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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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508 St. Urbain St.
Montreal, Mar 26th 99.

My own darling Sam,

I come today to have my usual chat with you my darling, but with a heavy heart, owing to the fact that my letters never seem to reach you – it is heart rending to have written as often as I have & still to get letters from you always saying that “you have no news from me yet”. I cannot understand where they go to & the reason they should all go astray puzzles me exceedingly. I wrote only a short note to Mr. Jarvis enclosing a letter from Alice & he received it all right – our great consolation is that in acknowledging my note in his answer of Feb 28th he says he leaves in the morning for Dawson & will soon see you. I

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have done everything possible to ferret out the cause of any letters miscarrying as they are all addressed “c/o Officer [Comdg] N.W.M.P. Vancouver, B.C.” & for that reason should be safe. I am sure I have penned over a dozen & enclosed letters & newspaper clippings – fortunately you are generous in your monthly allowance, otherwise I should never have been able to meet all the assurance’s etc, etc. I asked you for advice ofn different things etc, but all in vain, as no letters come into your hands, my darling. I know not what awful trouble this silence might bring upon us both – one little word whispered by some evil-minded person & my apparent indifference would perhaps lead you to imagine that my love was not as

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not as warm as it used to be. God alone knows how every heart beat is true to you, my darling & deeply loved husband & He only knows the grief this long separation gives me. Every time my eyes rest on our three dear little children, three strong link links that bind us more closely together than the day I was so happy at becoming your wife, my heart bleeds when I reflect on the distance that separates us, although my love bridges over the route & I am by your side many hours during the twenty four. If I could only speak

to you or make you feel my presence how happy would I be!. I now take up your letter of Jan 22nd & which reaches me on ~~Mar~~ Feb 24th, very little over a month afterwards – it was brought

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down by Mr. Heath & mailed in Seattle on Feb 18th – how my thoughts were with you on the anniversary of your departure from among us, my pet & how every little action & word of that day came vividly to my mind! – Before I go further I must acknowledge the receipt of the photograph which came with letters of a later date which I will refer to later on – it is not as well finished as your others & the cap makes a difference, but you look well & my own darling I can get a sight of your dear face as you are, with the cold frost of the Yukon [floating] about your dear head for the past year. The high hill seems to be your pet walk – I hope it sometimes brings to mind our rambles

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rambles on the brow of the hill in Macleod. I am not surprised at Skirving developing into a runner, as his limbs are long enough!.

April 2nd. A whole week has elapsed since I commenced this letter to my darling & Easter has dawned upon us! it is rather a pleasant day although the snow lies deep on the ground – the sun shines brightly & all is gay about us, but with all the brightness, some hearts are heavy & mine among them. This awful separation I cannot get accustomed to. To return to yours of Jan 29th, I am pleased to inform you that I had the children photographed. they are good, but not at all flattering so you will see them just as they are

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every day. Thank God! you have faith in me my dearest, otherwise this silence which I cannot help might cause a great deal of mischief. Your letters come to me – mine to you never seem to reach their destination – can one understand that? my letters are perfect budgets of news & would I know, be welcome. I have written Mrs. Davis, to see if my letter reaches her, some time almost a fortnight ago. If so, she will tell you of it as I requested her to do it. I also wrote Mr. Jarvis in answer to his written the eve of his departure for Dawson & enclosed a letter from Alice & a word from myself to you, knowing he would find some way of sending the letter on if his reaches him. It is hard [lines] to have

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to get a third party to convey news to your husband. Flora has been

vacinated [sic] twice already, this will be the third time. I am going to have it done in a day or two. The parcel is your peajacket & the other articles you sent for – I hope they will reach you safely. they were sent late in October, if I remember right. I enclosed all the bills etc to you as soon as they came. You will see from The Star” April 1st which I sent, all that goes on in the House re Yukon. Major Walsh is pretty badly scorched there must be some truth in it, or surely no one would ever dare say such an outrageous thing without foundation. I hope they will be satisfied with your work, my pet. I saw Uncle Henry & told him what you wished me to say nothing more. He also informed me, when I expressed the hope of seeing

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you in a year, “that they might give you leave for a few months, but they would not allow you to leave the service until the country up there is settled & every thing in perfect running order”. It made me feel very bad, as indeed I hoped you would remain here when you did come. Many of your letters reach me open & I often wonder they are not lost. I will send you paper & envelopes as soon as I can do so.

