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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

[pg 1]

26 Ste. Famille St,
Montreal Sept. 20th 19th

My own darling Boy,

Your dear letter of Aug 6th telling me of your journey to Johannesburg [sic] arrived in due time that is, about the 11th & received as usual a very warm welcome. How nice it is for you, my dear to be so graciously received by the C. [S.] Officer who made you evidently feel quite at home. We out in Canada cannot imagine what it must be to have 265.000 men about the country –

[reverse]

to think that even that large number is not sufficient to subdue these Boers!. The press reports told us of the intended surrender of Steyn & de Wet, but they failed to come to time. They are a determined vile lot & deserve harsh treatment. Really, I do not think they have a greater sympathizer in the world than my beloved brother in law, Richard – so much so, that it has undoubtedly caused a cool feeling & for my part, I cannot help it. He tried to bluff you by saying it was to tease [sic] the boys, but he did not tell the

[/pg 1]

[pg 2]

truth, because he feared to do so. How very proud you must be of the fine reputation left behind of your dearly beloved “Strathcona’s Horse”. I feel elated when I hear all the nice things said of them, so what must it be for you, my dear, when your work made them what they were!!. Their reputation will forever remain what it is as they cannot tarnish it in any way now. It appeared like a grand, bright star for a time, leaving nothing but an unsullied name & a souvenir of their splendid work. In fact, Canadians have done

[reverse]

well. As you see from my other letters I have also enjoyed Mrs. Miller’s hospitality for a little over three weeks. I found the “fedders” here on my arrival – a word from Mrs. White, collector of Customs, enabled Auguste to

get them out for about \$1.80 cts so I did not begrudge that trifle. The fan has been very much admired & is beautiful. I will keep it unharmed to use when we go out together. There were 18 features, in all – four very large ones, two black & white, four natural color, four white & brown tipped, & four white ones. They arrived in good condition & very many thanks for

[/pg 2]

[pg 3]

them all, my dear old boy. As I told you I got \$726.00 from the Bank of Montreal here & will see what became of the balance now that I have returned to the city. Your letters are so interesting that I fear mine must seem very tame indeed, especially when I do not feel as well as I would like to be. I now take up your letter from Modderfontein, penned on the 8th of Aug. I do hope you will find your officers a great comfort & support to you in your work & that you will all get on well together. I see that

[reverse]

General & Mrs. Hildegard have sailed for England – one great thing is, that judging from the positions the families of the officers occupy, they are gentlemen by birth anyway. I was not strong, as you may remember when the Aberdeen's came to Macleod, as it was not long after Gertrude's birth & I was a very long time pulling up, so I did not see Capt. Wilberforce, although I remember the name. One has to be very careful where there are so many thousand tons of dynamite stored & a great amount of caution used. You cannot

[/pg 3]

[pg 4]

imagine how pleased I am to learn you are so well & feel so very strong. I do hope you will escape the fever this time too & that your health will be such that you shall be able to perform your many arduous tasks to your own satisfaction – if so, you will be happy & feel satisfied. I will look up the young lady you mention as being at Mrs. Redpath's & will let you know the results of the search. It would have been folly to have gone out with you & I know full well, you are always right, still I found it

[reverse]

terribly hard to part from you again!. So Fall created a bad impression! does he not know better than to stand with a cigarette in his mouth under the circumstances you mention – I am not surprised at what you say of Critchley – I feared he would soon fall on account of his old failing. I feel sorry for his wife & family & suppose he will find his way home to Canada again. I now turn to yours of Aug 10th from the same place as the last. I paid Holbrook's account in June as you know ere this.

[/pg 4]

[pg 5]

My darling, I am surprised at what you tell me of the druggist at the corner. now, what kind is the right kind? I got the most expensive & the one that does not stain the scalp – the one applied with a brush stains the skin & is apparent to all eyes if not very carefully applied & you cannot put it on yourself, my dear. I will see if he kept a memoranda of the sort he sent the first time I go out.

