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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste Famille St
March 9th 1902

My own darling boy,

You will perhaps remember that today is the anniversary of your homecoming just one year ago – how eagerly the little ones looked for us, dear, as well as other members of the family! - poor little things, they recalled every incident when I mentioned it this morning. The weather is not as cold, but it is storming, snowing hard. We have been to church so now I come to you, my darling. I will now take up your dear letter of the 28th, which is the first I have to

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answer today. I suppose Krugersdorp is rather a nice sized town & would not be a bad place to reside in. It is surprising to me that you get my letters as regularly as you do as they are sent on from one place to another. Is there a Lieut. Jarvis in [Tootefontein], as that seems to be the name. Is he any relation to those here, if so? I was sorry I did not see Lieut. Scarth as he passed through - true I do not know him even by sight, still I would have liked to meet him, as he was going out. He made a mistake re Starnes as later news from me will have told you.

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Starnes not only got back into the N.W.M.P. but is really the one in Command in Dawson. Mrs. Davis told me “how much they were all disappointed in Zach Wood, as he has no individuality at all, that Starnes was first” - so you see Mr. Scarth made a mistake as well as in the elections. The Govt. is stronger than ever, had a majority in the Senate for the first time, I believe, or for the first time in many years. You must be feeling very fit, for you certainly cover a large track of country daily. Your horses still keep O. K I trust. The [resummit] scandal was even worse than people thought – it is too bad, still one must look for such things, even among English, I suppose. You must have enjoyed your lunch in Pretoria having tomatoes, sliced cucumbers etc, you are so fond of them, poor dear. Indeed, I am sure they were pleased to see you again – are you still in Kruger's when there? it seems to be a pretty house. Yes, Flora felt very keenly having the happy dream dispelled that Santa Clause was a myth – she actually shed tears over it. I really & truly find

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the [casts] in Dubbie's eye improving you may not believe me, but I mean it all the same. You have not as yet told me the names & places occupied by the officers in the big picture sent me taken before the Residency I fancy it is called. Do not imagine the girl is anything compared to our Marie for she is not – she is quick tempered & not of a very sweet disposition, still, is rather smart & is one that does not expect Mamma to be in the kitchen all the time – in that way, Mamma has some comfort & she is clean & tidy. I am very much better, all the congestion I have been suffering

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from for years has gone – it was made worse by the fall in the autumn & everything displaced; but I am feeling stronger & the massage is causing the circulation to be all right – in fact, better than for years. I must say Dr. Macd. has taken a great deal of trouble with me & I feel deeply grateful. I hurt myself on my way home & did not feel it for a day or so, so I was all right when travelling with the children. Oh! dear, so you hope I will wait until “the war admits of my coming home to see my old chum”! - well, I will wait, but with the greatest impatience I assure you.

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I do hope Cameron will have enough worry to wish he was serving under you more than once. Mr. Dickey told me “Evans had the devil of a time in Halifax!” The papers hushed it up, but I thought myself from the few reports, that such was the case. I did not know Mr. Sanders had so many brothers, did you succeed in getting the one from Durham into the S.A.C.? I do not wish you to bother too much, about Regie – he changes his mind so often you see. I will now turn to your next dated the 30th. It is from Pretoria too & on it you tell me of the terrible havoc the mosquitoes made of your face – it is too bad, my pet, & I hope you managed to find something to relieve the itching & the lumps to disappear. Do not bother about a house, dear as I told you in my last & we will remain here another year or so, if you think the country would be more habitable then. When you see fit to bring us, tell us, so do not let the house question trouble you any more. Better for us to remain here & endeavor to save a little money, if possible. I would not think of going out & paying all our expenses, I can tell you, it is too costly a trip.

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When was Sergt. Pearson one of your scouts? was it in Macleod or in the Yukon? he evidently finds the place to his taste when he married a Dutch girl. So you saw “the lady of the woods”! - did she seem shy at all? oh! not at all I suppose. There is not harm in that. I subscribed to the “Globe” for you as soon as your letter came, so you can be on the lookout for it – you will have it long ere this reaches you, if all is well. The agent here is a nice, obliging man. “The

Military Gazette” have sent the bill so you are getting that too. Postage is still very high, double the cost of the papers or more.

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I was weighed the other day with my winter clothes, but not my fur coat but a cloth one & weighed just 104lbs. One can take seven or eight off that anyway, so you see dear, I am not yet fit to be “Britannia” - I took such good care of you, after we married that your weight was rather heavy – you have me not now, you see, to look after you, my dear. I do hope you have your parcel pudding etc ere this – if not, write, the boxes or cases to the number of fifty (50) or more must have reached Capetown long ago, as they went direct in a steamer sent by the Govt. with hay & supplies of some kind early in Nov.