Now I take up yours of Feb 6th, next in order. The children are well, thank god – they will, I am sure be better tempered when they have not so many to tease them. Gertie has been very kind the poor girl, so has her eldest child, [Conconne], still the other two are trying at times & hard to get along with. I am going to Mamma in May – she moves but has no house as yet, so cannot give you the new address.

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Gertie & Richard move also, but I will fee the postman & so insure my letters coming to me. However you might address them in Auguste’s or Richard’s care, at their offices or places of business. Yes, my darling most of your letters have come, but yours in answer to mine of Sept. just after my arrival is lost, as it never came into my hands. I can well understand how you must feel with this long, unbroken silence, but you know darling, that it is not my fault. You are convinced that I write, are you not? Your news re withdrawing of field force from Selkirk is in the papers, recommended by Major General Hutton. I feel stronger than I did, but there is room for a great improvement yet. I never can be perfectly happy as long as we are apart, but it affords me consolation to be near

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my dear mother, when you are so far away. Her days are lonely too, I assure you & many moments of her day are spent weeping over by gone days, when all she loved so dearly were near – she is so much alone that

the youngsters will cheer up her life wonderfully. Then the board I will pay will prove as great a help to her, as it did to Gertie no doubt. She will be able to keep a good servant I hope & rest a little after all her work. John's wife is nice but exceedingly childish & selfish – she always wants him for herself & the consequence is, that if no outsider comes in of an evening, Mamma spends it alone; Frank & Antoine studying most of the time, she closes the door of her bedroom & makes John read aloud to her, getting pettish if he leaves her for a while –

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Auguste & Richard have written you several times, so the mails certainly miscarry in some way. Your dear letter of Feb 14th reached me on the 21st of March & that is the last so far from you, my sweetheart. Needless for me to say that the heartbroken tone of your letter had its effect on me & I shed many bitter tears at the cruel way fate treats my fond, loving letters. yes, dear, we had a happy life – true, clouds did obscure the bright sky sometimes, but we are both humans with our faults & failings & both had to forgive & forget sometimes – still, love is deep rooted in my heart, & I assure you, although I do not go about with a long face, that I am heavy hearted with grief caused by your absence & would give anything in the [reverse]

world for a sight of your dear face, my husband. I often wonder if my letters are especially picked out to be detained – would any person reap any benefit if you were to become disheartened at the mail service & resign? that idea has struck me several times. I wrote you all about Regie's troubles, but of course with all the mails lost you know nothing. You used to feel better in the old days when you gave up smoking & so you have done it again! If you could only finish your work, so as to come home to me sooner, what a blessing it would be. Uncle Henry promised he would tell Sir Wilfred what I wished. You have loads of work, of all kinds & I know you will leave no stone unturned to do your duty. God bless you for it, dear. I have not had any operation performed yet – it has not

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not been in any way convenient for me to have it done, so I think I had better wait until we are well settled in our new quarters with mamma. There is no fear, darling. the children will not forget you – they speak of you all the time. Alice is feeling better, but is far from strong – she has what they call “climate” she says in her last letter & the Dr.'s say she cannot remain where she is. A Mr. Farish cousin of Fred's is trying to get him a position in a mine

near the City of Mexico, where servants can be had & the climate more favorable in every way. He is a well known mining engineer & has just returned from a trip to Russia, where he went to do work for the Government, having been absent almost a year or more. Alice comes to St. Louis for May & will likely come on & spend a few months with Mamma.

[reverse]

Louise is somewhat lonely in Pincher Creek, but is deriving much benefit from the change I believe. Strange how some people find it hard to live away from the excitement & bustle of a large city!. Regie will I hope keep getting on. the other Dr., Malcomson is to be married this month to a Miss Beech sister-in law to a Mr. Birmingham who worked on the C.R.P.R last year in Macleod. he Malcomson, was Mewburn's assistant for a time. The Haultain's are going on a "shooting expedition" to Los Angeles some time in fact, are there now I presume. Mr. Irwin very inconsiderately timed a little strangers arrival which may have interfered with the excursion, but from what I know of the Dr. that would not bother him much & he would

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he would not mind going, no matter what inconvenience he would put an officer's wife to. I can thank him for my state of health – had he done his duty as a medical man, I would not be as I am! – Mrs. Haultain got a regular trousseau for the trip I am told & is a great swell, hunting costume & all. Charlie Wood is trying to sell the paper & wishes to go & practice at Lake Atlin. [Denham] McLean left him some time ago & is to marry a Miss Sage from Lethbridge, a girl who worked as dressmaker in the H.B.C. in Macleod. C.S.D. & his wife were down here for about three months as I mentioned in different letters, but I did not see much of them – merely exchanged calls, without seeing him at all. Nellie Ives returned last week & had a most enjoyable

