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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste. Famille St.
Montreal, June 7th

My own darling Sam,

For the past week I have endeavored to find a moment to write to my darling pet, but have found it an impossibility. As I told you in my last, your dear letters of April 26th & May 1st arrived ere I closed it & I merely mentioned their coming, reserving the answers for a pleasant hour or two for this week. In the former you mention my first letter after my return from Halifax, so from that I fear you never received

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the few lines I penned bidding you a sad farewell the evening of your departure. I am sorry as I would much have preferred it should be in your hands only. Indeed! dear I fancy that instead of lessening the love we have for each other, that time seems to increase it if such is possible & I must repeat once more, that I fervently hope you shall never leave me again – in fact, I am determined that you will not do so, come what will, so you must make up your mind that hereafter, “wherever thou goest I will go”. I am pleased to know you liked the horses you got to replace the

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lead ones & trust they proved satisfactory in every way. As a rule, it is men of the stamp of young Wilson Smith who usually give trouble in a regiment & after a dose of cells, are more amendable [sic] to ~~dieipline~~ discipline. The news of the entry into Pretoria was well celebrated here, – bunting all over, yesterday was a civic holiday & the night before, they had a great parade of the City Corps. I took our little ones to see it & I must confess they inherit their military spirit. The Royal Scots have a great effect on them all & they admire them immensely. Needless for me to tell you how sad my poor heart is in the midst of the universal rejoicing – how anxious I am for fear something may have happened to you, my dear old darling. I am glad to know my letter comforted Elmes – his mother has been in Ottawa for some

time & is, Miss Smith (Aunt Hannah) told me the other day, as well as can be expected. Mr. Oliver Smith has been ill ever since she left, suffering from lumbago & in bed but he also is on the mend. Did Elmes get any letters from the boys? I think Auguste wrote him. Alice received his letter & enjoyed its perusal exceedingly – she will write again, as soon as she can do so – she is going about a little on this flat & feels that the operation

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will prove very beneficial as soon as she fully recovers from its effects. How strange to meet so many you knew in the West out there. Capt.

Macpherson of High River used to play polo in Macleod, if I remember well? Is ex-Const. Kennedy the one who was dismissed from the N.W.M.P. in Macleod? He used to sing, recite, paint, in fact was highly accomplished & when all right a perfect gentleman in every way – he was a Capt. in the navy & a cousin of Capt. McIlree. I am delighted to learn your teeth are so good & hope they will give you no trouble when you are at the front – tobacco as a rule spoils the teeth, I believe. I really believe that

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I could get a free trip over on the Elder Dempster line if I want to go to London when you return. Mr. Sinclair is very courteous indeed, so is Mr. Campbell the manager. I went to see about the photographs the other day & Mr. Sinclair told me he would have an album made up & presented to me – very nice, is it not? Your dear letter of the first of May is now open before me & I too regret you were sorry to see I was in the blues, but it is hard to be otherwise sometimes – things are often very, very hard for me. when a woman has had her own little home & has three children to care for & bring up, it is awfully hard for her to please everybody & many a time the little ones

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have to be severely reprimanded for things that would never happen were they in their own home. I do not think it fair to cloud their young lives by making them please a dozen capricious, grown up people, which has to be done, for the sake of peace. You will perhaps imagine why I say, you must never leave me again & that we must have our own little nest once more. Forgive me for speaking to you in this way, but I must open my heart to somebody & to whom, if not to you? The Ottawa people will be far better off than ever before, excepting people like Hon. Mr. Foster, whose lovely residence was burnt & who lost a very valuable law library with all the rest

& persons like Mr. [Eddy] who lost a great deal too. I have so far had no pay from The Militia Dept. I saw Mr. Taylor on Monday – he had been to Ottawa to see about it, as some of the wives had been writing him. As there is another \$221.68 cts. due The Federal Life on the 15th of June, & as I have not had a cent of money since the 1st of April, when Mr. Taylor sent me a cheque for \$[150].00 I went to see him. he promised to let me have the loan of the money & I am to return it at once when I get the pay. The two months would be just \$300 – \$221.68 cts. from that leaves \$78.32 cts & my board at \$40.00 a month comes to \$80.00 for two & I have not enough left to pay that.

