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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste Famille St
Jan 9th 1902

My own darling Boy,

Monday afternoon brought me your dear letters of Nov 23rd, 24th, 25th, the first since those of the 18th & 19th acknowledged several times since their reception. You can well understand how delighted I was to get them, as I crave for them every day & my weeks seem to count now from "the day I got my letters from Sam". I would like them to come in by every mail & still would not get enough of them, I think. It seems strange to read

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your allusion to [Davis'] death as it seems so long ago since it happened. You received the enclosures I sent containing his wife's version of the affair, which was, no doubt correct. My telling you that it might cost Frank a good deal more than you thought may perhaps have frightened you. Since he came we discussed the question & he said before leaving that he fancied five hundred dollars a year would see him through all right – that most of his expenses were paid but board & room & trifling things. Anyway, I will do the best I can for him, since he has commenced.

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Still, all things taken into consideration, it was quite an undertaking to take on my shoulders to see him though three years of study there – it was your usual good heart, my dear. He is, he says economical, but money goes goodness knows where. I spend it & not uselessly, still it dwindles down, down. You cannot imagine how it pleases me to learn that you enjoy my letters, for I assure you they are at times written under great difficulties – it is scolding, threatening, etc all the time, as long as little folks are awake & tongues awagging [sic]. Yes, you are having heat while we are in winter – it is cold but the weather is fine & snow not very deep. I would like to see you so much riding by on your fine horses. I don't wonder people look at you, my darling, you look so well on horseback. I always felt so proud of you then..... The mounted photos are not very good, still they pleased me much. The others came on Monday & I like them exceedingly – every person finds them good, my dear old boy. You are thinner, but look well – in some you resemble the Kaiser but he would have

reason to be even more conceited than he is had he your fine figure & commanding appearance.

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I am charmed that you want to look well & so do I, that is why I did not like to send you the [group], but felt it would please you, so bad & all, it went! Is the mosquito season a long one? one would imagine that so much heat would destroy them early in the summer. [Minn] sent me a package of papers on Monday or rather Tuesday. I have not opened them, but suppose I had better do so, in order to tell you what they are. On the same day a box came from Regina addressed to me. Having paid a nice little sum for it & seeing it was a champagne box I concluded some one was sending

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prairie chicken [or] something of that sort, so after great difficulty I succeeded in opening it to find it contained your papers from the Yukon. I at once closed it up again & put it in safety. I was most beautifully fooled I assure you. Although so recently married, [illegible] goes as a lieut. with the next Contingent – strange that matrimony should have lost its charm so speedily. Your letters which you thought would arrive before Xmas only reached me on the 7th so you see the long delay. Santa Clause came all right, but I am sure had you been here, he would have been much more generous. Space is limited & I cannot litter up my room

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with too many toys. They all were pleased, that is the main thing. Flora unfortunately was told by [Sookie] that there was no real Santa – it spoilt much of her Xmas pleasure. I was angry, but there it was – a child's dream dispelled, one she always took such delight in too! Mrs Randall must be a bigger fool than I took her for. I wonder whose it is! She is now living in Calgary, otherwise Baker might be suspected, for they were very chummy before he went to Africa, I heard. The [Comt.] will feel badly, I fancy, still matrimony is a good, thick cloak. Louise's boy goes to school, thank goodness! for we have a little peace when he is away – mine are fine, when he is out of the way. Yes, I am sure Mamma will accompany me to Africa if we go – she is determined to do so & the change would do her all the good in the world I am sure. I do hope things will soon improve so as to permit of our going as soon as possible. Richard as I said in previous letters is doing better & takes nothing – if he will only persist in his determination & stick to his resolution he would do well. He is clever & not [above] certain things which harm him professionally.

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Torla will write again on Sunday. She has lots to learn, studies well so has not much leisure to write during the week. She is looking well and trying hard to be good. Gertrude also learns well & talks like an old magpie – Harwood is enjoying good health – sings all day. They all speak of you continually & do not forget you, my dear old pet.

Mamma cannot [convert] her capital, as she has little else to live on. The properties are up for sale, but I fear they will find no buyer. Uncle Jack is drinking & making a fool of himself generally. Minnie has been writing home, saying I don't

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know exactly what, but he accused Mamma, Bob & Auguste of doing “dirty work” & said “Mamma wanted to skip out of the country.” She was furious & faced him, but as he had taken liquor, she would not discuss the matter at any length. Minnie's letter was partly or maybe the whole cause of it – she as usual, shows little tact or discretion with her pen & reflection comes after. I suppose her beautiful Alec helps her. They are a mean lot to have any dealings with I assure you & hope you will not forget that when you come back to this part of the world again, my own dear boy.

