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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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508 St. Urbain St.,
Montreal.
[February 12, 1899]

My own darling Sam,

Your dear letter of Oct 16th written two days after the fire & yours of Dec 12th both came at the same time, viz. 27th of January. It seems so long since I wrote & since I heard from you, that your letters are like a ray of sunshine shed on my life from time to time. I wondered why you had not written after the fire, but you see the delay there is. I hope you have my letters ere now, for it makes me ill to think that you may be without news all this time. I

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would write you a daily budget, were the thing possible, but the little ones are very troublesome sometimes & will not give me one moment for correspondence. You must have had a hard fight with the fire & I trust your fire brigade is in working order now. I hear there is a big fire going on here today, but do not know where – it is very cold, & I feel sorry for the poor people who may be affected by it. Being Sunday, no one so far has come in, so cannot give particulars. I am delighted to know you are so comfortable, but fear you may feel less inclined than ever to return to the little wifie & birdies who so anxiously await your return. Being well housed, warm & good food in plenty you will miss us less

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there is no doubt – however, I suppose you have in a measure become accustomed to our absence. It is pleasant that the officers are all such nice fellows, as life would be unbearable in that distant country where you have to depend on each other so much for entertainment, if you did not all get on well together. The papers say there is a great deal of sickness up there. I pray God you will escape any serious illness – you cannot imagine how much that thought worries me at times. We see nothing more in the press concerning the corruption supposed to exist, but no doubt the session

which they say commences on the 7th of March, will see a lot of it exposed for the benefit of the country at large. You continue

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your letter on the 19th & say the boat got down all right, but evidently had no mail for you dear. What a lot of abuse the Police got about the handling of the mails & I am glad a civilian has been appointed for they will have that much less to abuse the Corps for. People are so unreasonable at times & always said a bribe was necessary to get mail from the N.W.M.P. in charge, particularly in Dawson. It was a good thing Judge Dugas saw Auguste, as you might still be in doubt as to our arrival. Oh! my darling you do not long for a sight of me more than I do for you – it seems so long since you kissed me good-bye & God only knows when our lips will meet in a tender embrace again!

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I look back to the long year that has elapsed since we parted & think of all that I have gone through since all the changes, heartaches & trials that I have had to bear without your dear voice near to comfort me. Well! God bless you, my own true love & may He in His mercy see fit to unite us once more at no very distant day is my earnest prayer! How long do you really think you will be absent? You will, I feel sure leave a good name behind you when you see fit to return, which I hope will be in another year at most. When you do come, try & remain with us? life seems so incomplete when one half of you is away & one has tasted the happiness of married life – however, I must not

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tempt you, although I know full well no matter how soft the voice of the temptress, or how deep her love, nothing will make you swerve from the path of duty or way you have decided to follow. I suppose, though it pains me to the hearts core to be parted from you, that the knowledge of that fact, only increases the fond love I bear you & makes me prouder of being the wife of such a man!!..

So you did not go to Mrs. Starnes' dinner – you must not deprive yourself too much, for you will be bashful in ladies' society when you come back to me. It is nice for you to have such a fine lot of men – they are fond of you (they always are) & will

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endeavor all the more to give you every satisfaction possible. You were wise to get carpet & easy chairs & I hope when indulging in a pipe your

thoughts at times wend their way to us so far from you, but who think of you night & day I may safely say. Torla is well, although not very fat. I must get them another bottle of Scotts Emulsion, it seems to keep them in such good health. Gertrude & Dubbie are well – the former is not as plump as she was – the winter has not been a nice one – having very little snow, it has been extremely cold & they have not been out half as much as they should. the house is extremely cold, 42 being about the usual temperature of my bedroom –

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it is the coldest room in the house but I prefer having Gertrude & Flora in a warmer apartment, as they are so apt to uncover themselves at night. Baby I can always succeed in keeping him well covered, as I awaken every little while. I must say I miss you terribly, as I cannot get warm myself & am compelled to have my big fur coat on the bed at night to try & sleep comfortably – there is a furnace in the house, hot water, but the dwelling is an old one & needs a great deal of repair. Gertie would not spend another winter here if they had it rent free – it is a nice place for summer, but is fearful in winter. I have not been weighed lately, but am thinner I think than when I left Macleod, at which time

