

2008.1.1.1.1.127

Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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508 St. Urbain St.
April 23rd 99

My own darling Boy,

You will I fear think me awfully indifferent for not writing as you asked me to, once a week, but try as I will, I cannot always do it. The duties I have to perform & my little ones, prevent me during the day & some person comes in almost every evening – when it is Auguste his wife usually accompanies him so that I must be on hand too. I know you will forgive me. Your dear letters of Feb 15th 23rd, 27th Mar 3 & 6th all came at the same time as I told you in my last that I was just closing. Yours all seem to reach me, more than can be said about mine, however I am pleased to know

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some of mine have come into your dear hands. You are now aware that it is not my indifference that caused the silence – my regard for you has not changed in the least, so there must still be the same warm feeling & I must still “have some regard for you left.” – You know it now, my pet; were it otherwise my life would not be the [blank] that it is & the feeling that the one I love best is thousands of miles from me, would now always be like an iron band around my heart. God bless you, dear & if your love is as true & warm as mine, it will stand the test of time & absence without the slightest tremor. As I acknowledged in the last the photo of wedding group arrived in good condition as well as the other views but you forgot to mention what the majority of the latter were. whether

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Skagway or Dawson. The papers also arrived safely. Mr. [Haldane] sent me word some time ago he would take up things for me to you – he has now changed his mind & is not going to Dawson, so that I shall have to send by mail, I suppose. The parcel sent at Xmas has now reached you, so it is not very encouraging to trust books & photo's to that source. As for the fine, thick underwear you must be sure & let me know positively if you want it, & I may find another opportunity. I am delighted that your English goods

proved satisfactory [Karki] jacket pantaloons etc. You must also tell me sure if you need the new scarlet serge – if I can afford it, I will send some cash to Hicks next month & will then order the serge. The wedding party made quite a nice lot of good looking people, far ahead of what one would expect so far from

[reverse]

civilization – why did you hide your face? but your dear noble shaped head is easily seen, my pet. You must have enjoyed the good things provided, but fortunately your little wife was not there, so you could have somebody else's wife near you. I asked Mr. White for official envelopes & he sent me small ones, so that I cannot use them to send the papers. I sent you a week's number & hope they will reach you safely. I will get another supply tomorrow & send them also. Auguste wrote for "Hansard" for you, so you are sure to get a copy if not more. You are now aware that I paid "The Federal Life" & extra premium \$150.00 in all in March or rather a day or two after it was due in Feb. & that the "Great West" is paid too up to date, as well as [I.O.F.s.] it keeps me pretty busy thinking of all this, I assure you & the months seem to fly so fast, in that way.

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Your next dear letter is dated Feb 23rd & awaits an answer. You will see by papers what the press says of the Yukon officials – but not of the present administration that is one comfort. It is good to learn that any accusation against the Force is not true or proved, even before you went up. I hear Mr. Ogilvie's son has reached Ottawa & is expected here shortly – the boys are on the lookout for him. No doubt the young man came down with the report re Investigation & the truth will soon be known now. They demand another investigation in Parliament as you will see by the papers. The days are longer than we supposed & it is not such a terrible place after all. Yes, dear your face is older looking but you will find, the same change in me no doubt, time is not always kind. I would willingly go up to be near you if you would only let me, but my dear mother is delighted to have me near her. Every one says she is brighter since I came.

[reverse]

You see dear, I can sympathize with her & understand all her troubles & the deep grief she feels at times; when the cup of sorrow overflows & she finds relief in tears, sympathy is very sweet especially when you know strong ties of affection linked us all so firmly together. I have written Hicks asking for N.W. Rebellion medal ribbon & wrote [Vir] also re the same subject. The latter says he has written you all about medals etc. Mrs. D. W. Davis was

no doubt much surprised at my letter, but I did not know what to do & wrote fearing some person might be tampering with your mails & she might get hers all right. You must let me know if she receives the letter – as I told you, I also wrote Mr. Jarvis for the same reason. Your dear letter written on the 3rd of Mar, conveyed the good news that you had at least received some of mine. You are now convinced, my darling, that I have

