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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil
Apr 7th / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Your dear letter written on the 28th was received Thursday last & gave me great pleasure the many times I have perused the sweet lines penned by my own dear boy. it is so kind of you to busy yourself with your little girl when you have so much to occupy you & believe me, it is very dearly appreciated by the one whose heart is yours. I know how worried you must have been during the time the Comr. & brother were with you, so value your dear letters all the more if possible. Mrs. Mac would like to come East when I do & her Lex will not part with her, that is the reason she says you will break your promise. but she knows I am reasonable & will not expect to come down three or four times a year. Indeed! Yes. You are a pretty fine fellow & all here are coming to the same conclusion, because I love you better from day to day. My sister, Mrs. Hubert, says “she never saw two people think so much of each other – they both expect perfection, still persist in begging the other not to seek for too much, for fear of being disappointed.” – Judge from that, pet, if I speak well of you or not! – I suppose you have been out this week & your absence will cause me pain, by depriving me of the dear letters I wait for so eagerly. Mr. Starnes will be rather pleased to be relieved of the onerous duties of Quartermaster. he will remain in

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Macleod for all that, I have no doubt. Mrs. Mathews will occupy your old quarters, will she not, since Mrs. Wilson is not coming into barracks at present? You see my dear boy, I place every person on my mind, wonder what they are doing, how their rooms are furnished & etc. it keeps me near you at every moment, my pet & what more can I wish for just now when we are so far from one another. It is a good thing you did not choose Sept. for your visit East, as owing to the Governor General's trip, your's [sic] should have been postponed. I am pleased for Lex's sake that no trouble has arisen out of the false reports about the banquet. The beautiful Freddie has not come & is not to favor in this time much to our delight, though we had to pretend we should have been pleased to meet him, but I except myself. even his brother could not be led to imagine I cared to meet him, for I have taken a dislike to the little imp - he is due in Winnipeg on the 15th so his stay is short now. I could form the idea from the little I saw of the Comr. & his brother that they both love gossip & what Mrs. [Champness] has told me of their conversations, are very common when they are with persons who like that style of talk. I was surprised she should repeat some of the jokes indulged in, but what more could I expect? he must have found me very calm in his presence. I allude to the Comr. - all told me he was a terrible man to meet but I did not mind him at all. If the K.s prepared to receive Capt. Cotton & bride, they must have been annoyed at their non appearance, especially as Mrs. K. lets every one know what she is doing, what her guests are to have & the quantity, not to mention the

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forcible words she generally makes use of, to give more strength to what she says. I am afraid meeting me has given you as much pain as joy, for where you were once happy, you miss me & always fancy something is lacking to make your pleasure perfect. if you did not love me, you should be perfectly contented, surrounded by some dear friends, in pleasant company very often, with ladies to talk to, to flirt & demand all the nice pri attentions it

is a man's privilege [sic] to bestow, good riding, any amount of going about, in fact almost an ideal life intermingled with duty when one little girl has changed all this & turned the enjoyment into mere toleration –

“What could he do indeed? A weak white girl
Held all his heart-strings in her small white hand;
His hopes, and power, and majesty were hers,
And not his own” –

But “cheer up sad heart & cease repining” a few short months, & your dreams will be reality! I trust my pet will find me all his fancy painted me & I will endeavor to keep him still dreaming for some time. You know how much I should give to have the exquisite delight of one look from your eyes, one glance at your dear face – for distance but makes you dearer to the little girl whom you love. No! decidedly I should not go out riding with any one else. if you were too busy, then the little maid would wait till a more auspicious day dawned, for the pleasure of riding, is the pleasure, of being near the one I love so dearly; be candid & say You m would not care to see me go with any person else – if you did, I should be led to imagine your love was slowly & surely cooling & it would cause me grief. You must be very busy indeed my pet – from what I saw when first I went up, I was sure the duties of the O. C. were light. You have changed my opinion & now I know if he does all required from him, he can be very busy indeed. I do not remember what I said to Mrs. Mac that could possibly give you such pleasure, but I am happy to have done so. What I said I meant my pet, you may be sure of that & she will know nothing of your telling me of it. Well, pet, of course you do as you wish about the piano. I do not want you to get me one if the purchase of it will put you out in any way. I have told you before that I am very reasonable & a piano is a luxury I can easily do without for some time, having so many necessary things to get. Had we bought one together, I should have given the preference to an upright, but the conditions upon which you invested in the present one are such that I was more than delighted to hear of your having taken it. The parlor being

small, an upright takes less place, but a square is easier to sing with – but settle it as you think best, for whatever you do is sure to be right. I am not sorry you did not send to Winnipeg by Mr. [Gight] for the things we require – a man, not always being a good judge, is often taken in. then, I think I should prefer buying with you myself, as if things were not to my taste, no one could be blamed by but your little girl herself: do not trouble Lex but wait till you come & we will go about together. I think it far the better plan.

