

2008.1.1.1.1.201

Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste Famille St  
Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 1902

My own darling boy,

As I told you in my last written on Wednesday last I reserved yours of the 9<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> of Jan. to answer today. That of the 9<sup>th</sup> is written from Bokfontein & you tell me of the loss of all their horses at Naauwpoort – it is terrible & would have been a bad thing had they been attacked by the Boers just then. I am sure you must have had a nice week with Capt Boyd, he is a genial fellow & being a Canadian you have many a chat of home affairs.

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If you are on until winter comes you will be pleased to get into Pretoria once more. I subscribed to the “Daily Star” for you early this week & hope it will reach you safely. They will come in a bunch I suppose & many a time. You will throw them aside unread I fear, still you will not say you are the only one who gets no papers. I had them sent to Pretoria, so if they fail to reach you, inquire about them, for it will be the fault of the authorities there if they fail you. I thought you would prefer the daily to the weekly as you get so much more news in the former, & I know all

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all the debates & proceedings in the House will interest you. It must be a nice country when all the fruit you mention, grows in such profusion. I am sure I would enjoy living there for a few years. I am so weary of the life I have had for the last few years - & oh! how I sigh to be with you once more. I am so tired always trying to keep peace with these children & am anxious to have our own by themselves – they will be happier far & so will I & that can never be until you take pity on us & bring us out or come home just as soon as you possibly can. I know Kerr was disliked in the “Strathcona's” for ever so many told me so. I pity the poor blacks he has anything to do with, for I believe he is hot-tempered. I was so anxious when I learned of the defeat of some of the S.A.C. & seeing [“Major Donells”] name feared it might be Lieut. [Horvell's]: however, nothing recent has been published, so all I can do is wait. I have learnt that by now, I assure you.

I hope your next horses will not be troubled by this sickness – does it last all through the year, or only in the summer?

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The children are well & look so – they take Scott's emulsion once or twice a day & that seems to keep them well.

Your next is written at Groenfontein. You must keep on the move all the time as you are in a different place every day. Is Lieut. Kirkpatrick a son of the late Sir George I think his name was? is he the one who was in your old Corps? The lightning & thunder must sound & look terrific on the veldt & among the Mt.s where you are sometimes. Is Krugersdorp a nice town? I hope so, if it is to be your permanent place for a time. I am afraid the Xmas parcel will have disappointed you, as I

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never sent you anything to read. I did not think you would be bothered with books as they are heavy to carry about. My parcel is well done up & I do not imagine Major [Dixon] would care to open it. All the things sent by the Soldiers' Wives' League were sent in his care, so if he goes through all he will be kept busy for a time. Who wrote the history of the war & calls Lord S's Horse, "Lord Strathcona's incomparable regiment of horse" - I would like to get it if possible. It is fast becoming historical, is it not & seems like a bright star. I was disgusted when I read in the papers some time ago that a Canadian firm who was given

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a contract for supplying jam to the S.A.C. I believe, filled the tins with turnip pulp flavoured with fruit juice – the govt had an investigation, but I do not know the result or the name of the firm.

As I told you we have not moved, you know why – so there is not use my going over the whole affair again but I tell you once more, with all the treatment & care I am trying to take of myself my hair will be white before we live together again – the children are too trying for me to manage alone. I am just heartily sick of this life & feel as if my heart would burst at times.

Somedays they are like fiends & do all they can to make one as unhappy as possible. The smallpox is not as bad as you think, dear & the health dept. try hard to stop it. Vaccination has been almost general, for the French Canadians who have always opposed it more or less have come to their senses & see that only those who were [un]-vaccinated took the disease. I have made inquiries about stories of 1812 & you will get it but not just yet. I could not get it here, but Col. Cruikshanks is

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a friend of Mr Lighthall's & I am to get them through him. Jarvis says Zach Wood is to come out over the [ice], meet his wife in Vancouver, go back & she will go in in the summer, she gives herself any amount of airs & I wonder where they get the money. By the by, I hear Perry is to be made Comp. in Mr White's place,

McIllree Comr. & Deane Asst. - a nice thing to have Perry at the head of the Dept., will it not be? They are rushing things before you come back, eh? There will assuredly be no place left for you, my dear. I do not read much – as usual too busy & when I have

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to help the children with their lessons, I have no leisure at all. The days are far too short for all I have to do, I assure you. I am glad to see that at last it has dawned on you that I am a slave. Yes, I am & will be until there is a change. You little know what this has been to me & for a woman who had her own home & was independent & could do as she pleased, it has been gall & [wormwood] to me to have been obliged to do as I have done for the sake of peace. I have had a good dose of purgatory only I fear I unfortunately have lost much of the merits for not [bowing] my head & taking

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my trials in the right spirit.

The Garlick's must have gone back to Capetown, for I never saw their arrival in any steamer. Have the Henderson's any children? it is so easy to have a happy time when there are no responsibilities on one's shoulders. Servants are so difficult to get too. We still have ours.

I was much surprised when going out to meet Mamma the other day I met Mr Dickey at the corner – he continued on with me & we had a nice walk up to Ogilvy's, where we met Mamma who was late. He came & spent the evening with us & I gave him one of the large group photos. He chose one with the house & the group small, as “the building is historical & he has several of you besides”. He is looking very well & was in a happy vein – his old father went up the same day to Ottawa, where he went yesterday. He may call again on his way down. He said he had heard from you some time in Nov. & I gave him all the news I could think of – also requested him to put in a good word & do all he could to advance the Pension bill – he promised he would. All the folks were eyeing him as we walked St Catherine St. knowing he was a stranger & he is a nice looking man you see.

His father is totally blind, but otherwise in good health.

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I sent Uncle John an express money order for \$60.00 this week, being your ten per month until July 1<sup>st</sup>. I waited expecting a letter, as I have written twice since Xmas & sent a photo of the little ones, but he has not acknowledged either. I wrote him again & hope all will be satisfactory. There is no bank in Coldwater but a private one. J. L. Ross & Co. - I will send the next through them. I also as I told you sent three hundred dollars (\$300.00) to Belcher, as he seems anxious

to get all his pay as soon as possible. The Star published a copy of the group, & Murphy had your picture on his Xmas pamphlet,

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copies of both I sent Uncle John, so you see I do not neglect him.. Mr Dicky was coming up to see me when I met him. Well, my darling, you will I hope forgive my burst of [lamentations] this morning. I have a bad headache, had been to church with Flora, came in fatigued & the youngsters worried me until I could bear it no longer, so pardon me, darling, & forget it, for I do not want to make you miserable – you have enough to contend with without having your little wife who loves you so very dearly to bring more trouble or give you cause for one moment's unhappiness – again I say forgive me. The little ones join in much love to dear Papa. Hoping you are in good health with many sweet kisses, I am, as ever your own true, devoted

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loving, lonely little wifie

Maye.

I also wrote Mr Colmes asking for an African map. The best I can get here are two years old I hope he will send it.

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