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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste Famille St.
Sept. 7th/02

My darling boy,

Yours of July 28th, Aug. 1st & 2nd all came in Monday last. I am pleased to learn that your tour of inspection was so successful & that Gen. B.P. found everything to his taste & could find little or nothing to criticize. You will know a large number of regular army officers as you meet so many. So many people find B.P. & yourself look alike - the big

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hat does it, I suppose, as I can see the resemblance myself. I infer from your letter that both No. 8 & 10 troops are stationed at Middleburg & that Mrs. Macnaughton & her sister are at that place. The men must be pleased at all the attentions bestowed on them by the ladies who dispense tea & cake so gracefully. I am sure they must have found you charming if you made yourself as agreeable as you sometimes can. Where is B.P. stationed, I thought his headquarters were Pretoria too. You certainly

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seem to have the happy knack of combining business & pleasure - "tea, cake, songs from Capt de H. & sister Clark & nurse Richardson for a two mile drive" are certainly a nice combination for an hour or two. I am sure the latter is delighted at being with you & will feel that she has friends near to protect her & take a fatherly (?) interest in her. I wonder what the ladies will think of me when I arrive & whether they will pity poor Col. Steele & wonder why he married me! You better look out & keep your eyes open, or you will be getting naughty & every one will know it. I truly believe it is time for me to come, you need me to keep you all right - it speaks volumes to hear you wish "all the sisters were naughty too!" Yes, some people appreciate you I have not the least doubt. I fear all the balls will be over by the time we get there, still we shall live in hopes of dancing next year. How nice to

hear we have such a nice little vinery, for I am very fond of grapes, so are the children, my dear.

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I am so pleased to learn Capt. Hilliam is of such value to you as he knows exactly what you want your division to be from old times in the west. If you think I shall be happy in Pretoria - I fancy I am sure to like it. You see the people & surroundings are really what make a place, & the people here are so purse proud & unsociable that I do not care for society in the least. Mamma is much more eager to leave than I am, so I think she will

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like it very well, too. She is fond of you my dear boy & intends remaining for a couple of years anyway, particularly if the climate agrees with her. I think when we get everything in our little home that we shall be very comfortable & have a nice little house. It is a very good thing we did not arrange to leave in Aug. as you must know of the very bad storms that prevailed about that time, or early this month, in Eng & in S.A. So far, we have not yet settled the date of sailing or the

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line. I am going to see Mr. Campbell of the Elder Dempster line - they may give us better rates & are cheaper to Eng. than the Allan's. We will leave here in the early part of next month - as you must know there are no passenger boats direct to Capetown [sic] for some months, so we must go via Southampton. I do hope the rains will not last very long. It is too bad that D.W. Davis did not keep straight, particularly on account of his wife & family, as he had a good position & as you say made extra out of seizures.

What could be coming for you from the Yukon? I do not know of anything so far - you can ask Col. White yourself & as you say there is not much use waiting for the pension. You seem to dine often at Lord Milner's - is his wife with him? You are having lots of dancing any way - you are keeping young & active. The Country cannot be any worse than the N. West was in the old days & if the climate is fine, must be preferable. I think Mrs.

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Mrs. Zach runs her husband & the whole of them up there. He is supposed to be "Asst. Governor" so Mrs. Mac says, but it is Asst. Comr. of the N.W.M.P. I know. I thought Zach Wood had more go in him but such is life. The Wroughton's are there too.

Torla is still in Vaudreuil but is lonely & anxious to return. Dubbie came home on Friday, but has been complaining ever since of toothache - his jaw is all [swollen] as he is cutting one of his large double teeth &

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he has not slept for two nights & of course neither have I. The result is that I am so tired that I do not know what to do to keep awake although it is not yet noon.

I now have yours of Aug 2nd open before me. I told you of Lord Strathcona's answer & that I had written the War Office - as yet there has not been time for a reply. I will do for the best you may be sure. Of course is I do not get free passage you have an idea of the cost & will have to cable money in consequence as I have no one to turn

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to, but you as you will know my dear. I had to get another hundred from Mr. Taylor to go on in my preparations - I cannot proceed without cash. I hope you do not find me extravagant, but it simply means if I do not get it, that I must remain where I am - you know me well enough & are perfectly certain that I am not, at this late day, liable to waste money. I ordered Flora's saddle from Hutchings, as I know they are good & I could not afford to pay the extra money which the duty was sure to be. I am obliged to study economy as you know, my dear & it takes a lot of money to dress the children & get all packed ready. I will never undertake such a piece of work again - have had more than enough of it, I assure you. Have now been hard at work sewing for seven weeks & have not yet finished. I am beginning to see my way clear a little, but you really can have no idea of the amount of sewing one has to do & it takes time to do it well. Of course I have a girl sewing for me & my

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mother has one also.

There is not very much news. Tillie is improving daily & so is the boy. John sent the photo of his son the other day - he is a Harwood in looks but has reddish hair like Mabel, I believe. George Taylor of "The

Star" told Bob McGillis he had met Lord Dundonald who thinks a lot of you - he related "that an English officer had come to one of the Stranconas for information or to reprimand him, I do not know which.

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The Strathcona's after a few words said "go to hell & ask Sam Steele" - Lord D. remarked it was a hot place they put you in - said you were the man for the country there, would do well etc etc. a few nice little compliments en passant.

Col. Macdonald wrote me a nice reply & said that if we were sailing by the Elder Dempster, he might be able to help us a little - so did Mr. Taylor, so I shall see. Mr. Campbell

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as soon as possible. it is worth asking for. I had a nice letter from Jane [Harvie] asking us to stay with her, but it is impossible I fear. Have not the spare cash for the trip & not the time. I am having a cape for evening wear made of the fox skins & a set for your Torla. The latter will I know please you & she will look well in it with her scarlet coat & hat. You like to see her well dressed, so do I. I see fur capes advertised for sale in Capetown [sic] papers so they must be needed for evening wear, hence my decision to make use of mine in that way. Well, my darling it hardly seems possible that in less than three months we shall all be together once more if everything goes well & we meet with no accident en route. I do hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you when we land! - if not, well at the station in Pretoria. God bless & protect you dear & pray Heaven we may meet & be happy together once more is the earnest prayer of your own true, devoted loving little wifie,

Maye

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