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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, April 1st 1898.

My own dearly loved Husband,

Yesterday morning was bright & happy for me, my darling, bringing me four of your dear letters at once, that of Mar 3rd, two of the 15th & one of the 20th, so you can imagine the rejoicing there was throughout the house & even among some outsiders, such as Morgan, Moore etc. You must have had a terrible experience in your attempt to get to Chilcoot [sic] pass, poor fellow! how sorry I am that you have to go through the misery of it all & feel bad for Skirving too. I hope your cold is now quite well & that you will be well & hearty for some time to come. I am not surprised at what you say of the Government agents at present in the country – some of the members have requested all the letters to & from Walsh to be put on the table in the House & want to know what he has done since he went up. The Yukon Railway Bill was defeated in the Senate by 54 to 14 so you see there will be no road after all. Inspr. Wood is transferred to Depot in last night's General Orders I have just been told – will he come down or is it only that Mrs. Wood will move down & get quarters there? Skagway must be frightful, every one has the sauce to say of it, I think. I now take your first letter of the 15th up & although it is so short there are many loving words in it, my darling. Needless for me to say I miss

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you, for you know that, as I told you in a former letters half my heart seems to have gone from me since your departure. Your little ones speak of you continually & I could not forget you, if I would or were tempted to do so even for a moment. Alec told me that Major Walsh was Senior Superintendent of the Police up there & as such has jurisdiction over all of you – is it the case. I am told that Mrs. Perry has gone to the coast with her children for two months – that Major Perry then goes for two years, as he is to be appointed Comr. of the Police in the Yukon – if so, surely you will not remain under him. I think it disgusting to have people put over your head in that way, especially when you have always done your duty so well. Mrs. Perry told Calgary people that news before she left. I am pleased to learn

people are kind & nice to you & oh! darling, how I did wish I had been near to nurse you when you were ill. I felt it in my heart & told Elmes & Alice that several times – there surely is some magnetic influence, when two fond hearts are separated, for th one can usually know how the other is, whether well or ill. The children are still suffering from very severe colds, the whole of them, but seem to be a little better. Constance has been in bed five weeks now & is very ~~well~~ weak: both she & Girlie have whooping-cough & I very much fear ours will get it too, if that is not what they are already suffering from. Poor little things – they have been ill ever since you left us. I am giving them tonics & hope they will pick up soon. Fancy all

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all the worry & fatigue that I am having. I am beginning to feel it myself & will have to consult Regie the first time he comes down. So you have found out that your love for me is deep, my darling – well mine was that all the time, even when you were near, & that clouds obscured the calm & rosy sky of our married life – the sun will still shine for us, dear, & perhaps will seem all the brighter after our long separation. God bless you, darling. Mr. Jarvis who left on Tuesday last, will, if he passes through Skagway give you an idea of how things are here. They would take coal & oil away too, only through Patterson's kindness I draw what I need of the latter & they still give me coal. Why, after issuing a double rations for Feb, it being all weighed when you left, they charged me up with the difference & all that Moore got in the shape of warm clothing was too, so my [G].M.S. bill last month was \$18.00. Major Walsh could not help speaking in high terms of you to people – you have always done your duty & have been honorable in every way, so he could do nothing else. I told you before of Regie sending the hundred & we had a letter & receipt in due time. Mr. Jarvis will also tell you of the move. They

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say Capt. Deane was asking what I was going to do, but J. will tell you more if you see him, but in case you do not I had better do so. Capt. Deane had a letter from Capt. McIlree, I believe & he told Mr. J. that they wanted the quarters but he was not going to tell me & asked Mr. J. to do it – he hinted at it & when I cornered him, begged me not to bring his name into it. I at once wrote Uncle Henry explaining all circumstances & asked him to do what he could for me. This is no season to turn me out on the prairie with three sick children & I will not stir one inch, until I hear positive news from you. Capt. D. has not been near me or said one word, so I feign ignorance too. I think it very hard, considering how you were sent off on such short

