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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste. Famille St. Montreal. Apr 25th

1900.

My own darling Sam,

This morning is so bright & sunny that it makes me long for a chat with you, my own dear boy – as one <u>de vive voix</u> is impossible, I turn to the weapon so dear to separated lovers, the pen, & hope through it to spend a pleasant time with you, my darling. Well, my pet, yesterday's despatches brought us the news that "Strathcona's Horse" "had had its baptism of fire & had no casualties" – this last is, I very much fear more than improbable & to say how every heartthrob of mine is torn with anxiety is impossible. Heavens! how I pray God you are safe! I vow over & over again that if you escape & come home

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all right, I will never let you leave me again – life is too short, my darling, for these long enforced separations & when this one is a thing of the past, do not ask me to stand another. The little ones have had colds but are much better. Flora was home for two days & considered it a terrible punishment to be kept from school – she is indeed very ambitious, poor dear. Gertrude & Dubbie are on the verandah singing "Soldiers of the Queen" for all they are worth. They get on so well together. The other day while seated quietly sewing I overheard their conversation – "Gertrune, Papa is at the war now" "Yes, Dubbie he's in Cape-town" "Gertrune he is fighting the Boers now" "Yes, Dubbie & our Papa is sure to win for he has the <u>biggest fists</u>, you know"

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They seem to be under the impression that each & every one of you meets a Boer single handed & as you are all fairly sized men, cannot possibly be defeated." "Dubbie, Papa is an Englishman you know" said Gertrude yesterday p.m. I asked Dubbie "what is an Englishman?" he replied "A

Soldier of the Queen, Mamma, who goes to fight the Boers". Their little brains are busy all the time as you see & they think of him they love so dearly & who is so far from us, my dearest. What better proof can you have of the constancy & depth of our love, dear, than that? On Mamma's birthday I gave her one of your large photo's nicely framed & I need not tell you that the sight of your dear self caused us all pain & brought tears to our eyes, particularly Mamma, who was much affected & pleased with the gift. Private George Scott, No. 2 Company 1st [A].R. wrote a very nice letter in "The Globe" in answer to an assertion that you had not served in the Wolseley expedition being "only a boy then" – some person sent me the paper & I wrote him as nice a letter as possible thanking him for his nice words & sent him your photo. Did I do right & do you remember him? he resides in Mount Forest.

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he relates that on one occasion he was going to have his face slapped when you stepped up & said "Corporal, do you not think you had better settle this with a man of your own size?" You became fast friends afterwards. Mrs. Hebden asked me to a Tea last Friday – there were about thirty ladies there very nice & she seemed pleased to see me. Her hair is perfectly white; otherwise she has not changed much. Gertie is still enjoying her visit in Winnipeg – she has remained over to meet Mrs. Sanders who goes to spend some time with Mrs. [Jukes] in May. The despatches show us that you have all met in that distant [/pg 4]

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Country. I do hope the climate will not be too trying, as added to all the rest it will be very hard on men unaccustomed to rough it. I am sending you by Inspr. Strickland, who leaves in a few days, some packages of "Foot Powder" to relieve sore feet – you poor dear I know yours will often ache & you may then, when getting relief from its use, bless your poor little wifie for sending it to you. Even that will be a comfort to me in my loneliness & separation. Antoine has passed his exams successfully, but still has another year – he is, of course delighted, as he feared some of [/pg 5]

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branches. The streets are improving – the snow has all disappeared, but there is a great deal of mud in some of the side streets – they say that is the cause of all the sickness which is prevalent as present. Gus' brother-in-law, Leon [Masson], the eldest of the family is dying – he was stubborn &

would not see a medical man in time – now it is too late. Marie feels it very keenly – their boy has had a severe attack of bronchitis & they feared for his life, but he has rallied & will now pull up quickly – he is teething, so that makes it harder on him. Gus has grippe too, so every one of us has been more or less under the weather. There is some talk of moving Mrs. Steele to Ottawa, as the Dr. says they can do so now, but she is just the same. I have not seen her for some time. I sent her your picture in a lovely brass frame as an Easter gift – I know she was pleased. Young Elmes' [Clarry's] son is home for treatment, being stone deaf of one ear – his mother fears he will never get better & feels very badly about it. Well, my dear old boy, I will leave you now. Frank & all join in fond love. Alice is still with us but anticipates going to Col. in June. With ever so many sweet kisses from our dear little ones, in which I join, believe me, Your own loving, lonely, heartbroken wifie

Maye.

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