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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
Oct 22nd / 89.

My own dear Sam,

You cannot imagine the many happy moments given me today by the perusal of your dear letter of the 14th. I feared to hope too much lest I should be doomed to disappointment as I had been Thursday last & yesterday. Well, dear I suppose if you really will not find me in the way I should prefer accompanying you to any place you may visit while recruiting – women are often considered troublesome at such times & I feared you might have been tempted to think me so & fancied it better to remain at home than run any such risks. I would be with you my pet, & you would scarcely have had time to tire of me by then. What would you say to the last week in Dec instead of January? – of course, we shall decide nothing until we

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meet, but that being the holiday season all my family would be here. however we cannot settle such matters when such a distance separates us, only I mentioned it in order not to surprise you too much when you do come. If not then, the first week in January, but I must not astonish you beyond words – we can arrange all when we meet – if your leave is but a month that would I suppose include the two weeks required to come & go. So Dec shall bring you to me! how quickly the year of waiting has passed, my pet, has it not? had any person told me when I left Lethbridge that I should see Mrs. Mac ere I met you again I would not have believed, but such has come to pass. She talked herself hoarse & we spoke far into the sma' hours of morning & after all left many things unsaid! I caught a fearful cold since she left us, being quite ill yesterday so last night resorted

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once more to mustard blisters & feel somewhat better this evening – it is not much but the coughing fatigues me. I am on a fair way to recovery so

will likely be all right by the end of the week. Mrs. Mac has often hurt my feelings, but you know I am a very sensitive plant & she thinks it was all for my good, as I am so ignorant of the ways of this wicked world. however, I could not take it in good part & resent such advice – it is naughty I have no doubt, as she has more experience than I have, still I cannot help it dear. Lex spoke of you once only very long ago – it was after I had refused him. when first we met, he mentioned his friends in the west, speaking of you in glowing terms. after his proposal had been rejected he said as cuttingly as he could, “no doubt if Steele asked you, you would go” while I, in mere spirit of mischief, seeing him so put out, answered as archly as possible “I have no doubt I would” – that was the only occasion I recall his speaking of you, until I went up last July, a year ago. He on the day I refer to spoke of several of the officers but your name struck me forcibly – that was in April '84 – some day I shall tell you all about his trip east in '87 when he on the last day of his stay married my aunt – he did not mention your name then, at least not to me, though I have since heard it was his intention to bring you to Grandpapa's & introduce you to my aunts, but Providence ordained otherwise & his plans fell to the ground!! – You are a sarcastic old pet & you let it appear even between the lines of your letter when you say “You should both feel complimented by having ~~your~~ my good opinion” – my many good traits can all be summed up in very few words for my love for you is the greatest of them all & that alone will make me nice in your dear eyes, my darling. It was a blessing for me that you were

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not easily discouraged & hurt for I then would have had to confess my love long before I did so. I suffered more than you did the first time you told me your love, for you had been kindness itself while I had to reproach myself for the heartless words I had uttered & to bear the torture of the many hard things you could not help but think of me. no one can know the grief that I was enduring under the mask of a smiling face, even to you my pet, for I am sure you deemed I did not care, while my heart was torn by the thought of what might have been! heartfelt prayers were answered though & everything turned out for the best. Lex mentioned Miss Nelson for fear I might flatter myself I should win where so many others failed. I knew you would find Miss F. affected but that pleases some of the bachelors of the N. West. I know I did not meet with the success so many

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ladies aspire to in the number of their admirers, but it was quality not

quantity I sought & I was more than fortunate in winning such love as yours, my pet. I would not give your dear little finger with the diamond ring for all the other men I met during my visit. had I been affected, moths would have been attracted, but I am in fact too sincere for that & cannot do it, even for amusement. On what occasion did I give you the sweetest glances? I cannot recall to mind the day you refer to, so do tell me, please? The nice regal party must have enjoyed their visit exceedingly. You can imagine I have no doubt, how pleased I am to learn all passed off so well, particularly in your district. The dance was a success I am sure, but you should have remained & enjoyed it awhile. You must have had lively guests when you remained up

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until reveille, but you were always famous for late hours, so cannot have minded it much. Continue that way, it is good for one's health, especially after a little supper, such as yourself & Lex can enjoy. You must indeed feel proud at his the opinion expressed by Lord Stanley & endorsed by Villiers. It will also prove to the Comr. how efficient an officer he has in Major Steele. How very mortified the Comr. must have been on account of his wife's conduct. I feel so sorry that she has that fault for I found her a very nice person the only time I met her. I had heard that she indulged, but hoped it was not too true. You must be found pretty stiff necked sometimes, but you are right & I admire you for it, though of course, that is of very little account. You know, dear, you must not imagine I do not wish you to take any wine, for I know you are man enough to know when you have had enough – a glass sometimes does one good & I sometimes have to take it myself – but, really I have seen men make such wrecks of themselves by the use of intoxicating liquors that I have a horror of them & cannot help it. You told me you would not touch it & while I did not in any way consider it a promise, I love you far more for abstaining from it when I am so far away. Even if you did take it, no one would be apt to let me know, so I have every reason to bless the day we met. Mr. Cochrane entertained the nice royal party well & treated them to sights they were little accustomed to. Englishmen ride well & one cannot be surprised at that for they get so much of it. Canada is too young a country to go in for sport of that kind, as every one is bent on making money, but the N. west is the best place to learn, especially when with a charming escort. I do not love driving, but when with somebody I love, am quite content & it is not quite as selfish a pastime

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as riding. Ah! pet, the nice little compliment you wish me to believe when you say none were as aristocratic looking as your little girl!. My long nose & thin lips make me so & my dear old Grandpapa used to take such delight in teasing me about my [Bomeau] nose – still, it affords me pleasure that I look so for your sake for I do not wish your friends to be disappointed – if you do not marry a beauty, I can lay claim to being somewhat of a lady, pet, so that will counterbalance the charms I may lack. Mrs. Mac is tired trying to initiate her Belgian in the art of house-keeping & spoke of bringing up a servant from the east – she may take Mrs. W. F.s as she wishes to go to her & [being] on the spot. I hope poor Wolly will get all right – he should have me near ready to make a famous remedy we have great faith in, Hop syrup & which I am swinging down at a great rate these days. Surely Wolly will not end by

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consumption! I feel so sorry for my old friend. We will both be considered tartars I fear, for the single officers seem to have that opinion of me now & as you show your teeth now & then they will begin to think we will be a pretty cross pair. By the by before you come down I think it would be a good thing for you to get a letter of introduction to the Archbishop of Montreal from Father LaConde. Being a stranger, they might make some objection to our union until they made inquiries to be certain you had no wife in the N. west – you may be surprised, but I believe it has happened before & it can do no harm, anyway. of course, I merely suggest & you can act as you think fit. I was told Lex had to see Archbishop Tache, but now Mrs. Mac says no, so I have been misinformed I suppose – at least, was told Lex gave the prelate as an authority to prove he was a bachelor. Mrs. Mac will likely leave about the 2nd of Nov for home, so you will see

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her ere you leave for your eventful trip. Well, pet, it is late & my letter long, so I will kiss you good night. pleasant dreams, my darling. with much love & fondest, sweetest kisses, as ever

Your own affectionate little Girl –

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