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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
Oct 26th / 89.

My own dear Sam,

Thursday last brought me your dear long letter of the 16th & it was read over & over again, my darling. tonight having leisure at my disposal, not feeling inclined to commence any new work until Monday, I think the best thing I can do is to have a chat with my pet. I thought that lovely photo would please you & you can contemplate it now & then while waiting for the original. Mr. Wood is I trust better by now – they are rather unfortunate this year, are they not? I will have to look after myself when I return, as the same thing may happen to me, particularly if the seats are as large as those of Lex's wagon: my experience the day we were driving so recklessly over the prairie will not be easily forgotten. You are indeed very proud

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of your men & with reason I have no doubt. The finger tips are warm by this time & I intend to keep them so, in order not to trouble you too much at first. You will more than likely indulge in a little smoking when you come, for my father is fond of it & men never can enjoy a good talk unless hidden by clouds of the fragrant weed. If it is owing to your health, I hope you will give it up for it must be injurious somehow or other. So you will tell me the something particular some day – how anxious I will be until I possess the information! – I fancied from the way you spoke that there was something, but could get no idea of what it might be from anything said by Mrs. Mac – just imagine what agony I will endure until the moment comes for you to tell. My woman's curiosity on the qui vive for four or five months may be!!..... You see having been so long with Mrs. Mac I know she does not like late

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hours, so you must not be surprised if more than once I took the resolution of never sinning in that way. As we will see so much of each other, we can

do most of our talking during the day & I am more certain that your leisure hour will be in the evening as your days are always busy. Mrs. Mac has been singing your praises far & wide – she has proved a good friend to you & I feel that I can forgive her for a great deal on that account. she is good-hearted too & as we all have faults we must not be too exacting, must we, pet? My brotherinlaw [sic], Richard is with us tonight – he says they all are well & baby beginning to say everything she wishes. Mrs. Mac had dinner with them the other day & spoke so highly of my darling that they await your coming with the greatest pleasure. She intends going in a week & feels much better they say. Who knows but what your little pet thinks you perfect? would you like her to tell everybody so & have them smile? not much, although she thinks it all the same, but it would not do to have too many find you so, so I keep my counsel to myself & will let them find out for themselves. Of one thing you may be sure that if you do confide things to me, they will be sacred for I can be discreet when it pleases me. I have the knack of learning what I wish to know without letting on, but of course do not intend to act that way with you. what it may suit you to tell me of others, I will listen to, but I certainly would like to know everything concerning yourself, my pet, so I trust you will prepare your confession. I will prove more irresistible than ever if possible in order to hear all you may have to say. I am very busy but intend to be rather indolent when my work is done, so if you sometimes see me with my fingers unoccupied you must not be too surprised – the fit may not last long for I cannot remain any time without something to keep me out of mischief. that was why I

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was such an assiduous worker last autumn when you were near!. Some persons find Mr. D. has a pretty mouth, but I think he has a sneer on it, which gives him a disagreeable look & as I rather dislike him one cannot wonder if I see no beauty in him. He knows me too well to make any ungentlemanly remark to me or about me, especially of the kind I referred to for he knows I have a pretty good temper of my own & that I do not stand any nonsense. I never could shake you no matter how much I desired to do so, you are too tall & my arms cannot reach higher than your neck, my pet – they would be apt to entwine themselves there & be forgotten. I felt sorry when I imagined your leave would be but two weeks for I know that would merely give you time to come & return immediately. my last may have surprised you somewhat as you may not be prepared for the date I mention – if not, let me know for it is very

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easy to arrange things for later on – a month or more makes no difference to you & would make none to me either, especially if you are kept very much occupied until the Xmas Season – as I said before, please yourself, my dear & your decision will be mine. Mamma enjoyed Mrs. Mac's visit not having seen her for so long & they enjoyed many a conversation you may be sure. Do you not feel as if time would increase the love you bear me? I do & hope such is the case with you. I would always wish as much affection as you seemed to feel for me the day we came to Dunmore & with that, I should rest content. I will not be as perfect as you think for a woman should have a fair amount of failings. they excite a man's sympathy & retain his love I fancy for if a wife is a perfect woman, she never gives him the tiniest amount of worry & he is more likely to forget he has a tartar to deal with – nice resolutions, are they not? I would

