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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste Famille St
May 7th, 1902

My own darling boy,

Well, dear here I am writing to you after a most fatiguing day, as you know our Torla made her First Communion this morning. She was awake at half past three or thereabouts & had me awake before four. We arose at five & I dressed them all, my Dubbie included, as we left for the convent. Torla looked very nice & aristocratic – her dress is as pretty as I could get here & she was very sweet. She read the act of Consecration very distinctly & did everything well – our little Gertrude collected & looked

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like a big doll. Torla's dress is a very handsome embroidered & lace French batiste, with nice white ribbon sash – gloves & fine Brussels net veil – Gertrude's was white silk (Flora could not wear that) made in what is called French style & very fashionable for little ones just now – she did her part well & looked dainty & sweet, with only her hair ribbon on her head & a pretty wreath of white flowers. What amused me immensely was that Gertrude knew the exact amount she collected – when I asked her how she knew “why, I counted it as they put it in the plate” - as it was up in the six or seven dollars she was pretty

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smart, I think. She is very bright & will be quite an arithmetician if she keeps on. This p. m. at two we had to go down to the big Notre Dame Church where almost five hundred children or more were confirmed by Archbishop [Bruchisi]. I was really very tired & am glad the day is over & passed off so well. My mother gave Flora a pretty white tiny prayer book & Auguste & Marie a pretty brown leather one. Uncle Frank sent her ten pretty pictures to frame which will be quite an ornament to her room, when we have a home of our own. She got a number of small pictures from little companions & I gave her, for her darling old Papa & Mamma, a very handsome pearl star brooch or pendant. Something she can keep always & which is good. I know, quite well you would feel very bad if she had not something in that style. I also gave her sweets & sent two pots of plants to the convent in her name, so I think I have done my duty as well as I could, without your being near, my darling. I did long so much for you dear. O! how I wished for you & how bitterly I grieved, for I know you would have been so proud of your big girlie, our Torla! –

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Before I go further I must tell you Mabel had a son on the 5th I believe, if so, it is the same day as our Dubbie & Antoine too – only a telegram so far, but she & son are doing well. Our boy was five on Monday. Mamma gave him a ball, Alice a book, I a hoop & Regie (his godfather) a fine birthday cake with five candles, of which he was immensely proud, I assure you. Now, it is time for me to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of April 5th & 6th. The house is filled with the family & being so very tired I much fear I will have to say good night & will resume this in the morning. God bless you –

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Thursday, May 8th. Today is Ascension Thursday, a holy day with us, so Torla & myself went to Mass, then I went to Dr. Macdonall's had my treatment & electricity & now, having a few moments before lunch, come to continue this to you, my own darling. Well, dear you find my letters sometimes "a [sanction]" - You can not wonder at it – you see a woman has nerves & at times they get unstrung & she must give vent to her feelings in some way. You say in yours of Apr 5th "I am sending you forty pounds" if has not come so far & I will welcome it gladly for my last \$5.00 I took out to buy a trunk

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to send you the books you asked me for. Col. Gordon is going to take charge of them & see them safely sent to their destination when they reach Cape Town. I got a trunk as it is so much easier to handle than a box & I hope the books will suit in every way. The two keys I will enclose in a small box & send by registered mail to you. I had no intention of buying the tray or side dishes – there are two of the latter - \$150.00 each is her price – they are beautiful but we cannot purchase them yet – they have been at J. Morgan's for sale for some time & do not think they are gone yet.

I am quite sure our going out is an impossibility, so have almost become reconciled to the idea of not being able to see you for some years – it is hard, but fate wills it so, I suppose. I also know that until everything is positively settled, there is no use in thinking of going to you – you may not care for the work & since you dislike the climate so much, you need not make a martyr of yourself on my account, I assure you. You have the best English military talent to compete against I know, so I will await patiently.....

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You will I fancy get rank service. I would never of my own accord choose a place to live in – you are the breadwinner, not I, & as I told you many times am content to live wherever you may decide – The coal mines in the Yellow Head may prove a good investment & bring us in something. I am glad I have your respect

& love, dear, it keeps me alive & makes me what I am – a devoted, true wife & an affectionate & devoted mother. I am endeavoring to build up my health & do all I can, but it is hard.

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I do not know enough of Ontario to select a place of residence – all I know is that I will go where you do & if your own country suits you, it will suit me – believe me, my dear, I am in earnest & mean exactly what I say. The children also like the place & climate as well as myself. You can have the fine country home & I will be with you in everything. I do hope the horses you now have are good ones, if not it handicaps you immensely I know. I do hope the English will have more sense & not run into such holes as the “Queen's Bay's” [sic] did. It is too

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bad the Tommies have such miserable officers – they are too fond of sport for the good of the country & the reputation of the army! - Major Cautan must have regretted seeing his wife leave. I suppose she has gone to England. Yes, the [Moir's] are fond of us, I believe. Can you wonder at it? I got the letter from the lady in Camarillo, but it strikes me she may be older than you think. Is she not perchance one of M. J. Haney's daughters? I think he had one by that name & had several. As you know Dundonald is the one who comes in command, not Parsons. Col. Gordon's going was a surprise to many. As for a Canadian taking command, why the best men they have in the country are in S. Africa!!..... I am told Col. Irving is going too, but I see a Lt. by that name ~~was~~ fell off the car on his way to Halifax & was hurt – what Col. Irving is it anyway? I know [illegible], the Ottawa man. Col. [Bircoe] has been recalled to England – you remember him, of course. He was rather a nice man.

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There is great excitement just now re Regie's house. They are looking for one in Westmount as the prospects for a dr. there seem better than elsewhere. She is somewhat of a Tartar, I tell you, & you should thank your stars every day that your little wife is so good & indeed! were you behind the curtains, at times you would think you had a treasure, even if I say it myself. I received Daly's letter & was delighted to note what he says re the Vancouver story. I hope he will not forget to

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deny any unfavorable report he may hear circulating around. As he says he knows you well & can judge for himself. They say there are really no foundations for the reports concerning Judge Dugas which I enclose. I cannot say, as I did not see the denial in the papers. Today is a fine one – only wis

h yesterday had been the same. The sun is bright & while not warm there is a smell of summer in the air. The little one's [sic] are well, Gertrude has a slight cold but it will be nothing, as I am doctoring

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her up – it is more of a huskiness in the throat. She does not complain runs about playing all day, having a holiday in honor of Flora's First Communion yesterday & today being Ascension, no school either. The boy is well – my mother is not very well & has had to begin a course of treatment from Dr. Macdonell – that is hard at her age & all the more serious in consequence. The Dr. cannot say yet, as she must treat her for a fortnight, at least, ere she forms any opinion on the case. It has been a great blow to her & she feels it very much, although she tries hard to hide it from me, I know. Well, dear I must leave you – God bless & preserve you, dear. Be sure & write when you can, your letters are such a comfort to me. With many loving kisses in which the little ones join & thanking you for the lovely answers they got to their letters, believe me,

Your own true, devoted, warmhearted lonely little wifie,

Maye.

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