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written, although not as regularly as I might have done. the knowledge that my letters might fall into other hands than yours discouraged me exceedingly & I made up in length the scarcity of letters. still several of mine are missing for you seem to have none of my Dec letters or even the N. Year's one for I am almost positive I wrote that day too. Certainly the N.W.M.P. in the Yukon are displaying the same efficiency, courage & energy as they displayed in the N. West & will maintain the good name of the Force to the end. They must have received a right warm welcome when the men arrived with the large mail on the 1st. as you know Flora & Gertie's eldest youngsters have been home all winter – they enjoyed good health & are looking well. You will be pleased to know they have all been vaccinated, & it proved a great success. Flora's took well this time & they

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are now almost well. owing to their good health, our little one's did not suffer very much. Mr. Cowdry has been exceedingly kind & considerate, my dear so do not think otherwise. I sent him another \$51.00 on the 27th of Mar as I told you & have his receipt for the same. Mr. McKenzie acknowledged the receipt of \$100.00 on Macfarland note long ago. You see the lost letters contained all this news & I hope they will yet reach you. I have not yet called on Mary [Hebden] – her children had whooping cough or something of that sort & prevented my going – they are now well & she called about a fortnight ago. I have however not as yet returned it. I do not want to neglect my dress or appearance but it is difficult to keep up with the style & fashion, I assure you & it takes money. I was having a nice tweed dress made for Easter & it

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being cold, the dressmaker had not quite completed it, thinking I would not need it. On Easter Sunday the shop was burnt to the ground & as she had no Insurance I have lost the whole thing. I regret it very much, as it was an exceedingly pretty gown & fit me beautifully. Of course, I have not been able to get another just yet, but will do so next month, I think. The house

Gertie lived in looks quite nice, of brick in the upper part of St. Urbain – my mother's was just a little below the house hill & is a very fine house, had it only been nearer Sherbrooke; however we are all moving to the Ste.

Famille St. – I go to live with Mamma on May 1st & my new address will be 26 St. Famille St. Gertie's will be 60 St. Famille St., so you see we are pretty close – the houses are

[reverse]

above Sherbrooke & we have lovely air from the mt. Mamma's house has a fine large yard & a beautiful wide verandah & I think we shall be very comfortable. She is very anxious that I should go to her & the board will be a great help. it is a nice street & locality & no one need be ashamed to call on us I can assure you, although many so called society people have not as good a house as my mother is now leaving. The lower part of St. Urbain, below Ontario is not as nice as it might be; at least, it had a hard name in the old days. The upper part has always been nice & has beautiful trees. Elmes has gone to Ottawa for a few days & leaves tomorrow for Winnipeg. I do not know what his plans are, but he will try & get construction work, if they go on building

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in the Kootenay country. Alec went to Ft. Steele on the 1st of April his wife writes me, but I do not know what the prospects are – she says if “The Empire” is a failure, Alec will have to go to the Yukon & she will come East. Of course, we are separated my darling, & I feel it terribly, still you have more chance of distinguishing yourself where you are, so I must bear it without complaining for your sake, my own one. Needless for me to mention Miss Dugas death, I forgot it in my other letters & her father has heard of it long ago. It is very sad on his account, but entre nous she was very fast & although only twenty one I believe had distinguished herself somewhat. I am charmed to know your throat is improving – the climate as well as not smoking may have something to do with it. Alice is to spend May in St. Louis & will come on here in June for the summer – her intentions

[reverse]

so far are these, but should Fred perchance get work in a more suitable place than he is now, she might not come. Alec behaved much better the last time he came down, not drinking so much – his sore eye gave him a fright & he has to be more careful – he sold the cattle & Cowdry sent me a statement after I asked for it, but there still remains a debt. I gave you all particulars in previous letters. Figures & all were as I had them. I have kept

most of my business to myself, Auguste knows a little of it but you know the reason why I did not trust Richard – he has turned over a new leaf & is getting on nicely now – he is however in trouble again. The Star's will give you full particulars although I must tell you he is in the right – the bar & all sympathies are for him. St. Pierre who accuses him of forgery put the name of his firm above L. J. R. Hubert on a paper that was to be filed in court.