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You would do things so well, I should consider you very extravagant, for a man always gets the most expensive articles. Colds seem epidemic just now – every one in the house suffers from one, but myself. Louise coughs very much, but is some what better. She has the best remedy with her just this moment and seems happy - the cloud has disappeared & things are bright once more. The snow is melting rapidly & thank goodness, no rain so far. The spring is lovely – our little nightingales are warbling sweetly all day long, filling the air with one grand burst of song. – it seems to me they sing better than ever before – perhaps because this time next year I will be too far to hear them & will have but the memory of their sweet strains!!...

Antoine is in his glory, boiling sap to make syrup – as it is his last year at home, he is allowed to do pretty much as he pleases, after his school hours – he goes to college in Sept. & our baby will be no more. they become independent after they leave home & all their baby ways are laid aside. it grieves my dear Mamma to think of all this, so you will begin to th believe we must be afflicted with very large, sensitive hearts. It does not surprise me Mr. B.'s fiancée went back on him, if he was not attentive. What would he have been afterwards, if he neglected her then? You do not give me any uneasiness; knowing all I expect, you will do all in your power to please me – I am not too difficult. I should save you the trouble of coming down, for being pretty well acquainted with you ere I left, & more so now, owing to our correspondence, I feel sure we will tolerate each others faults & do all to make our future a happy one. It was

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far better for me to reflect well & thus afford you ample time for reflection too, ere I gave you my answer. We both required it, at least I did, so am not sorry I did so. I remember well all that passed through my mind & the tears that my hand to my forehead hid from you! it was a decisive moment in my life & my face sometimes expresses so well what I think that I preferred to screen it as much as possible. I imagined your suspense & it caused my heart to beat so wildly that I could hear it plainly [sic], as you sat near me, calmly awaiting the answer from the lips of the one you did not believe loved you so dearly!. You knew when I gave you my hand, that your answer was favorable, but do you know I did it unconsciously? – it was the perfect trust I had in you, pet, that made me do it & your letter recalled it to my mind. Do you not know, my darling, they say “The Eye is the mirror of the Soul”? I so much feared my eyes would tell all I thought of you, that I invariably turned them on the person I cared for least, more particularly, when you were near. I imagined I must have been in a particularly inflammable mood after my trip up, so would not have you think for one moment you had made such an impression. You see, I had my dream, always before my eyes, & having recognized the person, you must not be surprised if I did all in my power to fight against it. You are blue my pet & fancy, now that you are to

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be bothered with a wife, that you will grow old very quickly. You must chase away such thoughts my pet & I will do all I can to make you feel younger than ever. If you persist in saying you are so old, I will begin to realize I am so too, for no matter what you may say to the contrary, I am as old for a woman as you are for a man. A woman’s life is such, that she grows old when in the prime of life & ages more quickly than a man. But one thing consoles me, we are not too old to love each other well & to be happy. Mrs. Mac was as old as I will be when she married & she feels young, so why should we not be so too, for you are very much younger than Lex! – You are a perfect treasure to me, my darling & dearly I love you, you know full

well. I often go to the package I have made of your dear letters & select one – when I commence to read it, I know it by heart, almost having perused them so very often & they are so sweet, that every dear word you have penned to me is engraved in my memory forever. You are good, you are kind, & every day proves that, if I waited for a person whom I deemed worthy of my deep love, I have been well rewarded & blessed by Providence & I thank God for it every day on bended knee & breathe a prayer for my own love so far from me. I keep pretty busy & do you know that looking forward to your letters makes time pass very quickly. I count the days so long ahead & as I lay my head on my pillow at night, the thought always comes, “well, I am one day nearer meeting my own pet” – so like yourself find the days fly. Six months will soon have passed since we parted!! Mrs. Mac’s birthday was the 1st of April & though I wished to write her for that day, could not find leisure. She will have heard from me ere this reaches you as well as a letter to you, my darling. Mrs. Mac tells me Mrs. Neale is as gay as ever & says she cannot endure a quiet life. I fancied she had enough of society & her experience of the last races in Sept. give her a lesson, but it seems to be all consigned to oblivion long ago. She must miss Mrs. Pritchard, for she certainly was very obliging when in Macleod. So many persons made a [convenience?] of Mrs. Neale but she is too blind to see it. They will not find me quite as nice I fear, but do not mind it. Mrs. Zach & Mrs. Mac seem friendly since the latter was ill – so much the better for both – does the former ever go riding now? So she did not go to Mrs. Wood’s to play whist & you were deprived of the pretty eyes! I am sorry - take all you can get from black or blue ones now, as you will be condemned to the flashes of grey eyes until they are closed forever after this year, so profit of the time left to you, my own pet. It is time for me to go & see about tea, so I have

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to leave my pet before I get too tiresome as well as stupid. Pleasant dreams to my love & with very many sweet kisses, ever
Your own loving

little Girl

Baby keeps coming to the door & calling [Anille] and disturbs me – children always give me the name of [Anille]. See in your French dictionary what it means –
Maye.