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Marie Harwood to Sam Steele

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Vaudreuil,
Aug 13th / 89.

My own darling Sam,

Your dear letter written on the 4th arrived today & was so warmly welcomed! I find the days intervening between Friday & Tuesday very long, without a word from my own dear pet & long for the delight of reading your sweet lines far more than words can tell. You have sought for me so patiently, that even had you not found me out in the view of the ruins, I should reward you, darling just the same for your "labor of love". A kiss may be a fleeting pleasure, but it is one of the sweetest & one that usually is recalled with most enjoyment. I know some of mine today give me sweet thrills so you can perhaps imagine what treasures they are, though at the time of giving & taking they seemed unwelcome. Even had I to wait till the sma' hours, I should not deprive myself of the gratification of penning some lines to you dear, on the days

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I determined to consecrate to you, so fatigued or not I come to chat. The only thing is that my missives may prove uninteresting – if so, pray forgive me, when you know the reason. You are kept very busy dear & will have well earned the rest you desire to take. The inspection of out posts occurs often & you have had several long drives again. Think of what pleasure is in store for you, pet when you feel inclined to take me with you, just for company, you know. It does not surprise me to hear Col. Panet speak so well of my darling – he told Papa of your valuable services during the rebellion & praised you up to the skies. He is a very conscientious man & "gives honor to whom honor is due" – he worked night & day at the time. I remember it being then in Ottawa & it was of course the sole topic of conversation. No, pet, well you know I do not think you sour, for you are just the sweetest, dearest old love it has ever been my happiness to meet!!...

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The jam may be needed to sweeten me some day, there is no telling. It just proves to you what a fabricator Mr. Freddy is when he tells such stuff to his brother & the latter silly enough to believe him – if he reflected he would not try to persuade me of Mr. F.s importance, having been where I can judge for myself, but he evidently imagines I know nothing whatever about the Force & I do not care sufficiently to let him learn his mistake. You must inform me of the things considered the right things & which so many ladies do not do. I wish to do all that is correct & you must tell if I fail in any way. It may have been a little curiosity, which they say we possess to a marked degree, which led me to express a wish to see the mess. I really at the time never thought that I should have an opportunity of viewing one, if I did not profit of the occasion of my visit west & I never fancied any harm could come of it, as long as I went in with somebody capable of chaperoning such a very giddy girl as I am. I should have liked it, but no! so many single officers were around, that I must not enter the sacred precincts. There is one thing certain, that a young girl makes many a remark in all innocence that married ladies think dreadful. Now, I consider it far better to let them pass unnoticed & not right to tell a person of her slip of the tongue, as it puts her in a very awkward position with regard to the persons who have been unfortunate enough to hear her remark. Some would lead you to believe men take harm out of everything & that idea has often embarrassed me exceedingly, strange as it may appear to you – I as a rule, am pretty observant, but of course plead guilty to having said things sometimes which might have better been left unsaid, still I cannot believe they were taken in any way but the one I intended. I trust my darling will not mind my failings in that light & that you will never feel anxious on that account – “a word to the wise is sufficient” my pet & when you think I may not beware, one

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look will suffice to recall me to my senses. Strange to say, Mr. Starnes' engagement is denied by Miss Sicotte's friends – it strikes me as queer, what say you? Why his mother says it is not the case, though she would like it very much. if you come down together that will put off your trip of a few days later, if you leave in Dec. only – still I suppose when the time does come, my pet will wish it very far away. I hardly think any of you need protection, but it will be nicer to travel together, when the journey is such a long one. Your good news of the coal oil is delightful & I trust the hopes raised will meet with all your expectations. I do not think I shall be frightened when you come but if I am somewhat timid, you must not mind it

dear: it will soon pass away, for I am confident you shall meet with a very warm welcome from all my family. We spent Sunday evening at the Dorion's as I told you & enjoyed it. I met an old friend who is almost related, in fact is a connection of ours – he congratulated me on my engagement, though I fear his heart -

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was a bit sore. he came to see me the very Sunday before I left for the west last year & begged me not to become engaged when absent. I laughingly replied there was not the slightest danger. he recalled the circumstance, & would hardly believe when I said I did not know you previous to my trip. He swore eternal celibacy now & all kinds of things. I fancy he rather [envies] my pet, for he knows all the love I have given you dear. he is a perfect gentleman & very nice, ~~but~~ his position as revenue officer is not a very lucrative one, but we have been the best of friends since /80. I have never felt one throb of love for him, pet, merely knew & regarded him as a very sincere friend. We sang & played for them, enchanting them of course. Beau & Regie play the violin pretty well, you see. Grandmamma left today to our regret. I hope she enjoyed her visit, though it was quiet. I wonder when next she will favor us? – I wrote some cards for her & told her no doubt the next I should write would be written in my own little home.....

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I cannot say when she will leave as business keeps her here. Has Miss H. arrived & what do you think of her beauty & voice? – I owe Mrs. Mac two letters but did not write while Grandmamma was here as she kept her au fait of all the news – will soon do so now, tell her & give her my fond love. I went out calling with Gertie this p.m & had a long walk so feel rather tired. Baby is two years old today & the sweetest pet imaginable. Saturday will be the anniversary of our first meeting & the whole scene is vividly imprinted on my memory – just fancy, one year has brought such changes, but another will bring more... We may have a party for our boys this week – if so, it means a very busy time for me. Well pet, the hour is late & I will kiss my love good-night. I expect a long letter tomorrow which whether it brings joy or sadness will be warmly & lovingly welcomed. Pleasant dreams, my own one. with the deep love I feel filling my great warm heart, I still remain Your own loving little Girl.