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time I weighed 97 lbs. Alice was two & a half lbs more than I ~~did~~ was so you see her trip did her good. I told Mamma you wanted to thank her for making me so nice & she was very much amused at it. I told you before that I had no official envelopes & the “Star” is so voluminous even the daily paper, that an official envelope would not hold it all. Mr. White might refuse to let me have official envelopes. I hope you received all my letters containing the news of my correspondence with him etc. You know he retained or disposed of the sum of \$401.20 cts. most of your pay for July & Aug. I wrote & asked him if he would kindly let me know in what way he had disposed of the money, thinking he might

[reverse]

have sent some to Hicks & Sons & I did not wish to pay them twice, but he never acknowledged the letter in any way. I sent you their account in Oct when it came but heard nothing from you concerning it. On the 14th of Jan, they sent the enclosed which I forward to you. I have written explaining the course of the delay in sending remittance & must endeavor to forward some money soon. You see in a few days, I have the “Federal Life” to pay, the premium this year being \$150,40 cts. so I cannot waste the cash you allow me in any way. It has increased some \$4,50 since last year – why I

cannot say. I paid the "Great West" on the 17th of Jan, \$33,45 cts.

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these premiums keep me on the qui vive all the time.

Feb. 13th. This morning brought me a lovely surprise in the shape of six letters from you, my own darling, one to Flora containing the \$5.00 bill & one to Richard also. I shall answer all in due time & continue the ones I commenced to respond to yesterday – my hands are so cold I can scarcely hold my pen so I hope you will pardon the penmanship, if not up to the standard. I write fairly often & such long letters but you do not acknowledge any in those that came today – it is indeed very strange if they do not reach you!. Alice has been quite ill – the troubles of matrimony commenced & indeed badly for her, poor little girl!

[reverse]

She had a mishap in Dec & was very ill; having no servant, they can get none but Chinese; it was very hard – no mother or sisters near to come to her aid! I do not think they will remain in Mexico; will likely move to Colorado in April. The other members of the family are quite well, thank God! Auguste's wife expects to be a happy little mother in July & is looking forward to the event with the greatest pleasure imaginable. I hope all will go well with her, poor little woman. I am getting better, but will be under the Drs. care for a while yet. As for being frisky I have not been asked to any entertainment worth mentioning but next year if all goes well, I will try & be fashionable. society is very

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is very queer! With health, will come youth I suppose & when we meet again I shall be as young as I ever was, no doubt. Your dear letter of Dec 12th now lies open before me, awaiting an answer. Yes, I wrote Mr. Herchmer & Mr. White after my arrival here thanking them for kindness & ~~eortesy~~ courtesy extended to me since your departure. I heard nothing about paying for the car; far less room would have done, but they placed the whole car at my disposal although I told them I would not need it all. You do not say you received any of my letters at all – you must not forget to mention them when you do. Folks live well, even so far from civilization. Turkeys are a luxury though & no mistake. [Adile de Beaujeu] is engaged

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to Mr. [Domoille's] brother, but I have not seen her since I came – she is [Rene] second sister. You know George left his wife & is in Regina, in the Police again. Foolish fellow! he flirted with the sister of an old flame, who

made a fool of him, had words with his wife, then left unknown to his friends. I as you know have been drawing \$150.00 per month. this Jan. pay is \$153.08 I do not know the cause of the increase – it all goes except \$3.00 towards “Federal Life” as I said yesterday. I sent Alice’s letter on at once & she must have received it some time ago. From your saying “You do not know what Elmes means by writing me in that way” you must have had one of my letters anyway – the mail that was lost

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must have carried an answer to my first letter from here which will now never reach me. It is too bad, for we are in the dark all the time. Elmes has as you may know been here since Dec 20th – he & Mr. Harwood came to turn over the books to the C.P.R. He went to Ottawa for Xmas & his mother came down on a visit to Oliver Smith to be near him. He kept fairly straight for a time, but commenced a big spree about a fortnight ago with Barnhardt & others who used to be in Macleod. Mr. Harwood did everything possible to keep him from it, for his mother's sake as well as for his own. a week ago Friday Mamma gave an evening for Mr. Harwood & himself but he was not a credit to me. he had been drinking for days, was