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visit. I got a trifle for her as a present before her departure, not having been able to do anything for her. She was away a great deal & stayed at Dr. Armstrong's – they are society people & go out all over, so she had a jolly time, but told me she would not care to live East & was quite contented to go back to the "wild & woolly west." Mr. Cowdry is very happy & his wife is a favorite. Mrs. Wroughton writes me the news & says they miss us all very much – of course there was a complete upheaval there as you know, the Casey's Sanders & ourselves all moving at once. I paid Cowdry Bros \$50.95 cts. this month – last month, \$150.00 to "The Federal Life" & have "The Great West" again for April. I have had you transferred from "Court

Chinook”

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I.O.F.s in Macleod down here. Gardiner was elected Sec. Treas, & because the money due for Feb did not arrive on the 1st he had you suspended.

Bryan wrote me at once concerning it, telling me he told “Gardiner he would be responsible for you” when he gave up the secretaryship. I attended to the matter immediately, but so there would be no more trouble saw Mr.

Ross who is chief secretary for the Dominion or something like that, & who works in Lighthall's office. he made everything all right & attended to the affair. Gardiner suspended Sergts. Macleod & [Genereuse], but he lost his position at once, being too active a member I suppose. Frank is passing his finals & I sincerely hope he gets through all right. They have made dentistry as

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as difficult as medicine & the costs are the same. Frank is as thin as a rail & is studying very hard. Antoine passed his first exams, but we do not know results, but believe he got over them. O.K. Richard has kept his pledge faithfully & has not touched a drop of liquor since N. Years – he seems to be getting on, having apparently lots of work - & his temper has improved since he gave up drink, I assure you. Mamma & myself have been on the go since early in Feb, spending our afternoon's house hunting, but it is difficult to find one suitable in every way. time is short now & we must hurry. Elmes is still here the work not being ended, so is Mr. Harwood. I suppose the former will find employment in Winnipeg when he leaves – he looks better & we see him often – he has been keeping in better condition

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at least, when I see him. We have had a great deal of snow lately & everything points to a late spring. The children got some very nice Easter eggs from Mr. Harwood, who sent six. Elmes gave Gertie & myself some lovely cut flowers, tulips & roses. The little ones also got sweets from René Hubert. Mr. George Taylor who is an old friend of yours spent an evening with Elmes here last week – he promised he would let me know when Mr. [Haldane] returned & he will bring up some things to you. Mr. T. works on “The Star”. Well, my dear old sweetheart it is getting late & I must pen a few more letters so I will say “good night” hoping the morrow will bring me more news from you. God bless you. Dubbie dear little man, says his prayers for you & Gertie & Flora never fail to do the same, so you must be convinced

[reverse]

they do not forget you. Heaven bless & keep you safe, my dearest.
April 4th. Your dear letters of Feb 15th, 22nd 23rd 25th & 27th, of March 3rd & 6th,
accompanied by photo's of bridal breakfast, & other views, as well as
Gertrude's & Flora's letters, all came this a.m & I can assure you there was
universal rejoicing especially when we found out you had received some of
my letters & were convinced I had not forgotten you, my own darling boy.
This apparent silence on my part worried me terribly as I knew not what
idea might come into your head. no letters would help you foster the
thought that my love might be growing cold, or absence causing me to
become indifferent –

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as I told you often, Heaven alone knows how deeply I love you & how much
I miss you, my own sweetheart. Your dear letters I will answer in a few days
as I am anxious to send this one off by tomorrow's mail. I did not write
weekly, as there was no use adding more letters to those that were
seemingly lost & I contented myself with longer & fewer letters. The little
ones are well & I have arranged to have them vaccinated in a day or two. I
expect I shall have a lot of trouble when they are not well. God bless you.
Mamma & myself have been out almost every day since the first week in
Feb & have not found a suitable house yet. We are all in

[reverse]

in good health. The streets are in a fearful state owing to the heavy
snowfalls during the past fortnight & the water is awful. All join in fondest
love to you, my darling. Good night & pleasant dreams. As ever
Your own true, warmhearted
devoted wifie,
Maye.

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