

2008.1.1.1.1.104

Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, Apr 17<sup>th</sup> 1898.

My own darling Sam,

Your short note written in Skagway on Mar 26<sup>th</sup> reached me on the 13<sup>th</sup> & you know how delighted I was to hear from you, my darling. I cannot understand how my letters fail to reach you, as I have written regularly every week, sometimes twice. I have had them weighed every time so that there would be reason for them to go astray, so I really cannot understand why they should fail you, my own pet. You know me well enough, darling after eight years of wedded life together to be sure I would not neglect you in that way, & I sincerely hope they will all come in good time, as most of them contained something important in one way or other. I think all your letters have reached me, as I answer every one of them as they come, mentioning the dates every time. I am sure your morning experience must have been anything but pleasant & I am happy to know you escaped safely. The people here seem to have suffered in the same way as you have up there, coughs & colds being very prevalent all winter – now that spring has come I hope we will

[reverse]

have a change. The children, particularly Gertrude have whooping cough very badly – I am constantly on the jump all night, as Gertrude almost chokes & needs watching. Flora is on the mend & I find Baby better too. He has now eight teeth & is cutting more, so I hope he will be over that trouble before the warm weather sets in. He is looking more like his old self, in fact, is looking very much like his dear old papa, I fancy. Elmes wants to know if you received his letters for you have not acknowledged them even to me & he wrote you twice, enclosing his in the same envelope as mine. If mine do not reach you I regret it very much, as I have written long ones always & told you all my troubles etc. Your dear letter of Apr 4<sup>th</sup> came yesterday & you cannot imagine how I thanked God for your escape from that terrible snow slide which occurred [sic] on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. I was like a demented person for some days, fearing every moment to hear you had been one of the victims. O! Great Heaven, how anxious one can be when a loved one is so far

away! friends consoled me by saying the truth would have been known at once, but it was hard to convince me & I said "when I get a letter written after the 3<sup>rd</sup>, I will believe". my heart is now at rest on that score, while I am still very anxious concerning your health which has been so poor since you left me. I hope my dearest, that you will not be compelled to remain very long up there, as the climate certainly does not seem to agree with you. Dr. Haultain who

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came in a few days ago, said he was not surprised to hear you had been ill, as he feared the climate would be unfavorable. as for forgetting you darling, far from it! I seem to think more of you all the time & I can say the same for our dear little ones. You must have had a very rough trip up to Bennet, & the summit. Mr. Strickland must have been pleased to get away & I am glad you like your officers, as it is more agreeable to work with men you like, than with some you do not care for. How strange it seems to meet so many you know in that far away place, & seeing a familiar face must be doubly nice under the circumstances. Who accompanied you, was it only Const. Clare? You left Mr. Cartwright at the Summit so must have found the way long. By the by, Mr. C. is engaged to Lucy Taschereau, a daughter of Judge Henri Taschereau, whose second wife is de [Lotbiniere's] mother-in-law, formerly Mrs. Masson, so it is all in the family, as you see – did you know that? I do hope, my darling, that you will feel no ill effects from your many falls, especially when the horn of the saddle was in the pit of your stomach. What a dreadful country it must be – not a fit place for Christians to live in. You must be very weak from the night sweats which have been troubling you & take fresh

[reverse]

cold I fear during the day, making your cold worse all the time. You will, of course continue your work & I do hope you will soon be able to return home to us. In my last letter written by Tuesdays mail, I enclosed a letter from George Cowan which will, I trust reach you. Do you anticipate making a long stay at Bennet [sic]? & should I address letters there? but, no! I will still send them to Skagway knowing they will be forwarded but will not address "c/o Officer Comdg. N.W.M.P. Vancouver" as if he is absent, they may be detained en route. I have sent you several papers too, so you must tell me whether they reached you. I suppose you left most of your wardrobe in Skagway, as you could not bring so much with you. Your pink flannelette pillowcases will be handy & comfortable for your dear, old head, only I wish I was near to give the pillow a good shake & make you comfortable. Did

you ever get the blue handkerchief & large cowboy hat, sent at the same time & in the same parcel as Skirving's? You have not acknowledged them & I have asked you several times. Marie knows Clare, was once I believe, engaged to him, so she says & was delighted to hear he was with you. It is strange, you should meet people who know the family up there. The world is not so very large after all. As you must know by this time, Mr. Jarvis left long ago & may be with you as I write, if he has not gone on to his destination ere this. he brought you some tobacco & photo's [sic] which may please you, dear. I hope he will have an opportunity of seeing you. I was

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sorry to see him go, as he seemed more friendly than any of the other officers were or are. Mr. Casey is very kind in attending to business for me & does what he can. The rest of them I very seldom see, even the Sergt. Major having kept away for a long time, but I gave him a few cuts about it, which seem to have made him ashamed of his conduct. Alec came up for a few days, but stayed at the Mess. Elmes being here at night, he does not care to meet him, I fancy. [Alec] was delayed by high water at Kipp – he came over & wanted papers of the B. Diamond containing figures, but I found very few, in fact none in your small desk, but will look again. The Sergt. Major told me "he thought Capt. Mac & Mr. Gibson might pull it through, after all". Of course, Mrs. Mac's letter to Alice caused very strained feelings, between Alec & Alice & he preferred to keep away. Mrs. Mac, has, I think regretted her haste in writing & has dashed several very gushing letters at her since, but the mischief is done & it is late to withdraw what she said, as Alice sent the letter to Fred. Mrs. M. has taken upon herself to settle the time of the wedding with him, without ever consulting Alice who is, as you know of an independent turn of mind & does not

