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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,  
Oct 6<sup>th</sup> / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Today in the most dreary, gloomy weather I come to converse with my pet, & answer his dear letter written on the 25<sup>th</sup> [ult]. You cannot imagine what disagreeable days we are having – the sun has not shone for almost two weeks & the rain hardly ceases – in fact, I am completely disgusted & talk of the northwest climate with the greatest pleasure & look forward to living there with delight. I have always hated dampness & rain, you see, so you must not be too surprised at what I say. Mr. Murray must have had a very pleasant trip, only it would have been more enjoyable had there been two instead of one – do you not think so? I trust he may favor you with a visit later on, when

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I am entitled to play hostess. If you do go recruiting after we are married, I shall certainly lose no time in making all sorts of pretty things to decorate our little home – if I went with you, you should find me in the way & perhaps a worry as well, so I think the best thing is for me to remain in Vaudreuil. I know what some men say when they have their wives with them, even on a short business tour – what would it be with you, if your time was very much occupied & your absence long? You would not be accustomed to have me near & it might bother you sometimes. I fancy I might help you in a way, but then I should be compelled to look so sweetly, that you might not like it. If your leave is short, about how long would it be? I would like to know, as it may make a difference to me, my pet. Advent prevents our marrying before the Xmas season

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anyway, that is sure. You may have other views for then so of course, it is out of the question to settle anything so far ahead. I know the district is an important one & also that Lex would not be left in command for any length

of time. Somebody else, Cotton for instance, might try to replace you & that would not do at all & men can so little be trusted. You may find it strange that I seem so anxious to know all about your projected trip, but a short time may make a difference to me you see, that is why. I was very much hurt that Grandma should be under the impression that you were always at Mrs. Mac's whether invited or not, & knew Mrs. Mac's way of complaining & seeking comfort, so rose up in arms & defended the darling of my heart to the best of my ability. I even told her, that for your sake I should be glad when I returned, as it would make your house more pleasant & give you a home which I would always try to make as attractive as possible, to make up for the many years of discomfort you haëve had, since you had gone up to the wild west. I know not if you consider that my true womanhood, but I love you, darling & no word shall be spoken before me, which shall cast the tiniest slur on you in any way whatever. You are mine to love & to defend & I shall do it as long as I have the power. I do think Mrs. Mac far more religious than I am, & she has often made me feel ashamed of myself, but I cannot help it. in very serious matters I might equal her, but in small, trivial things she surpasses me. It is only natural you think most of me, but I know myself better than you do, & my failings are ever before my eyes. She is not unselfish, that I am fully aware of & she showed it on several occasions

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one of which I shall never forget, for she touched a very sensitive chord in her remarks & did not confine her words to me only. I was the one most interested & others should have been left out, or at least given the benefit of the doubt. I am pleased to know you think so well of me & trust that this time next year, your dear heart may not have changed in any way. I am not as unselfish as you think may be, but if I am, my love for you has a great deal to do with it, pet. I feel sure, Lex would regret anything of the kind mentioned for he holds to having you & impressed the fact very forcibly on my mind, long ere I had the happiness of meeting you. "Steele & I are like brothers & I like him better than any man living – he knows my house is open to him & that he shall always have a bed here whenever he cares to" – he often repeated these

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words to me before you came, so you cannot wonder at my not being surprised that you should find your way over so frequently, previous to the 18<sup>th</sup> of Oct last. I was so sure, so positive that your friendship for Lex was your attraction, that I used to think it was nice to see such intimacy exist

between two men, & thought better of you both for it. It seems to me I shall confide everything to you only, once I leave home, so you must prepare to bear a very heavy burden, added to all your own cares, my darling. I very nearly was called upon to make the greatest sacrifice demanded of a woman, not long ago for my religious opinions & you know the truth of my assertion. a little stubbornness [sic] on your part would have done it! – what nonhappiness would have been my lot for the rest of my life, my pet, had such been the case –

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however, a woman must be prepared to sacrifice all if necessary, it is her fate..... no more picnic's [sic] or boating for me – the season is over. it is cold & windy today – the leaves are falling on every side & all warns me that my pet will soon be here to claim me. This time last year we were at the Springs in the Crow's Nest Pass, & though it was raining a little, it was a nice day. you were pretty far, but see the miles that separate us now! I do not think I love you much more than I did then, for my secret love was very dear to me. I must ask pardon for my letters sometimes, as they cannot fail to let you see I am disturbed now & then & lose the train of my wayward thoughts. You will rest your lungs after the Governor's visit I hope, in order to ~~be ma~~ be able to answer a word of three letters on the eventful day, instead of one of two only. I do not know if you could find a substitute on such short notice, if the latter took place, so you had better take good care of yourself, my pet. I am surprised that Mrs. Charlie W. should find any fault in the Majah! she thought her perfection when we were on our trip to the Mts. & could not praise her too much. a woman who cannot tell the truth is not to be trusted I fear – she should never do anything which would necessitate an untruth to screen her!!... she, the Majah! showed her hand plainly & did not think it worth while to hide her aversion to me – had she had tact, she would have acted differently before you, my pet, for policy at least. I would have been friendly, perhaps as I at first never thought I should meet her again, but then - - she let me see how sincere she was & that was sufficient. I hope the fires have ceased by now, for you must be tired of them. I saw in the paper