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feeling miserable & not himself. I have not seen anything of either of them since. Elmes & Mr. Harwood took Mamma, ~~John~~ Mabel, Gertie & myself to hear “The 3 Dragons,” a new opera by de Koven first played here by the Broadway Opera Co. – scenery, costumes & actors were splendid – we enjoyed it immensely. On the 3rd Harold Jarvis sang at a concert here. Elmes asked us & I got tickets for Mamma, Mabel & John too – we enjoyed his singing – he has a magnificent tenor voice, but all his songs did not show it off to advantage. it was an Irish affair & his “Come back to Erin” was grand – in response to a double encore he sang “Afton Water” & how I did wish you were near & how it brought back our old parlor in Macleod,

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those who sat around, Jarvis (Arthur) & last but not least, you my old darling seated in the big arm chair, which, alas! will never be viewed again! for we never will be just the same people, in the same room, surrounded by the same things never, never again!. How hard it is for us all, dear? After the concert Elmes went for him & introduced us to him – he is a handsome man, sings beautifully, is highly polished but I do not think he has the good, generous heart that beats in his brothers (Inspr. Jarvis’) breast. He sings again on Thursday at St. Georges, S.S. Club concert, but I do not expect to

go. my voice has improved but I do not sing much. Gertie has no girl, so I have a lot to do – their circumstances are improving, but they have to economize

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to try & make ends meet, so I have to do my share, although I give \$40.00 per month. that is what keeps us all going, for Richard so far has not commenced to reap the benefit of his change of life. he now has work, but no money comes in: at least, none that I am aware of. he just manages to pay rent & coal, that is all. I told you in my other letters of his drinking so very hard – he would have gone crazy sure, as his brain was what felt the liquor most – he has kept his pledge well so far & will, I trust continue to do so. I am delighted to know Miss Scott is better although I did not know what ailed her until your last came today. I do not think Auguste will buy the old home back – it has already commenced to go to ruins. the people who

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inhabit it are Constant's son in law & wife – they are great cowards & are afraid to live in it, so I fancy they will not remain very long. Now, for a little business. Alec came to Toronto on the 3rd of January & succeeded in selling "The Empire" for the sum of \$48.500 or 800 I know not exactly, retaining the ¼ interest. Jim Clarke was one of the principal ones – but you know Alec of old & between all the groans & sighs he gives when relating anything he is very hard to follow. He said he had or was writing, but I hope Jim Clarke has already done so. Alec was in Hospital almost all the time of his stay in Toronto, suffering from an abscess or something similar above his left eye. The Drs. here thought it serious, but after a

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minute examination the other day, Gardner, eye & ear specialist decided to await developments in order to see if an operation might be avoided. On Thursday morning last, Alec, Bob McGillis & Auguste went to New York, Albany & Lake George to try & wind up the affairs of the estate. The U.S. lawyers are grabbing everything & the family are determined to finish & divide what is left. They have not yet returned to my knowledge & I sincerely hope they will succeed in their mission – it is time for poor Mamma to enjoy what she will have. the boys professions are very costly & it is hard for her to make the two ends meet. I am going to live with her in May – when Mabel goes

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goes out, she is alone & if anything happened her we would never forgive

ourselves. The board money will enable her to keep a servant & I do not think the little ones will be too troublesome, as they are all fond of children. She is going to move but I do not know where, as she has not chosen a house yet. she seems delighted at the prospect of having me living with her again & as the Huberts give up housekeeping in May, [Rene] & Auguste will board with Richard so will make up for our departure. Mrs. & Miss Hubert, going to reside with Marie Louise, Mrs. Rolland. The youngest Gabrielle, is to marry Robbie Taschereau, Judge Henri T.s son in April, a young lawyer who seems to be clever. John & Mabel will continue living with mamma as long as

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there are no babies, & there is no sign of such a thing so far. Poor Mamma gets very lonely sometimes & said the other day – “Very soon I shall forget I ever had any children at all; they are all leaving me one by one” – it is very sad to rear so many little ones & be left almost alone in the nest, at life’s twilight, when they could be so much comfort. I think she will enjoy having ours with her – they certainly brighten up a house. Well, my darling, I shall close & send this today, & will write again at once – this will be something to cheer you when it comes – in the meantime God bless you. The little ones join in warmest love to you, my dearest – write soon to your own true, devoted, warmhearted

loving wifie

Maye.

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