Poor Mamma has had to do so

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much with her money. The boys are & have been an expense – she had to give so much to John to start him, last spring, then the professions cost lots..... I hope your old “S. H.” men will do well by you & reflect credit on your division. How strange poor Ogilvy should be struck by lightning & then killed almost a month after – war is terrible & what a number of lives are taken & how many hearts are broken by it. I told you I sent all the money sent on Nov. 8th or thereabouts to Percy [sic] Belcher, viz, \$485.00 – I also wrote him. Your appetite must be lighter than it used to be in the days in Macleod – we both had good appetites & enjoyed things then, eh, dear? I am sure you are at times surprised at the number of miles marked by your [odometre] [sic] which you have gone over in a day – you remember in the west, they always seemed to make distances a little more – likely the same happens where you now are. Your gossip re nurses surprises me. They must at times have strange ones in their ranks. Tommies cannot be resisted, I presume & her remark to the major was a happy thought no doubt. As you say, odd doings!

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I now take up your dear short note of Nov. 24th which you write only to inquire about my health. I told Mrs Moon & the Millers of my accident long ago, but did not enter into particulars – I never like to put such things down in writing – I feel

shy about it you see dear – I am much better anyway. Several people thought you were last in the militia list or I should say that the others would be senior - I know better & told those I happened to hear speak of it. Ibbotson I believe, so Frank heard, was insinuating that Cameron had done even better than the Col. in getting the D. S. A. for he had not that.

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I told Frank if Cameron got the D. S. A. he could thank you for mentioning & recommending him, had you done like other Canadian officers, so many of “S. H.” would not be [airing] their honours. Cameron goes back as major, so if you meet, give him a dig or two about it. They do not know what the M. V. A. is out here I fancy & would need a little enlightenment on the subject, it would lessen their ignorance somewhat. Your next of the 24th tells me of your proposed trip north to push your line of posts to [Slandrises] – also mentions the photos which delighted me so much. Your

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cap is immensely becoming & looks fine. I hope Kerr is quite well & entirely recovered in every way from his attack of fever. Also that the Xmas parcel reached you safely & in good condition, my poor old pet – [now], that you had seen how good looking you are, my darling. You will not wonder that I wish you to take good care of yourself, will you dear? Keep up the conceit, dear, it is well placed. So you are god-father by proxy – who is the real one? Can you tell me if Mrs Stepney of Pincher Creek is a daughter of Gen. Kelly-Kenny? Louise says she is – you remember the bright fellow we had in the Force, whose mother is the Hon. Mrs Jarvis? he is a rancher near the Creek now & his wife is they say very nice. I sent our old Marie a photo of the children for Xmas & wrote her as well – she answered & was delighted to get her dear children's picture – says Donnie is fine & has not touched a drop for over two years – that all the old policemen went to see it as soon as they heard she had it, Donnie first – that Sergt. Patteson almost cried when he saw it – etc – she was no doubt pleased – Cummings is still on the Force & [Moore] still in the place I got for him before I left.

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Cowdry is now alone, Mr [Tom] is gone – he is getting very grey & seems to be very lonely – people feel bad for him, poor man. She wrote quite a newsy letter, poor Marie! By the by, your two letters of Dec 3rd & 4th came yesterday, written from Bokfontein. They were both sealed by you, but they have evidently been opened, as all the wax is off except the very faintest trace & a spot of grease where the wax was – it was carefully taken off, I am sure. One was sealed in red, the other looks kind of greenish – I went to a “euchre” on the 7th given by

Mrs. Power, [G. T. R.] people.

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There were ten tables, it was crowded, a small house, people on top of one another almost, no room to move. All ladies of course & some bent on winning the prizes. They would make fine gamblers. They play very earnestly I assure you. The enclosed came from Alice, but I could not send it, no room on the envelope to change address, so had to open it. All at Gerties are well – baby has his first tooth – so I suppose there is general rejoicing. Mr Taylor telephoned Auguste for your address saying he was writing you – have not seen him for quite a while now.

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Lord Strathcona presented each of the ladies who had anything to do with the giving of the guidons with a pin made of the large badges some time last week as a souvenir. They will be more common hereafter. The [Reiffensteins] spent a quiet evening here last night – played whist & I sang – sandwiches, cocoa, cake & ale & how I did wish you were here, dear. I have not been out lately, not feeling exactly up to the mark & having sewing, I have been busy for a few days. I intend going to Vaudreuil for a ~~few~~ day or two next week & will bring Dubbie, as the others are at school & will not miss me, quite as much, as he would. Have not been there since we were there together two years ago, just think of that. It has no attractions for me since my poor dear father & [illegible] lie there at rest – I find it hard to go up, but must as Auntie Angelique is not very well & they are lonely. Well, my own darling, you will find this a long letter. Primrose was married on the 8th I believe. were the little ones awake they would I know load me down with messages to dear Papa, but your heart will tell you, all they would say. Mamma joins in fond love – very many sweet kisses from our three

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[lieuts] of love - with many a fond embrace believe me, as of old,

Your own true, devoted, loving, warmhearted, lonely little wifie,

Maye.

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