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Why did you not send Dixon's letter. I would have destroyed it. There has been a lot of talk re Mrs. Cole & Greenshields, started I hear by Lt. Col. Cooke after his difficulty with Lt. Col. Cole in connection with the Valley field [riots] – I never got to the bottom of it – while I am not alone wishing to know ins & outs I would not ask any one but you, so I am ignorant of the affair – whatever it is. I do not believe anything against Mrs. Cole – she seems a nice little woman, but I know there has been much gossip & Mrs. Col. Bond told me “Mrs. Cooke was not allowed to join the Soldiers Wives League because Mrs. Cole was in it”. I do not know if I mentioned that Mrs. Allen was distinguishing herself in the same way as her husband – fighting with all the officers of the League in question in Toronto – she wrote a very disagreeable letter, mentioned the Montreal branch & said “if they did so much it was because the men who went from there were of a much inferior class to those who went from Toronto – that they were in much reduced circumstances etc.” in fact, all the delegates [sic] were indignant – a note was passed & she was requested to send in her resignation – nice, is it not? All this happened on the 26th. of Feb, when the Annual meeting took place at

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Rideau Hall. She must be a very charming woman! - have you met her? They really do a great deal of good here, I assure you. Your next dear letter of the 31st from the same place is next in order. I hope you still continue in good health & that the rainy season is almost over. You must find it somewhat difficult to get all the orders to work into one another.

You see my dear, I write you twice a week regularly – sometimes I may write oftener, but I seldom do – you may depend on two though without fail.

Gertrude's letter was not bad – they have a great

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idea of composition, have they not? Torla wrote every word of this one herself - she feels rather shy about sending it, not finding it well written, but I said it would please you. The reason she says she is up to my mouth is because I told her you feared she would be short & so she measured & that is the result. She is tall for her age & her limbs hard as nails & full. she is a stylish child & hold herself well. No! I differ from you & do not think Strathcona is at the bottom of Mrs. Ross' kindness to me. I think her old friendship for you & her husband's kindness are the cause of it.

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We have not been out much since Lent. I took Mamma to a concert given by the pupils of the Nazareth Asylum of the blind – they are marvels, I assure you. Two of the boys have lovely voices & play the piano beautifully. I think Mamma would feel very bad if I took a furnished house here - naturally, she would not need this large one if I did so, & I cannot do so now – I must stay by her anyway, so she rented this one for another year, to repeat the same old story again. Mr. Harland insisted on the [Insp] speaking of him to me. I did what I could – have heard nothing of him lately, so he may have an occupation of some kind now.

I will send something to the little Eric Steele in Dawson later on – letters only go up at present. You had letters from them some time ago, had you not? We, Mrs. D. & myself have struck up a correspondence in some way, all due to their ardent admiration & friendship for my dear old boy, my dear. You say “if you had seen my” turn the page & [learn not]--- what? I did not think the S. African mosquitoes would be so much more indiscreet than our Canadian ones! “seen my with mosquito bites”! what with the natives running about

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about in such a state of dishabille constantly, I fancied they would be quite accustomed to it. You are getting [worse] than ever & I did enjoy that sentence & I fancy I see the merry twinkle in your eyes as you peruse this & say “I did not think Maye was such a goose”! I know what you mean, I think.

That was a splendid capture of Col. Charlie Ross' published in last night's Star – you can fancy how pleased we are & a Canadian did it. I see he is a Col. or Lt. Col. I suppose – he is getting on well, is he not? The Imperial army

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officers will see the Canadians have their eyes open & their wits about them, will they not? I have written Col. Cruikshank thanking him for the books he sent you & which I am having nicely [bound] – I also wrote Miss Janet Carnochan, one of the secretaries of “Lundy's Lane Historical Society” for her kind offer in wishing to send all the works published by them free of charge, to you. I have already purchased almost five dollars (\$5.00) worth, but some of them, not being

military, I will keep until we meet, sending you part of them in the bound book. They are all small pamphlets you see & would get lost.

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Really, if my correspondence increases, I believe I shall require a typewriter myself. I do a great deal of writing I assure you & should develop into a decent kind of letter writer after a while. Mr. Palmer, who is dep. post master here brought or sent me one of yours this a.m. enclosed in an official envelope. It is dated Feb 2nd. leaving Pretoria on that date. Being Sunday (& there never is a mail delivery on that day) I cannot imagine why it was brought. Perhaps it came in the last mail & was mislaid as the last left Pretoria on Feb 1st. - I will find out anyway. You mention the trouble you have with the second in Comd. - who is he? This letter is so long, that you will, I fear be tempted to put it aside to take up at your leisure, my dear boy & I cannot wonder at it. All the little ones are in good health – you will be happy to know – Gertrude & Torla have gone to Gertie's for the afternoon. Tootsie's doll is to be Christened this p.m. & it is a very important event, great preparations have been made for it. Well, my dear old darling, I will not weary you any longer. All join in much love & many sweet kisses to dear old Papa. God bless & protect you, my pet. I could write for hours yet, but reserve your last for another day. With a heart brimming over with love, getting more ardent

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every day, I fear, believe me

Your own true, devoted, warm-hearted little wifie,

Maye.

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