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after Richard had written it all out, St. Pierre who was counsel, wrote the name of his firm over Richards without the knowledge of the latter, as if his ~~were~~ firm were lawyers as well as Richard in the case, while in reality the latter was the only one. When it was pointed out to Richard by one of the employees of the Court of Appeals, he immediately ran his pen through the names of St. Pierre, Pelissier & Wilson, leaving only his own name as he had a perfect right to do. The man, St. Pierre, the well known criminal lawyer is a knave, well known by every one as such & being done out of part of his fees as he thinks, had Richard arrested for forgery. The trial is now going on, & the whole affair is in his favor. He has two smart lawyers defending him & the court room is crowded with people who sympathize with Richard – of course, the publicity

[reverse]

given the affair by the press at first, might do him harm, but for people who follow the affair he will be all right, I have no doubt. Poor Gertie, she grieves over it all. I had to do another thing this week, entre nous, which somewhat runs me a little short. Last year when Gertie's little ones were ill with scarlet fever & Richard had not much work, she was compelled to pawn some valuable jewellery [sic] for a mere trifle – jewels worth about \$300.00 for \$25 or \$30.00. Richard could not redeem or pay the interest on them, the pawnbroker, a nice man died & the whole business was to be wound up. She told me of her trouble with tears in her eyes, saying if they went she would have nothing to leave her little girls. I said I would do what I could, went to Mamma & there taking up "The Star" saw the sale

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had commenced the day previous. We rushed to the auction rooms, then to the pawn office & were fortunate in getting them, they were to be put up in a few moments. I paid \$41.00 Mamma \$19.00 \$60.00 in all. Mamma has them in charge, so you see what unforeseen [sic] things occur. Gertie says "I am her good fairy" – these things are nice to do I suppose, but it sometimes inconveniences one a little. We have commenced packing; Gertie has

taken a lower tenement & Auguste Hubert will board with them. Gabrielle Hubert is to be married on Tuesday to Robbie Taschereau. I gave her six cups & saucers, very pretty they are. she got a lot of beautiful presents although they are having no wedding. I will endeavor to find out if Ogilvie intends resigning. So Faith Fenton is not at all clever etc! why judging from her writings one would think the contrary. I begin

[reverse]

to think she has tried her wiles on you, but pray do not forget the true little wifie who awaits your coming so longingly, so lovingly!! Mr. [Haldane] may have been exaggerating when he mentioned about the money, as he told several people about it. I have had no operation as yet & have put it off until the autumn because Gertie had no girl, the children had to be vaccinated & the moving – besides I am not yet strong enough I fancy & as you say do not wish to run any risks. Your next of March 6th is now before me. You have indeed beaten the record in many ways – it seems strange to hear you say you got an account of Auguste's wedding when his little wife is looking forward to July with some anxiety – his wedding seems so far away now. Did you ever G get Alice's wedding cake. I mailed it & a long letter

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letter on the same date some time in Oct towards the third week, if my memory is not at fault. The children are found nice, especially by their own relatives. The boys are fond of them all. Frank is particularly fond of Gertrude in fact, they all love them dearly. You will see how much like you they are my darling. You will see Walsh's denial in the papers, but Sir Charles Tupper & Sir Hibbert Tupper are not going to let it rest I assure you. Who is now police Dr. in Dawson. Dr. Bonner went in first, did he not, then Wills? Regie seems to be getting on all right now – he has built a nice little house & is comfortable. He writes home quite often. The children will I hope be all right in the city. It is very hard for Mamma to go to the country on account of the boys. Uncle Jack is far from well & I fear, unless there is a change he will not