Friday 20th. I got this far yesterday when Bob, Jessie & two of their little ones came in & put an end to my writing any more. This morning's mail

[reverse]

brought me four of your dear letters as well as two to our Flora – she was a very happy girl & your advice seems to have made an impression on her & Gertrude. When you have a moment, drop that little pet a line, addressed to herself & I do not think a prouder or happier little heart will be in the wide world the day it comes to her. She is very affectionate & fancies "Papa does not love her, because he does not write to me, like he

[/pg 5]

[pg 6]

does to Torla". now some that came today are dated the 8th & one dated the 10th of Aug. came to me when at Moonstone on the 11th & that is the one I commenced to answer yesterday, so I will continue that, reserving those that came today for my Sunday letter to my dear old loving pet. Now, my darling naturally I do wish to be in a home with you & I think you miss a great deal of this life's pleasure

[reverse]

in not having our little ones near you when they are young, sweet & so cute. But as I have often said I leave it to you – you know best what is right & I feel that you love me enough to have me near if all is well. You know my desire to be near you is as keen as ever & time or distance does not diminish the intense love I have for you, my own dear boy – on the contrary, I fear it has increased a thousand fold since the day I first called you husband.

[/pg 6]

[pg 7]

so the future is in your hands & what "you will, I will". Flora will go to an English convent as you wish, but I really find her too young to be left on our way out. she could be brought back when some years older & able to take care of herself. Your seniority does not, you tell me today date from Nov. 15th last, but from March. Well, we must be thankful for small [fams] & your

being so well appreciated & officers so anxious to join your division,
pleases me immensely – they

[reverse]

have found out your worth in a short year in old England & your own
country that you have served for thirty years has scarcely found out your
qualities & if she has, will not show her gratitude in a tangible way. I am
sending you a number of “Star’s” about the President’s death & the visit of
the Duke & Duchess of York. We went to Mrs. Hebden’s on Peel St. &
watched the procession from there in the evening – the crowd was so very
great that I feared bringing the children about

[/pg 7]

[pg 8]

in the evening to view the fireworks & illuminations – we saw some the first
night but not anywhere but Sherbrooke St. – last night I got a cab & drove
all over. While very many of the places were not illuminated on account of
the general mourning for the President, still they were very fine &
everything passed off well. Some honors were conferred. Sir John Boyd is
made K.C.M.G. for Pope C.M.G. besides others. Prefontaine, the mayor
here, refused C.M.G. not considering

[reverse]

it sufficient for the mayor of the city of Montreal. I hope the papers will
reach you safely, so that you can read the whole affair, as it would be too
long to write about. The little ones are well & looking fine. We left Orillia at 8
a.m. on the 16th – Grace & Essie coming to see us off. Changed cars at
Blackwater, & Port Hope – when we boarded the car at the latter place,
found Mrs. [Rieffin] – [Etomi] & her three youngsters on the train – when
they all met there was general rejoicing & a great hugging match – they
were

[/pg 8]

[pg 9]

so very pleased to meet. You know they are our neighbors & warm friends
of the childrens. We have had very disagreeable cold weather during the
visit of the Duke & a lot of rain which marred many things – it has been
more like November. There were two big dinners at Strathcona’s but I was
not asked. I am out of all this here, but I do not mind it as long as I go when
near you, my pet. Frank speaks of going to Philadelphia for the 1st of Oct.
He will have to study for three years

[reverse]

even the year he was there before not counting for anything. Antoine
studies & passes his finals again here next spring, so will be able to

accompany us, if there is a chance for him in Africa. I could go on forever I think, but as I want to catch the steamer, will have to close. All were well in Moonstone & Orillia when we left. We spent a night at Hugh's on our way in & I sang a lot of Scotch songs for him, which he seemed to enjoy. By the by, I got the song "Strathcona's Horse" composed

[/pg 9]

[pg 10]

by Kyle "on the battlefield & friends "Yours truly,.... Kyle" written on the corner – if he sent it himself, I would like to be able to write him a few words of thanks & would much like to know where he is, if you could tell me. Also on the wrapper of the feathers or rather fan Bertram wrote "Contains fully prepaid letter" – now, there was no letter inclosed [sic] – it was opened at the Custom House but I do not think they found a letter. I have inquired [reverse]

but found none. Well, my dear pet, I must end. I do hope you will keep well & feel as strong as you now are for a long time to come. Heaven protect & bless you, my darling. Mamma & all send much love. The little ones send kisses to their dear old Papa. With very many fond embraces, believe me, Your own true, devoted, loving

lonely little wifie,

Maye.

[/pg 10]

[pg 11]

I find in reading over my letter that there are many repetitions, but Gertrude & Flora were writing at the same time I had to spell a word every second or so. I trust you will pardon me, but fear I shall lose my reputation as a good letter writer if not more careful in future. God bless you, my darling.

[/pg 11]