notice etc. If I did take "Time by the forelock" it may do no harm. I have no intention of going East – in the first place, cannot afford it; then Mabel & John are to be with Mamma until Oct so there are too many there already for me to think of going with three little ones. when Louise & her boy have a home of their own I may visit Mamma, but until then..... There would be little use in writing the Commissioner if I am in serious bother, as he seems to have no say in the matter at all now-a-days. at least, that is what he asserts himself & it looks true. Yes, Mrs. Zach Mrs. Harper, Mrs. Moodie & myself are minus rations now. They wanted to take Moore away just after you left, but he said he had promised you faithfully to remain & that I needed some one. He got into trouble on St. Patricks day, being on guard he with

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with three others had a good time, drinking some whiskey & beer in the washroom. I do not know if they were intoxicated, but Moore got eight days in the Guard room & was told by the O.C. when informed that this was his first offence, that "if he was not punished before, it was not because he did not deserve it, but because he had been allowed too much rope" a thing which greatly irritated him, as he looked upon the remark as a slur upon you. The O.C. is detested I assure you & many would re-engage if you were here. Moore's time is up on the 29th & he will not take on again. He received orders to live in Barracks today; considering the long time he has been in the Police & the short time he has to put in, he might have been left alone. Tucker also leaves on Tuesday & says he may return in the Autumn if you are here. Dr. Haultain has been returned to duty today, but do not know for how long. I hear he has asked for a transfer to Battleford & it has been forwarded & recommended. Mrs. Sanders told me yesterday that she had seen Capt. D. but once since he came & also entre nous that one night, when Toddles was very ill & that the Dr. had to sit up all night watching & caring for her that she asked that Mr. Sanders be wired to, as he was down at Kootenay Lakes. The next

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morning finding the child better she told an officer to tell Capt. Deane he need not do it. O! said the Officer, "he has not the intention of doing it anyway," as he had positively refused to do so the evening before, but they would not tell her. She almost burst out crying when she told me.

Considering all the kindness shown his eldest son by the Jukes family for so many years, do you not think him very ungrateful indeed? I think it horrible. It is hard for a poor woman to be alone in such trouble: fortunately

she has warm, kind friends in the Caseys & Wroughtons who have helped her & sat up with her nightly. Mr. Davidson has come in & called this evening – he is in a predicament too, as his wife is alone with the children, [Corrine] being at the Lethbridge Convent & she has not even a servant – he is in for duty in the post & as there are no quarters he does not know what to do. Morgan is also going if they will let him buy his discharge – he has the offer of a good position on the C.N. line & is anxious to take it if possible, but told me he would never leave were you here, but cannot stand the new regime. There was a rumor in Lethbridge this week that you were on your way to Ottawa with special dispatches & Minnie wrote asking if it was true: that is the second time that this rumor goes about. “The Black Diamond” is still shipping under Gibson’s management. Alec will have told you that I suppose in his last. I think he feels mad that you have not written him, since you left. Clary goes to Kaslo to see about “The Ibex” but is looking for something to do – he is better, Katie writes Elmes today.

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Saturday, Apr 2nd. I will now continue the letter commenced last evening, but which I was compelled to leave on account of Baby’s wakefulness. I sincerely hope the little ones will soon be well again, for they are sometimes pretty difficult to manage, as they get peevish & want their own way in everything. Mr. Jarvis gave me his hen when he left, but they have made quite a fuss, as they were claimed as the Mess hens. Brindell said he went with Mr. Primrose to buy them & the say (that is Mr. Tabor says) that Mr. Wroughton & Mr. Casey have decided to charge Mr. Jarvis with the keep of the house & are to deduct \$9.00 worth of wheat from his pay. Of course, nothing has been said to me by them, but I know Mr. Casey wanted them & Mr. J. would not give them to him. I know positively Mr. J. brought them in from Stand-off & they have dwindled down to six hens & three male birds. Moore tells me that when he went for the oil a few moments ago, Sergt. Pattison wanted to cut it down again, so I suppose by the next fortnight I will have to pay for it & the coal. Mrs. Moodie has had to buy the two latter ever since her husband left. He comes back soon, as his eldest daughter is to be married as soon as her father comes, & is expected shortly after Easter. The Officers