[reverse]

he will not last very much longer – he is very thin, has no more of the old [win] in him & seems to take interest in nothing – his wife leads him a jig I hear & accuses him of going to see “his black cat” as they call her whether he does or not. the consequence is a very disagreeable home that has not many attractions for him. Galbraith or Mr. G. as I should call him was very kind to help Lex re “Empire.” I hope all will go well in connection with the mine as so much depends on it. I have not written Miss Esther Miller for

sometime, but will do so when settled. I fear she wants to flatter you, my boy when she speaks favorably of my letters. I now turn to your dear letter of Mar 12th – fortunately my darling the ink you use is good, for it had been wet but apart from the envelope, had received no damage – it is so nice to hear

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yourself called “the dearest, sweetest little woman in the world” & I hope time will not change your sentiments dear. It affords me so much pleasure to know you are in good health & feel so well. You must be looking just splendid & I would give a great deal to see you. I sincerely hope the weekly mails are not ended now, as I will miss your dear, kind letters very much. I promise after this to write weekly – you see there will only be three little ones & mine are all right if alone – it is Gertie’s youngest who teases them & causes trouble. Dear, I do not think the Comr. would care for a letter from me. I am not one of the gossipy kind & cannot write an interesting letter to such as he, I mean that he would appreciate or care for. Those who make charges against the Force had better look out, for they will soon learn who they have to deal with & will be more careful in future. Your next of Mar 16th

[reverse]

is in my hands & the first part of it expressing the hope that my trouble is over & that the little ones are pleased to have me with them again, is very nice, but as you know, it is something I must look forward to for some time yet. They all have their qualities as you say – Flora is proud & can be very cutting I assure you – a kind look or affectionate word can make Gertrude do anything – baby is almost the same, but he has a very quick temper, but an affection term seems to make him thoroughly ashamed of himself & he rushes to me kissing to make up & says he will be dood. Mamma seems to be enjoying good health, but will be fatigued after all the moving. Frank is a full fledged dentist, being the one who made the highest number of marks who has ever graduated in Bishops – that is nice & very satisfactory to my dear mother, after all the sacrifices

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she has made to give them their professions. Walter Harwood, Aunt Emma’s second son is I hear going up to your new country, but cannot say if he is going straight to Dawson. I thought Mrs. Strickland was in Bennett long ago – where has she been all this time? – Mrs. Wood enjoys being the only lady amongst so many men, so is in her element. Yours of Mar 18th containing two short extracts from B.C. papers I am now about to answer.

Of course I fear this may be delayed as I did not know of the irregularity of the mail after April. We have had a very late spring & there is still snow on the ground in some places & no sign of the trees budding yet. The robins have come though & there is a spring look around & a spring feeling in the air. I will be very careful of the milk dear this summer I assure you & will see what I can do re country. They will never forget

[reverse]

you, my sweetheart & even dear Dubbie prays for you often during the day he drops down on his little knees, puts his hands to his face & says "God bless papas, . . . journey & bring him home safe & to us" – a little prayer I taught them the first night you left us & which they all say since. The men who go up are determined to make money if possible. You were certainly right re voting yourselves a salary & the affair has already been spoken of in the House, if I remember rightly – they said the salaries were not high enough & that it was not improving if men did [boodle] or try to make money. You are determined to do your duty at no matter what cost & will uphold the honor of Canada as you have always done. I know you are kind & considerate, but very firm & determined to do what is right & are just acting as you have always done.