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then I have the Great West in June, \$33.45 cts. & Martin who wants more. Then Topley \$38.00, so you see dear, I have rather a hard task – the children require things all the time & I have to get a lot to build me up so if there is a possibility of my having a little more I must say I would be very grateful. You know of old that I never waste a cent, so if I ask for more it is because that life Insurance is so high – otherwise I could have managed all right. The customs dues have not come, so I have written Mr. White once more – the session will soon be drawing to a close & it will not have been paid. This delay in remitting the pay is very trying to a woman with a family, I must confess.

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I also have Flora's schooling which although not much in itself, soon counts up, with the little extras. I must get another Miners Licence to send Mr. Belcher – another \$20.00 will go there & I had to send a copy of power of Atty. to Capt. McIlree & had to get two, so they came to something too. Do not be angry at me dear for bothering you with these details, but I want to show you that I really require more in order to make both ends meet, during your absence. Auguste moved out to Terrebonne yesterday & is comfortably settled in Mr. Masson's house for the summer. he lunched here today & will do so often I feel sure. He likes to hear the news. Antoine expects to leave at the end of the

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month & is looking forward to his trip west with the greatest eagerness. Your dear letter of May 6th came on Monday the 5th & received a warm welcome. Your letters came like a big ray of sunshine into my existence & keep me radiant for a time. Your corps must have been in splendid

condition & if you meet the enemy, will I feel sure do well. how fervently I pray you may all escape! It is a shame for me to trouble you airing my trials, but dear, pray forgive me. I cherished the fancy that you might get \$150.00 per month from Lord Strathcona & pay from the Imperial Govt. too, but I have been mistaken to my sorrow I must confess. I have been very miserable & am in de Lotbinière's hands once more. He says extreme weakness is the main cause of my ill health & wishes to build up my Constitution & says he will put some flesh on my bones, for I have wilted to a mere shadow. I really feel stronger for the last week. I have to drink Vichy water only, no tea, very little coffee. I do hope by following his directions closely, to get better soon. Diptheria [sic] broke out in Regina barracks some time ago. I do not know if it was very bad, but saw in the papers that the quarantine was raised, so suppose all is well. Mrs. Gordon Mathews (Clare) had a daughter in Prince Albert the 1st of this month so last night's "Star" told me. The Press excursion from the west comes tomorrow. [C.S.D.] & Mrs. Wood, Mr. & Mrs. Saunders & Nellie Ives are among them. I suppose we shall see them.

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Mrs. Hope called on Tuesday but I was out – she left me a photo of "Buzz" & I will give her one of yours in return. I trust you enjoyed your dinner at Government house & will keep the invitation as a souvenir. God bless & guard you, my darling – how eagerly I peruse every paper I can get to see if I can follow your movements & how difficult it is to do so. Louise & her boy are going to Grand Mère where Willie is working, for a few months & is to leave about the 27th of this month. I do hope we will get a servant soon – it is so hard to be without one, when we are so many & have such a big house to keep up. it is too much, as none of us are exceedingly robust women!!.. It has been raining most of the day & rather

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disagreeable, but the weather looks more promising for tomorrow. Mr. Taylor was anxious to know if you had mentioned receiving other hats about five weeks after you left, as he sent a lot bought I think he said in Philadelphia. He sent a large consignment & very sincerely hoped they reached you ere you left Capetown for the front. I had a letter from Uncle John who had heard from you – he was well. All join in fond love to you. Flora has her review in music today, but as I will go to the distribution of prizes later on, I did not go. She returned quite happy, so I suppose everything was satisfactory. She is growing & filling out – her teeth require

attention & I am coaxing her to come to Frank with me, but it is hard work. Gertrude & Dubbie are well & happy too – they all speak of you so often dear. The other day when the three [illegible] by firing 21 guns announced the entry of Lord Roberts into Pretoria, Gertrude flew out to tell Judge Doherty's housekeeper the news. "Do you hear those gun's" she said – the housekeeper answered Yes, "well they have just killed a hundred Boers" with the biggest twinkle in her eye "& the war is over now & my Papa is coming home again". Poor little things – when the papers come, they crowd around to hear the news!. It is now late & I will have to say good-night to you, my darling. Mamma says to be sure & give you her love. With very many warm loving kisses from our dear little ones, & ever so many more from myself, which I too imprint right here..... trusting that God will keep you & guard you until we meet again, believe me,
Your ever loving, lonely, heartbroken little wifie

Maye

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