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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste Famille St
April 27th, 1902

My own darling Boy,

Your two letters of March 20th & 22nd, as well as the envelope enclosing Belcher's all came to me on Wednesday afternoon last, much to my great surprise & pleasure – my usual day being Monday, I had given up hope of hearing from you until tomorrow, so I verily believe they received an even warmer welcome than usual. They are the first that come since

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those of the 12th & 14th, so you see, my dear fellow, that you have not written me every day, any way.

Now that I have made you cognizant of that fact, I will answer the first, that of the 20th. You had a few moments & devoted them to me – well dear I do the same very often & even if my pen is not in hand, my thoughts are constantly with you, but cannot find the leisure to commit them to paper - "a right good thing!" I fancy I hear you say-

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think of the nonsense you are spared perusing, eh! dear? The massage treatment is doing me good, but it is expensive - \$1.00 per treatment & I usually take two a week – you see how money goes! You must have been & are always very busy – why move troops from west to east? are the Boers not as active in the western part as usual? The places you mention are not all on the expensive maps I got from England – it is provoking, as I wanted them so as to be able to follow all your movements. Having four or five of them now I go from one to the other & imagine the locations, if I cannot find them. Delighted to know Lord Milner was pleasant. The [S. G.] had not long to knife poor Boyd. I do feel so sorry for him – the more I think of him, the more I regret his early death. I feel for you too, knowing you liked him &

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that you have the sad & difficult task of writing to his family. Lord K. does not seem to think much of Canadian officers in the S. A. C. I wonder how Col. McDonnell [sic] will get on! they did not take long to get promotion & reach your rank in the Canadian Militia, did they? I thought he could scarcely ride again after his terrible injuries – they are to appoint an Asst. Comr. in the Yukon at

\$1600.00 a year & Zach Wood gets it – so last night's "Star" says. I hope you are getting the paper

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all right now, my dear boy & have time to follow up things – the N. W. M. P. pension bill passed its third reading all right – no more since. Major Gen. French & wife passed through on their way to Eng. this week. You will see a short notice in Thursday's "Star." He found the west much improved since he was Comr. of the N. W. M. P. - going to the Coronation, I suppose. I see the Critchleys all came home this week – at least, I think it is the one who went out with the S. A. C. & not one of the ranchers.

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If the officers who go with this last contingent are Minto's choice, I hope he displayed better judgement than he did in his former selections – I am so glad you are such a model – you can be, I know if it pleases you to be – also that Hilliam is doing so well. I think these young & giddy nurses need a sedate chaperone like myself to look after them – all their studies give them only a greater liking for the opposite sex I begin to believe - & it is a dangerous place to venture in at present, when there are so many to be ensnared, as S. A. is just now. If Vaux is all right, I hope he will succeed in having his trouble made O. K. as it is hard on him to be so far from here, with no prospect of work. I hope your cold is thoroughly well & that you felt no bad effects from it. How very careless of the General's A. D. C. to lose all the Confidential reports you had written – not only because of the trouble of writing them over, but because it would be very awkward

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for you. Major Stewart has had a lesson which he will not likely forget – drink is the cause of a deal of misery, is it not? The price list is appalling & there is no use of our thinking of going down when prices are so high – perhaps, by waiting, the war office may help defray our expenses when peace is declared & they want people to go & settle the country. We must trust to luck – at any rate, I would bring out the lightest kind of furniture & suitable for packing into wafers & moving around, as

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military people are so often required to do. Why we would be years getting over the expenses of the trip I fear & we cannot do that – we must take time to consider the best thing to do & "await the turn of the tide" with patience. Your next is dated the 22nd of Mar. & you were evidently pleased with mine of Feb 13th & 16th as you are so affectionate – not that that is anything new, but when

you write between letters, they are sometimes not quite as ardent – I do not mean this as a reproach, for I

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would be doing you a great injustice, but you know what I mean. The little ones are well & look so – Gertrude has had a cold, but remained in bed for a day & a half & has got up, apparently well & as bright as a dollar today. We missed Mass this morning – I overslept myself, a thing I am never guilty of, & could not get them all dressed in time to go. We had horrible weather yesterday – it was a cold, rainy day & we had our first thunderstorm of the season. Today is dreary & cool, but the sun is trying hard to shine. Our Sundays are usually wet ones of late. Yes, I told Taylor I had done up the parcels of discharges & saw you hand them to Moir – also that I had helped you sort them & read them after you had signed them, so he knows Moir got them. I cannot believe Moir destroyed them, but it is a queer thing anyway. Why did they not go to the “Dead Letter” office? I cannot understand how

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Moir left so soon after being married – surely the poor fellow has not made a mistake & found it out so soon?

