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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste. Famille Street
Sept 29th 1901.

My own darling Boy,

It has been raining most of the night, the morning is gloomy & not feeling very well I did not go to church today, so will now pen a short letter to you, my own dear boy. Although none of your dear missives lie open awaiting an answer I feel that I cannot let the day pass without writing you, my poor pet; you are such a faithful correspondent that I too must do my best. I send you a "Star" of Sept. 28th in which appears news from your command & something about the N.W.M.P. I fancy all that is said of the latter is not quite correct in every detail, still it will prove interesting & in one way let more know the truth about the Force during the rebellion in '85. Frank is busy packing up, as he leaves tomorrow evening – he is somewhat blue at the idea of going, but one thing is certain – he will not be in continual turmoil. Louise's things all came back yesterday

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as well as Frank's office furniture etc, so you can imagine how lovely the house is going to be until we either leave for S. Africa or I take a home in the spring. There's no use making a fuss – it's a cross I suppose I must bear, but I am heartily sick of it. If Duffin's were not here, it would be bearable, but oh! dear – I must not inflict all this upon you, dear – you are away & have enough to bear. He is going to go to school, which will be some comfort; he is a very hard child to get on with & his playing with all the imps on the street since he left has not improved him – he is so saucy, even to his Grandma. You see from this the position has not amounted to much – now, Mamma has offered to pay for her lessons in typewriting & shorthand until we leave or for six months, to enable her to try & earn enough to keep from starving any way. If she refuses, it is her last chance – Willie does nothing never gives her a cent to keep herself or the boy & Mrs. Drayner does not either, so all falls on my poor mother – she does a great deal, but it is not appreciated & never has been, so when she gives up this house

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house in May, she intends shaking off all these responsibilities. You cannot wonder at her, can you? How a pretty girl who was much admired, could make such a foolish match! I was not supposed to be anything, could aspire to no beauty of any kind, that is in the eyes of some, for in my dear, dead father's eyes, I was all in all, had every grace, virtue & beauty a daughter could have, thank Heaven!!!.... well, I chose a king among men, in every way & have been blessed for beyond my keenest expectations – one of the great trials of my life, my darling, has been the terrible separation which has fallen to my lot. I only hope the sacrifice will not be in vain & that Providence will not forget it in the future. The money I will give Franke I will keep count of – do you intend that I should use it to return the amount Mamma lent you for the mines in B.C.? if so, let me know for I have paid up every cent I owed her until Oct 1st. You see being so many in the house, servants are difficult to get & I pay almost half the wages – that is,

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besides the board, & I pay my washing too – well, I do not intend paying a second girl so..... if we cannot live in the same way as others I do not care – I will not spend any more than I do, for I do not stint. I get the milk for the little ones & have done so all along – they scarcely tough it – all this counts, but you must not worry; I will get through this winter all right, but of course, there it must end. I will never consent to go on like this after next May, at no matter what cost – it must end.... Regie writes in good spirits & every thing is going beautifully – Dr. Malcolmson is leaving the Creek & he will likely have things his own way. Lillie writes in good humour with all & every one in general, so has made up her mind to be satisfied with the place she says. Mabel is liked, Minnie tells me – she was nice to every person I suppose – more democratic, I presume than could possibly be the niece of Sir W.C. that is why she is liked – can be nice to people, even if she does not think them her equal socially.

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I was much amused yesterday while dressing. Flora was studying her history of Canada & came across de Vaudreuil name. I told her my Grandmother was a connection of his & that it was a very old family – “O! my Mamma – that is not much – why on Papa's side the family is much older than that – you know, Gertrude dear, one of Adam's daughters was a Steele!” – was Flora's answer. You see the admiration your eldest has for you, dear. She always tries to go one better for your sake. I fancied by

telling her she was learning something of her family she would be more anxious to study, but she has no use for French blood or connections! Scotch & English are good enough for her. I just laughed myself sick & how heartily I wished yourself & the Miller's had been here to view the scene & hear the tone & see the expression on her face. Gertrude & Dubbie enjoyed it too, seeming to understand it as well as myself. Mrs. Morris wrote me from Fredrickton that they, Winnie & herself would pass through here on the 13th –

[reverse]

I was still in Orillia & they had gone when I came. I wrote explaining, so suppose they will understand. I met a Mr. [Grasett] next door the evening we spent there who said he knew Col. Cameron "who had had two letters lately from Col. Steele". We had a pleasant evening a game or two of whist then music. I sang a couple of songs & Antoine ditto. The words & music of "Kyle's" "Strathcona's Horse" are very good – I intend practicing up both vocal & instrumental music this winter. I am going to a concert this week – [Lancier], a French Canadian baritone who married a girl from Vaudreuil who is a very good musician too, gives a farewell concert this week & goes to Paris to study for two years. I feel sure he will do well, as he has a lovely voice & sings with much expression. He is a handsome man as well & will no doubt, look well, on the stage. There is not very much news – a great deal of talk has been caused by the cancelling at the last moment of the only public function here during the York visit, viz, the reception at the City Hall.

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It was to have taken place on Wednesday evening & Friday was the day set apart for general mourning. On Tuesday morning or during the day, the affair was declared off & all contractors for flowers, refreshments, etc have to be paid. It has cost the city a large sum, & as the Ottawa programme was carried out even in its smallest detail, it will be the cause of bringing up the race cry I fear. It is to be discussed in Parliament next session. Minto is greatly blamed as he said among other things, "the people of Montreal must not tire the Duke & Duchess". The people here, had no opportunity of meeting them, even Lord Strathcona's dinners being composed mainly of Ministers from Ottawa, their wives & daughters. Very few Montrealers were favored & only [Clouston] & the Drummonds, a judge or two & their wives – the Allen's are in mourning you see. Contact with the Gov. & his wife evidently only fits Ottawa people as being worthy of meeting such high personages. Well, it has done its work & will cause trouble, I fear. The little

ones are in the best of health & enjoy life. They send their warm love to dear Papa & ever so many

[reverse]

sweet kisses as well. Remember us kindly to Mr. Kerr. I went to the druggist at the corner & have got $\frac{1}{2}$ doz bottles of the one you like best "Elite" applied with a brush & sit in the sun – this is mainly composed of nitrate of silver which as you know stains the skin & gives away – the other I got is far preferable & more expensive, being a vegetable, the main thing in it is walnut juice, which does not stain – however, since you prefer the one I now send it is all right, I suppose. Some kind of Hair tonic or [renewer] would be a good thing for me as I fancy mine is getting thin & needs nourishment. I used to have such a fine head of hair! I will now leave you, my darling – it is almost dinner time I live in hope of receiving a letter or two tomorrow from the one so dear to me, my own pet. God bless & protect you, my darling. With very many sweet fond kisses from our three dear little ones & myself, believe me

Your own true, devoted, warm-hearted

lonely little wifie,

Maye.

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