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do a great deal for those I love & would sacrifice almost anything for under a calm exterior beats a wild, passionate heart, my darling. My cast of features leads to believe a helmet would be becoming & I will try it someday with my hair flowing just to let you see whether you are right or wrong. I have had a hard time with this cold of mine, but think it conquered now & trust to be well in a week at most. It amuses me so to hear that a man thinks every woman he meets in love with him & I dearly love to take the conceit out of people of that sort. I thought Mr. Wilson was to remain in Macleod for a while. The Comr. should have been the "Wandering Jew" – he is so fond of sending people around the country that I begin to think he missed his vocation. I suppose we will be sure to get accustomed to go different ways, but my prayers will only be the more ardent for that reason, my own pet. The difference in our religions has no doubt led several persons to believe our marriage would never take place, for we are both thought to be rather strong minded I fancy – it must cause them to wonder how the matter is settled & to form many conjectures as well. Mrs. K.s mourning for her mother is not as deep as that [illegible] for her brother. I was surprised to hear she danced at the last ball. I think I heard she was a good dancer – is it the case? Well, pet it is late & I too feel rather tired so I will kiss you good night & pleasant dreams. With many sweet kisses added to the large number you are already possessed of I will say au-revoir until tomorrow...

Sunday. It was my intention to go & spend the afternoon with friends of ours who think of leaving Canada to settle in Philadelphia or Baltimore, but

the rain has altered my plans once more & keeps me in the house all day, as the weather being so damp I did not go to church owing to my

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my cold. While your new officer may be common I blame the young girl he was engaged to for allowing things to go so far – it must be rather hard on a man sometimes. true many of the sex would not care & might in their inmost heart be pleased to think they had escaped the cares of matrimony so easily! – still, others might feel it very keenly, in proportion to their capability of loving. some love with selfishness, some for the mere pleasure of leaving, while others do so for the many qualities of heart & mind they fancy they have found in the object of their affection – this is usually the lasting love which ends but with the grave. It is a mistake not to give the appointments to gentlemen when they favor French Canadians, for as you say the English are generally prejudiced. Macleod is particularly so, being so English you know & every one strives to be thought so as if it were a disgrace almost to have been born in this dear old Canada of ours!

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Miss Fraser will no doubt have many admirers. I have not seen her for a long time & she may possibly have improved. Mrs. K. is a friend to her no doubt & I hope she will always prove so – circumstances may alter things a little for Mrs. K. is a lady who has the interests of her male friends nearer her heart than those of her own sex. She may be right of course for men take a different view of things to what we do!. You must have been charmed to see Capt. Neale – has he left the Force as he intended doing? Mrs. Mac is anxious to return on Grandmamma's account knowing how lonely she must be, but her Grandson to be is as usual very attentive I am sure, so the time does not seem so long with him near. Mr. Wilson must regret being in such close proximity to the bête noir, as one must walk pretty straight under his eye. The Majah is making a long stay, but the autumn has been pleasant so she enjoyed it. Mrs. Mac told me how ill her mother, Mrs Daly had been & it is only natural she makes a long stay when she is there.. “So if you take to riding when you come back“ – well, really, just as if I would give it up when you know perfectly well how I love it, my pet. why if I gave it up, people would be sure to speak & say we had had a quarrel – do you remember your own words a little over a year ago, my darling? No! no! I cannot go without a ride now & then, though I am aware of how much you care for it, still any of the others might like to take me out & Ritchie might sometimes, when all are too busy to indulge in the

charming pastime. It agrees with me & does me all the good in the world, far more than you imagine & I must satisfy you by letting you see if I could possibly look better than I did on the pony. Papa & Mamma go to Montreal tomorrow for a few days. They propose going to see our boys at

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college & will be warmly welcomed I know. It will do Mamma good to see them once more for she has missed Antoine so much. Mrs. Mac was speaking of Mr. Starnes & wondering why he acted as he did. I by degrees led the conversation on & she told me of his way of entering the house while they were absent & of Lex's letter requesting Mr. S. to be kind enough to let him know the next time. I then said that might be the cause of the whole affair & she thought me very smart for it had never struck her in that light. of course, I had to take all the compliments & not let on I knew anything about it, but I felt very guilty pet as you would if you knew you had told something I asked you not to mention, but the [warning] came too late. I fear my alluding to the end of Dec must have given you a great start as you may not be ready to give up your bachelor life by then, but if it is too soon, be sure to say so, for I really do not know what time you may have settled on. Miss Hubert will

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be married before Lent sometime, so Richard says. The trees are perfectly leafless now & the country anything but inviting. I only wish your first view of it was when it was looking its best, in June for instance – is not that sufficient inducement to put off the day until that month? Well, my darling, I think my letter long enough, so will leave you. Write me soon & long missives too, for I love them so. With a great big kiss just as sweet as I can make it, I am as ever

Your

own dear loving

little Girl.

I send you by this mail "Cleopatra" one of R. Haggards last. I have not read it myself, but Papa says it is a good work & I think you will enjoy it. some sentences may recall me to your memory & I will peruse it when I return more than ever

Your own Maye.

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