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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Orillia, Aug 30th 1900

My darling Boy,

You will see from the heading of this letter that I am enjoying the hospitality of your kind friend & relative, Mrs. Miller. We all came up on the 20th & are having such a nice, pleasant time. They are doing all in their power to make our visit a most enjoyable one & we are already reaping the benefit of the change. I am beginning to feel much stronger. We spend most of our days out on the water & have visited almost every place of interest

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in the vicinity. Tomorrow we go to Barrie, as the boat usually ceases running early in Sept. Every spot I have visited has been doubly interesting to me, knowing that at some time of your life you too have been under the same trees or [roamed] over the same spot & my thoughts are with you unceasingly. Your three letters dated July 14th, 15th, & 16th all came the morning I left Montreal & I perused them on the train – of course, I had to make Mrs Miller & the girls conversant with all that was going on & they all thoroughly enjoyed hearing

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the news. We follow your movements everywhere & every person in Orillia seems to have a very special claim on you, my darling. They call you “our Col.” which Flora does not like the least little bit – she is so awfully selfish where you are concerned & wants you all for her very own even more than I do. All your particulars are so interesting, that I could read your letters over & over again without tiring of them. It is a fine thing that the Canadian horses have proved to be so good, as it will give ranchers in the west a fine market for their stock & a number who have given up raising horse flesh will likely go into the business again. It is a great comfort to me that this is the healthy season of the year & that you have enough blankets – I dread this terrible enteric fever & hope my own darling boy, that you will escape it. You have had the malaria of the N. West often enough & how I pray you will not suffer from it down there when so very far from me! I now take up your second letter written at Waterval drift. I again follow all your

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your movements with the deepest interest. I hope all your prisoners will be well treated, as they are a fine lot of fellows & it must gall them not to be with you & their commander, fighting the villains who are giving so much trouble & costing so many valuable lives. When I read that your horse had been struck in the left side by a mauser, I cannot tell you the awful feeling that came over me for say what you will, my darling, that means a very near escape for you, my darling. O! how I pray you may come safely home to me & what a day, the day of your return will be, my sweetheart!

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Now your letter of July 16th is before me. I think entre nous, Jim Henderson has very little to do to write you away down there about Uncle John. Considering all things, he might give him all the necessary help – he is well off, so is his wife & they have neither chick or child to leave it to. You are far away, work hard for the pay you get & have a wife & three little ones to provide for – besides that, the pay is very irregular & in consequence I am kept on the qui vive all the time. I may be able to give him a little before I leave, as I will have saved some by my trip up. The C. P. R.

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kindly gave me a pass – you see I put a bold face on & went to see Mr Shaughnessy as I told you in my last. I was as nice as possible & he did not refuse my request. The customs money has not come & although I wrote Mr White some three weeks ago, have heard nothing about it & Mr Cowdry is anxious about what is due him. I have not seen Uncle John, but am going up to Mrs Morris for a day or two & will see him then, I suppose. I would like to do all in my power for Uncle John, still cannot as you will understand, be left in the lurch myself with our own three little ones to see to. How pleasant & consoling it must be to you to know that your men [do] their duty well & that no fault can be found with them. I see by “The Star” since I came up that Major Cameron has written Col. [Ibbotson] & given him the news. when I return to Montreal, if I see him, I will tell him what you say. Dubbie's eyes are much straighter & will, I fancy get all right in time. The Dr. says he is too young to operate on – that he cannot wear glasses, as they would be dangerous & that he thinks it is due to his teeth, as the child was not born that way.

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Flora is like yourself – has the [bump] of [locality] & can go all over Orillia by herself. She spends most of her time at Mrs [Harvie's] & has a fine time. She has taken a great fancy to them - Dr. & Mrs Gilchrist called the other evening & they became very [charming]. Mrs Miller told Flora the Dr. was a cousin of Papa's – so she asked him, was he third or fourth, because, if 3rd cousins she

would call him, Cousin – whatever his first name is – he was much amused. Every person seems so fond of the children – Essie & Grace [find] Baby's so smart – he is like a soldier, being built like yourself & walks exactly like you -

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he is full of form, is fond of punning, [sees] a joke at once & can enjoy it too. They all find him fine & Mrs Miller devotes herself to him all the time. Gertrude is found lovely – they all have acquired a heavy coat of tan & are looking very healthy just now. So many have called upon me – Mrs Macaulay had us over on Tuesday evening & had about fourteen people to meet me. Dr. [Slavin] & his wife, Dr Macdonell, Father [Monia] & ever so many others. My voice has come back fairly well with a practice or two & I sang ever so many times – they want me to sing in church on Sunday. Mrs Begg, mother of

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Magnus Begg, Indian Agent whom you know well, gave a nice yachting party last Friday & we were asked. We went down the Severn, had a nice lunch on land, fished, then went over to Geneva park for a bathe & supper returning at nine p.m. We had a perfect day & a very nice time – no children, they remained with Auntie Miller & Grace. We spent another day at Strawberry Island, & are going to “Horseshoe” today. Monday, we went to Bass Lake so you see we are on the go all the time. I have not a moment to write or do anything else, so if this is an awful scribble, do not be surprised & accuse me for it. I told you in my last that Alice had gone & has now been in Telluride some two weeks or more. I do not know how she likes the place, as I had left home before they heard from her, after reaching her destination. I only hope her Fred will improve & treat her in a more Christian manner now. She can fight her own battles & left home well armed & with the knowledge that she would find help if necessary & make him behave himself – the mean, contemptible little pup! I never cared a pin for him & was always

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surprised at her choice, for such a bright girl. Mamma & John have gone to Plattsburg & Lake George, the Star tells me. [Thibodeau] Bros' are going to close & John is anxious to find something to do. Mamma & he have gone down to see if there is any opening for a good market gardener in Lake G. & if the soil is good, he may get a few [lots] from Mamma & go in for that & raise funds for the N. Y. market. He is fond of that kind of thing. Poor Mabel had another mishap a day or two before I left. They feel so bad, being fond of children – strange, she is such a big woman, one

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would imagine she would be strong – little ones are of far better stuff, after all, eh! dear? – Gertie & her family will return home almost the first days of Sept. I have not been to Vaudrevil yet but will go up for a day or two when I return home, I believe. The weather here has been exceedingly warm but no rain. The children are enchanted with the place & run wild all over. Flora makes friends with everyone – she is much sun-burnt & goes bathing whenever she has a chance – she is filling out and getting some flesh on her bones. Johnson was away when we came –

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gone back to his school teaching in Argyle. Essie's school begins on Tuesday & sorry she is her holidays are over – they are such nice girls. I brought Mrs. Miller a handsome embroidered table centre of Irish linen – the girls fancy silver tie fasteners, very new. They were all pleased with their gifts – also a box of nice candy – I have a very fine silk handkerchief for Uncle John, & a pretty tie for Maggie when I see them. Well, by deal old pet, like the book, when I commence writing you I could go on forever, but as it is near mail time I must cease: the paper is not as good as the last & my pen holds too much ink, so my letter is not as neat as it should be, however, you will pardon me I know & be pleased to get it, such as it is. Be sure & write soon and address to 26 Ste Famille – I will be here a fleeting bit longer, I suppose – this is quite an invasion, four of us, but they have found room for all & made us very comfortable. Essie is going to write soon so will give you more news. With many kisses from the dear wee ones,

believe me, your own warmhearted, devoted wifie,

Maye

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