Yes, I have written Jarvis twice since Nov. - the first was only a few kind wishes & the children's' photo for Xmas – the next, in answer to his was longer & more chatty. I do not remember your ever mentioning a Southern lady in my presence. It strikes me you are after all a terrible flirt & seem

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to make a favorable impression on ladies in a very short time & strange to say, a lasting one too! - “Buzz” is a tease & is fond of ladies himself. I do hope the little woman in Montreal is dear to you, for she is as fond of you as ever, which is saying a good deal – she tells you all her inmost thoughts & awaits your coming or at any rate, your meeting with as much love & anxiety as she did your coming in /90. I know the cattle affair was a great ruse – so did the rest – that is why
Richard

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thought de Wet so awfully smart to fool the British – that the Boers outwit them every time – I suppose they have got indifferent about their homes & do not care whether they are burnt or not. Gertrude does not forget “Chawcole” & we often speak of those days, I assure you. You must be in splendid condition now & your telling me so, only makes me all the more anxious to feast my eyes upon you, my darling.

I am sure young Steel is a nice fellow & trust he will do well. It is the account books that are in the terrible mess – the paymasters books of S. H. not the diary

& orders books – The accounts cannot be straightened out – that is the trouble. Elmes is looking forward to going to you, but failing that will go with the present contingent. He does not think much of Vir – speaks bitterly of him (of course, this is strictly entre nous) & says he would not tell any one else but me.

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They certainly did not act nicely to Katie & himself – she will never forget it, I am sure. You are always very busy & you may rest assured, I appreciate your letters knowing how much occupied you are. Torla's first communion dress is made & it is very pretty. I got the very best of everything & will have her photographed in her toilette for your sake. I hope she will look nice & that it will please you.

Gertrude is to do the collecting

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on that occasion – she calls it the re-collection & is delighted – she must be fixed up nicely too. It will take place on May 7th. The other day I called Dubbie to come & be washed previous to going out to play on the side walk – he told me a long story about a little boy who was out with dirty face & hands. I commenced to lecture & said “what would people say if they saw you with a dirty face?” - he looked at me very earnestly for a few moments & then said in most solemn tones

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“they would say – he is not his father's son!!” - I just roared laughing – he is very original in his remarks & so witty too, poor little chap – He is so proud of his dark green serge coat & feels like a soldier walking about. Flora is writing one of her effusions – she is developing talent for writing, is she not? she composes all herself – no help from me, for I want you to see her improvement. Had a letter from Jayne & he wants me to get Uncle Henry to say a good word for him re collectorship of customs at White Horse – It is a hard thing to do, for Uncle Henry has no influence at all, as you know. I will see about it later. Says he has been working for a long time & no pay. Gertrude & Dubbie are skipping together just now & they are bobbing up & down like two corks in water – the funniest thing in the world. Marie, Gus & their boy are coming to dinner, so I will have to cease. God bless you, my pet. Capt. Bliss died after a very short illness –

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is he the one who was in the Yukon, distinguished himself there & married Miss [Costigan] years ago? Well, my darling, good bye – if I go on, I will pen pages more & you will be too tired. Did you get my Xmas parcel, as well as that sent by the Ladies from here? Of course, you will write & thank Mrs. Busteed, Pres. of the Soldiers' Wives League for sending it. I have missed several of the meetings – could not go, other engagements.

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Our house cleaning is almost finished, but we are not all fixed up yet. Had tea at the Reiffensteins on Friday, only a few, but pleasant, although as I was out shopping with Mamma, we were very late, so remained but a short time. I hope you will soon send me a cheque – money just running out. Really, I do not waste a cent my pet, & do not spoil the little ones, by giving them too much. Frank sent you a hat some time ago – large one from Stetson – You see I have to keep him going, as well as the rest of expenses. He writes in a very blue mood sometimes & wants to give up all, but I tried to speak kindly & explain I regarded it as a loan. I suppose Belcher will soon be writing again – it keeps me on the dead

[jump] all the time trying to pay up. I fear the coal in the Yellow Head will not turn out anything for a long time, as the railway meets with opposition in the House. I must send Hicks & Sons some soon. The amounts are such large ones that I

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cannot spin my money out further. I do my very best. Well, God bless you. The little ones are well & join in much love & many sweet kisses – all wish to be remembered. God preserve you & keep you safe until we meet again. Hoping to hear from you soon. As ever

Your own true, warmhearted, devoted, affectionate & lonely little wifie,

Maye.

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