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So Mr. Jarvis has seen you – well had you not had my letters in the meantime, you would have heard from him that I was still in the land of the living. I know Mrs. Wood is awfully fond of admiration & made money card playing last winter it seems to me. I am not positive, but think my memory is not wrong there. I forget the man's name – was it not [N__] or something like that – a peculiar name anyway. I do hope you are enjoying the fresh eggs – Gertrude thinks she was very good to let her little black hoodah as she calls it "go up & lay eggs for Papa". Your dear letter of Mar 22nd is my last & these four last came on April 20th so you see it is pretty quick work after all. You acknowledge my letter from 19th to 23rd Jan, so those between Nov. 13th & that time are still unaccounted for & I am positive I wrote. I wrote Xmas day & N. Years day as well. Do

[reverse]

not worry over Life Insurance policies – it seemed a terrible thing for me to give all a months pay at once, but I managed it all right & have contracted no debts, so I am O.K. The children are well dressed, & I am not bad, but I intend getting more things soon. Mrs. James Ross is absent from Montreal again, being in Europe once more. I will likely meet her next Autumn – I intend joining the Antiquarian Society & will then attend the teas at the

Chateau de [Ramssay], where all the swells go. My mother belongs to it, so we will then go together. Beau is & has been secretary for a long time.

Cottages are very dear all around Montreal & \$50.00 per month board for a couple is nothing – wages are also fairly high – we can take some nice trips & make up for country air in that way, however you may be sure I will do for the best. The fat lady is Mrs. Godfrey Weir, Miss Georgie Leslie that

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she used to be very intimate with the Huberts & with Louise, but I am not good enough to bow to. I saw Miss Jarvis & them all as I told you in some of my letters. Mrs. Jarvis also called & took me for a drive, but I fancy they have returned to Toronto – they were looking for a boarding house Holy Week & I have not seen them since. I am sorry Mrs. Dr. Fraser is so ill & will live, I suppose until after her child's birth, then die – consumptives in that condition always do. She is at Bennett or somewhere in the Yukon, is she not? So Sergt. Morris is at Tagish now! I wonder why he acted as he did towards me when we were leaving Macleod, after all the kindness I showed him. I hope he will appreciate it now, when he has time to reflect on it. His fiancée jilted him & married in a very short time after. Dr. Good must be a wag – every person finds the children tall for their age & Flora is filling out. I suppose Mrs. Wood

[reverse]

worries her husband, having no society where she is. I did not see the Comr. & watched the papers carefully, but do not think he came to Montreal at all. had he done so, I would have called upon him. We have been having three weeks of Grand Opera by a good French company. I went twice taking Mamma & one of the boys. We heard "Mignon" & "La Reine de Saba" (Queen of Sheba) they were both grand & we enjoyed them thoroughly. We also heard "The Three Musketeers" some time ago – the theatre has been my only amusement & I have not gone very often.

Mamma is fond of it & likes the attention, I assure you. I packed for a time this p.m as Gertie moves this week. The present occupants of 26 are not ready to leave, so we will not be able to get in, until May 1st but the house Richard takes is

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empty, so I will in a way have two moves. Elmes has been suffering from gravel & that has been his trouble for a long time – he was attended here & seemed to be better. He was anxious I should go & visit his mother in Ottawa, but I objected on account of it being so near the 1st & the children's

arms not being quite well. I enclose a copy of "The Herald" – I sent one to [C.E.D.] Wood & asked him to copy – also sent one to George Hope Johnston. My hand is now so tired that I can scarcely hold my pen & I fear I will have to give up for tonight. All are well & join in fondest love, my darling. You will be so tired reading this long letter, that you will wish me in Jericho & will be hoping the next mail will contain nothing for you. God bless you, my darling & keep you safe until we meet

[reverse]

again. My birthday will have passed long ere you get this – two birthdays since you left, my husband – time flies on & I am growing old, my darling. The little ones have written you a letter. Baby commenced all right, but thought he could write himself as he neared the end. the writing will prove that. Heaven protect you is the daily prayer of your own little wife. I was about forgetting to tell you you are now a member of Court Montreal, 741 [L.A.F.] being transferred from Court Chinook on April 1st. You know they had suspended you because your fees I had not paid sharp on the 1st of Feb, however it is all right now. Hoping you are not worn out perusing this awful letter, believe me, as of old,

Your own true, devoted,

loving wifie

Maye.

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