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paper you sent Papa of the compliments & thanks paid the M.P. for their efforts in helping & know they fully deserve them. I heard of Mr. Nelson during his visit to Macleod but did not meet him when he called as I was in Lethbridge for the concert – the greater part of his visit, he was under a

cloud if I remember well & was invisible to ladies. I went to school in Ottawa with a Miss Denniss whose father was Col. Dennis I think. I may be wrong, but do not think so. Lex told me of Mr. N.s desire to make a match with his sister-in-law one day when he seemed bent to tease & did not wish me to flatter myself that you cared a pin for me. it had the contrary effect & began to make me hope – how contrary a woman is!!!. I have not seen Mrs. Mac but will write her today – the dentist is attending to her & will

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keep her some time. You cannot say I disappoint you with regard to the letters you expect, such as they are. Everything is set aside for you my pet, on the evenings I have consecrated to you. Grandma must have been frightened by the fires as they look so large & so near at night. She will be anxious to leave & in consequence, Mrs. Mac will hurry back, I think. It shows how much Mrs. K. knows of her friends, when after living in Cornwall for years surrounded by Miss Fraser's relations & Lex's that she did not know they were related. If Miss F. allowed Mrs. K. to write ridiculous things about Lex & Mrs. Mac, she should be ashamed, as the Macgillis' were some of the best friends her family had – they are & were poor when Grandpa lived in Williamstown & he did many a thing for them. but she is a girl of very little force

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of character, in fact is a silly, simpering, fashionable, society girl, as you will be sure to find, if you have the pleasure of meeting her. Mrs. K. was received & welcomed at Grandpa's home in Montreal at a time when nearly all her friends shunned her & were ready to throw a stone at her, but such things are forgotten now-a days. I hate to think it sometimes & never could like Mrs. K. Miss F. would see the west & I told her in my answer to her's [sic], "it was a trip she could easily take alone – there were numbers of nice young men in the country & her visit would be a pleasant one. I could but wish she would be as fortunate as I have been, should she perchance make up her mind to return," or words to that effect. She will talk in a disparaging way of me, for she does not care for me & I expect to be hauled over the coals by both the charming creatures. she will wonder what you saw in me that could possibly attract you. Mr. Campbell can play the gallant man & perhaps fall a victim to so many fair charms. I have not seen her for several years, so she can say what she pleases. the last time I saw her at a distance only, was the day of Mrs. K.s marriage, as I was in Cornwall at the time, - or the day after, I forget exactly. As a rule, you must

know that women never wonder, “what a Girl sees in a man sufficient to marry him, but what a man sees in her, to warrant such a step” – particularly if that man has position, & bears an unblemished character – they regret they were not on hand to enter the lists as well as the lucky maiden who won the day. You must tell me how Miss F. takes & what you think of her. Lex told me in confidence that her intimacy with Mrs. K. previous to the marriage of

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the latter had done her much harm, but Lex may be prejudiced.... I hope far sweeter glances are in store for you than any you have yet had & no one will be there to notice them. was it the Saturday that I was in such a tantalizing mood that I gave you such nice ones? – we were riding & I teased you unmercifully, but I was playing with my victim, dear, against my better womanhood, just for the sake of drawing you nearer, my dearest & best. Strange mixture of love & contradiction your little girl is, my pet, you will find, but I wished to retaliate a wee bit for all the pain you had perhaps unconsciously inflicted upon me. they were days of pleasure & pain combined... The young lady who did not seem to have any preference for you succeeded in hiding

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it fairly well, did she not? a year will have elapsed on the 14<sup>th</sup> since we returned from our camping expedition & the 18<sup>th</sup> was the happy day you told me of your love. I see you now as you were then, wounded by my thoughtless words of lack of feeling & fthough I try to recall all, cannot understand how the subject came about. I was pained that I had hurt you & while deep in the reflection of how I should right myself, you made your arrival of affection for the seemingly heartless girl by your side! – Heaven bless you, how I loved you then, my own dear pet, but the time had not come yet for you to know it – too many difficulties remained to be overcome, but the truth was known that your dear heart was mine!!..... We miss Gertie & her’s [sic] very much. Beau goes this week also but Louise returns. Baby is very lonely they say, but she will soon get over it. Well, my darling, my letter is rather long

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so I think I will finish for today. God bless you, darling. we had the devotion of the “Forty Hours” this week & who was first in my heartfelt prayers, do you think? My own darling Sam, that he might be one of those most

blessed & earnestly I prayed for your welfare my own pet. With many sweet  
kisses & warm love, I remain as ever

Your own loving

little Girl.

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