[reverse]

here say it is decidedly Mr. Wood who is transferred to Regina & not only his wife who is to move. So that the result of the trouble between Major Perry & the rest of them? They say Perry has a firm hold on the government in some way & I do hope he is not going to step over your

head in this manner. Every one is anxious to know whether you are to remain up there or not – it seems to make a difference to them, for if they considered you strict they preferred your hand of steel to the one who rules them now. So Perry ahead of you that you forwarded Mr. Woods report to him, or was it merely for him to forward to Ottawa. You will, I fear find me very inquisitive, but pardon a woman's failings. Charlie Sharples is going to Regina for a couple of months to help them with the [fixing] of the new [branch]. he will get quite a good salary, his wife told me. She came in the other evening for a time – I wanted her to remain so I had asked Miss Ives, Miss Morden, & a few others in, as the Morden's were polite to Alice when she went to the Creek. They played games, music & we had cake & cocoa – they enjoyed it. Clare, Johnny Bullock, Elmes, Mr. [Gurd], & McLean as well as Miss Devlin were our guests & it gave Elmes an opportunity of meeting some of the young folks. He is a great favorite in the office. Mr. Harwood is very fond of him & says he is a good fellow. All that was said of his conduct in Kaslo was false. Alec told Alice that he was a terrible flirt, ran after married women, & drank all the time. his behavior here belies all these reports. Morgan has just been in & says to give you compliments en masse. All the old men are leaving & the men who are taking on now

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he would be ashamed to bow to in the street. [Murison], in fact, all are disgusted & the whole def division has gone to smash. I will not leave this house, whether ordered to or not until I hear positively what you are going to do. If you remain for any time & I have to rent a house, I shall be compelled to sell the furniture at a great sacrifice & move where I can get a house, as there is not one to rent in this town which is getting to be a very tough place. Miss Hughes & Mr. Cummings are waiting till they can find a house to be married, so you see how things are. Have you written Uncle John? he wrote after you left, but I have been so busy that I have been unable to answer him, but will endeavor to do so soon. We have had beastly weather all March, cold & stormy & April has not commenced very brightly so far. You got all the letters I enclosed with mine I suppose, for you say nothing whatever about them. Well, my dear old darling if you advise me, I shall have the garden attended to, with the hope that ere the things are ready for use you shall have returned to us & will be here to enjoy them. O! my darling how much I miss you & how I long to hear your voice once ~~hea~~ more – will I not welcome you warmly when you return to us again? how we have

[reverse]

sighed, & wept for you no one knows, & the poor wee ones! You will have no peace for days, as they will be so overjoyed they will not want you out of sight for a moment. Morgan has not been over to fix your desk yet, he is kept on the dead [pump] all the time I believe. I sent you by Mr. J. six plays of T.&B & some photographs as you have none – regret I have none of dear little Dubbie's to complete the group – hope they will be as warmly welcomed as the love that accompanied them was true & warm. Regie has not yet decided on what to do & may build in Pincher Creek – partly depends on my movements I fancy, for he is not going to see me stuck. Well, my old sweet-heart I fear I must cease my chatter, as the mail will soon leave & I must be ready as I hadte to miss one, they are so very irregular just now. God bless you my darling & keep you safe among all the trouble that surrounds you & do not run too many risks, as loving hearts await you down here. Alice sends love & says she will write some day soon – she looks very well indeed & seems quite happy. The little ones join me in love & many sweet kisses to their own dear Papa. Hoping to hear from you soon, with a heart brimming over with deep affection for my dear absent one, believe me, as ever

Your own true, devoted wife

Maye.

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