Aug 14th. My darling's letter of the 6th has not five minutes been eagerly perused & I hasten to respond while my heart is still warm with the fire your

loving words have aroused! – Your letter reassures me, my own one & I thank Heaven you have told me all – that is another matter settled between us, darling, & I hope you now know it does not require a great amount of courage to initiate me in the details of your past life, whatever it may have been. It was not a terrible tale to tell & many every day join the ranks of the society you mention & think they but do right. it was my Catholic sentiments that made me speak as I did & would do again. now that the deed is done, I can say nothing: but would certainly try & prevent it were it in the future – you will ascertain, some way or other, if it could possibly make any difference to us at some distant day & then, I shall rest content. I long to meet you darling &

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am charmed that I have work enough to keep me very busy, that I may not note the flight of time until we meet again, my pet. I fear that Mr. Tachereau's return to civilization will not do him any good. his wild oats are not yet fully sewn [sic] & if he comes in contact with persons he knew but too intimately ere he left, he is done. he does not care for his profession & studied it because his father insisted on his doing so. Why do you say “that never to be forgotten evening” when you allude to our trip to Dunmore? true, it is imprinted on my mind & will always hold a very dear place in memmorey [sic]. I hope to prove my good sense & affection always, when I am truly your's [sic] my pet, & trust your idea will never change. It consoles me greatly to know you do not fear to suffer any disastrous consequences from my love & our union. Your kind, affectionate words have the effect of making me feel very happy in your dear love for my heart is rather sore today, but not through any fault of yours. Papa's business troubles worry me very

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much sometimes & it grieves me very much to see him anxious & not be able to help him in any way: but, I should not mention such to you, my pet, so forgive me. Your horses must be fine & will give you pleasure in driving them. it will take some time to get them in trim for the Governor's visit. the whole turnout will perhaps surprise them & show them how efficient the Force is. As time draws nearer, I feel as if I were going to be very happy. You know not how the faith & trust I have in you have increased of late & in a measure augmented my love. it seems an old story to you now, my pet, but it is very true all the same & gives me pleasure to repeat it anew. I too will be very much occupied when Sept. comes, but in a different way to you

– it is a true “labor of love” pet, so I work with a happy heart. I do not mind the boyish spirit you have retained & hope my companionship will not make you feel any older for a long while yet. a dash of the other spirit is good sometimes & I enjoy it myself now & then. You must see what a complete

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captive you have made of me dear, after the perusal of my letter in answer to yours of the 19th. I am astonished Mrs. Mac said nothing if she knew & am inclined to think she did not – she would scarcely keep silent if she were aware of the awful man I have promised to wed. she praises you up every time she writes to Grandmamma as well as to myself & that pleases me beyond words. It was Mr. Bourget my uncle met, who cannot find a wife to return with him. he does not meet with your success dear, does he? – After we are married, I shall take my letters one by one & you must tell me what you thought of them when you received them & why they sometimes make you smile. there must be no secrets between us then & if you expect me to tell everything, you must do the same. I have a question or two in reserve which will lose nothing by being kept, I fancy. Lex is very busy & Mrs Mac, I am sure, very longely when he is away. I am sure she will be glad to have me near once more, but they will miss me sadly when I am gone from here. Grandmamma will tell you how bad Mamma feels over the prospect of my absence & never alludes to it without tears – so much so, that I avoid the subject as much as possible. One & all keep telling me it will cause my father to age very much – instead of encouraging me, they do their best to make things as black & heartbreaking as they can – it is pleasant for me, pet, is it not, when they know how dearly I have loved my own until now? – The boys have but two weeks left, as they go to college in the beginning of Sept. – it seems but yesterday since they came. The weather has been so unpropitious that it has prevented us from indulging in any of our usual pleasures – picnic’s [sic] & etc – too bad, & my last summer at home too!!... Today is quite cold & puts me in mind of an autumn day – the wind is blowing pretty hard & recalls many a pleasant afternoon spent in

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the society of my darling boy. If I could only see you now & then, my pet, how happy I should be. The time will soon come when I shall see you & none of the dear ones who surround me at present, be near! – The hotel is causing quite a commotion – it was seized the other day, the proprietors failing to pay the rent. it is reported that they have shipped out this morning

– if so, I think it will be a blessing. French Canadians have not the knack of running a first class house & every person is dissatisfied with the manner in which it has been run for this season particularly. They say the “Windsor” Syndicate on “Balmoral” wish to get it & that Hogan of the Hall has, also expressed his desire of having it in charge. I know not how it will end, but hope it will turn out all right in the end. Baby has paid me a couple of visits & caused my letter to assume a very negligent appearance. The blots which disfigure it disgust

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me but time is really too precious to permit me to write it over again, so I trust you will pardon me. I cannot say they are kisses having sent too many for that. Do you hear from Julia now & then & how is Mr. Elmes? has he met the young lady I introduced him to since? I fear his heart is susceptible, far more so than his uncle’s is. Mr. D. intends going to Quebec & Three Rivers shortly & will be absent some time. Louise will miss him, but she will visit some friends in the city for a few days next week & that will pass part of the time quite nicely. Well, my own dear pet, dearly as I love you, we must part for a short time. The mail leaves in an hour or so & I do not wish to miss it, knowing you will be disappointed if my letter fails you on Tuesday next. With sweet kisses by the score & deep warm love for my own darling pet, I remain as ever

Your own dear, loving little Girl –

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