul man: they were within a month of being married, when he failed in business & that finished that chapter in her life. She was rather unfortunate, was she not? She is pretty & has been out a great deal – her younger sister was Mrs. Kirkhouse. You know all you tell me of yourself interests me so write what pleases you. “The rolling stone” will soon find rest & I hope the place may prove a very

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paradise for him! What a memory you have for even trivial things, when you recall my admiring that pretty horse at the races! I trust Col. O’Brien said nice things of you & will not be too hard on me, should he perchance learn of our future marriage. I am glad to see your friends take such an interest in my darling, knowing he fully deserves all the good they think of him. I trust your treasure will be valuable, if love can make her so, tease though she may be: she is delighted to know you recognize the motives which suggest the different changes she desires in the home you are to occupy & that your comfort is her first consideration. Your long letter has been like a book to me & has been my reading matter for the past three days, finding fresh enjoyment every time I peruse it. Mrs. Mac wrote me a nice long letter, while Lex & yourself were listening to a lecture on “Imperial Federation”, I believe. I will answer her shortly. I know what I tell; you keep to yourself & being cognizant of the fact, say just what I please, as it will go no further. Mr. D. would have had “the mitten” had he been my fiancé, but, I should never have given him a seconds thought, I know well. I saw what Mr. Wood

headed “a mild & wooley time”, & thought of my song, wondering if he recalled it to mind when writing. Did the mysterious hour of midnight bring me to your mind, when you finished up your letter that you say you are superstitious? it is a shame for me to ask such a thing, when so much of your leisure had just been devoted to me, my own darling. I never fancied I was what might be called superstitious, but think your view of my dream will lead me to believe I am. it was strange I will give in & the attentions paid me by others I, as a rule, enjoyed – giving nothing in return. My love for you I was always fighting against, fearing it was imagination & fate that was at work & not love. You remember the Monday after the races – in the morning, when I was walking up & down you came over, asked if I did not find it cold, I came in - you left with Col. Herchmer, or the Comr. rather, to visit several detachments in the afternoon – a short time after, the love I really felt for you I was aware of; your short absence, seeming as if a great deal had gone from me very suddenly, caused me to realize

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my heart was no more mine. the surprise was such that I fainted – you may recall it now. had I not been ill a few days before, it would not have had the same effect on me, but being rather weak, the knowledge that I was to return home & leave the best part of me in the west, just at that time was more than I could bear. I pictured my life without you, never for one moment dreaming you might care for me, a man who had met & seen so many charming women!!. I never told you of this before, but had they been keener of perception & put two & two together, the mystery would have been quickly solved. As a rule, I command my feelings pretty well, but was alone just at that time – had Mrs. Mac been present, I should have made an effort, but she appeared more speedily on the scene than I imagined, so discovered me & gave the alarm. Your return was the best medicine – in the evening when the Dr. came, he found me very well. Lex was teasing me & when the Dr. said iron would be good, Lex said “do you not think Steel! would be better” – I for a moment fancied

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he had discovered my secret, but his subsequent remarks proved my fears groundless. We had our first ride the Friday of that week & the sequel is well known to my pet. Your fall was another link that bound us closer together!!..... You will be sorry to hear I have a very bad cold – I am doing my best to get rid of it. I used not to take cold as easily & know not what is the cause. We have been busy this week, I particularly so. The warm weather seems to have set in – it was dreary & cold for some days, but we have had a change. the trees are budding nicely & spring flowers are peeping up. My letter is not as long as yours, nor as interesting my darling, but it is quiet in the country at this season & news scarce. Antoine is eleven today & I made him what would please him most, a nice cake – he is my little pet, now that I have a big one, who has robbed him of a very large corner of my warm heart. he & I are chums – I am his god-mother too, so he loves me pretty well. My treasure will be wearied by my long letter, so will leave you now. God bless you my own old pet, my very own, as I so often loved

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to call you when near. Write soon again to the little one who loves you so devotedly & whose every thought & wish are yours forever. With many sweet kisses which I imprint so often on your photos, that the impression of my lips will in the end remain, believe me ever

Your

own dear Sweet

little Girl

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