[reverse]

stand much meddling in her private concerns, telling Alice if agreeable to me, she could be married from her house, etc, etc. I cannot tell you all, but Alice has determined to be married here, or go home for it & will not accept her offer. Minnie is good-hearted but too impulsive & apt to draw conclusions too hastily – entre nous Marguerite is engaged to Sergt. Major Macdowell but her father does not know it nor is he likely to, as he would, I suppose object. You will be sorry to hear poor Gertie lost her little boy who was about five weeks younger than our little darling – how or from what cause I cannot say, as we only saw his death in "The Star" & have had no letter since. he was teething & was not very well, but they did not seem to

think much of it. I feel so sorry, as she grieved bitterly over her little Louise's death & was only getting comforted now, when this other terrible trial comes to her – how her affectionate heart must be torn by sorrow for the wee thing, as they unconsciously entwine themselves round one's heart until they seem part of one's very life. I pray God will give the poor child the necessary courage to bear the heavy burden of her cross. They think of moving to the country again, but where I cannot say. I hear Richard is doing very well. Elmes brought Major [Bowles] up to spend last Tuesday evening with us – we found him charming & he found us enchanted – such voices as Alice's & mine! – such ladies!! he was not surprised I did not go out much here, for where were the people for me to meet? the society?. we made quite an impression on him, I believe.

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he left yesterday for Fort Steele & will not, I fear come this way again. Mr. Edwards was here in the beginning of the week & spent an evening here too. Miss [Murcott] is engaged to the Manager of the new Bank in Lethbridge, Mr. Reeve. the family are delighted as they worked hard enough to catch him, they say. Poor old Father Lacombe is here. this morning after mass, he came over to inquire about you. he is very much altered & is thin after his long illness – he goes to Pincher Creek to recuperate for a time. There is not much news to give you – things are quiet in a way. All are wishing you were home again. nine of the men are to leave on the same day soon. I have had no answer to my letter ~~from~~ written Uncle Henry some three weeks ago, re moving me from my present quarters. I hear nothing about it now. Inspr. Allan is going to Calgary & will reside in the Herchmer house, I am told. I do hope you will get all my previous letters as I have said so many things & want answers from you as well. I hear Clare's engagement to Mr. Matthews is given out & that she is sporting a new ring. Sergt. Morris' engagement to Miss Harris is off, without a word of explanation from her – he seems to feel it very much. Well, my dear old darling – I wonder what you are doing now & what the difference in the time is. It is now half past eight p.m. & my hand is getting tired so I will [reverse]

have to leave you for tonight. I hope the book I sent by Mr. Jephson will reach you safely. "Canadian "Men & Women of the Time". I will send you more papers by the same mail as brings this letter to you. Well, my darling I reluctantly leave you for tonight. God bless my dear old sweetheart & bring him home safe to us. I made my Easter duty yesterday morning & how fervently I prayed for your safety, good health & speedy return Heaven

alone knows. Pleasant dreams, & a sweet good night from your own true wifie.

Monday, Apr 18<sup>th</sup>. I fancied this morning's mail might bring me news of some kind but was disappointed, so will close this letter. I send you a notice from Union Bank in Lethbridge, not knowing what else to do, as Elmes says there is nothing else under the circumstances open for me to avail myself of, in the way of making arrangements of any kind. Julia wrote a few lines to Elmes & says she is getting on beautifully. Mr. McFarland has just been in & showed me the notice of the note of \$1.026 11/100. he seemed very much put out about it & I told him I was sure you would make it all right & that he would not lose the money. I told him I was not much of a business woman & that I supposed there was no use of my writing Mr. Vibert. He said he would go down to L. although he was very busy & see what he could do. I am sorry – do tell me if there is anything I can do for you, dear in this affair.

Tuesday. Well, darling, that was all I managed to write yesterday. Mr. Harwood spent the evening here & we chatted & had music as usual. The Sergt. Major was in a few minutes ago & said to tell you to stay there until Autumn – “things will go all right here (& I suppose he alludes to the Mines) in time & you will not have half the worry”. Mr. McFarland asked me if I thought they would take a note with my signature, but I told him I would not do that

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& that I was certain his money would not be lost. I am not going to meddle with your business in that way. tell me if you want to leave the “Loan & Building & if so, I will send you the forms necessary to enable you to draw out the cash paid in. also give me an idea of things – how long must Mr. Cowdry get \$50.00 per month? is it every month? I ask not through curiosity remember, but because I hate to let every person know all the ins & outs of my private affairs & of my ignorance in your business matters. You see I have no one to turn to if I happen to want money in a hurry, & there are so many small bills that crop up continually, such as \$12.00 for those four copies of “Canadian Men & Women etc” besides household expenses, that I am sometimes very much at a loss & must hide my trouble from onlookers. Some lady asked me “if it would not be better to go without a servant” one day – not that I was complaining, but she must have heard some remark of one kind or other. I said, “no, I could not with three young children & giving out my washing & paying doctors bills would come to as much as I give Marie” – do you agree with me? – Do not worry over what I

say, only I want to let you know how things are, for I do not want you to think I spend money uselessly. You understand me, dear? I have not given Moore

[reverse]

any money since you left, but he goes on the 27<sup>th</sup> & I will pay him some later on. He is going to look about for some one to replace him. Well, my dear old darling, God bless you. I hope you are well & almost, if not quite well. You must be careful for these night sweats are dangerous. I hope this as well as my other letters will reach you. All join in love to their dear Papa. Gertrude speaks continually of you & is so anxious for you to return. Alice & Elmes are well & send kind regards. Flora looks better, but is still very thin. the fine weather coming on will I fancy be as beneficial as medicine in her case. Baby is fairly well, were it not for the beastly whooping cough, which is horrible. Gertrude is the worst with it as yet. With ever so much love from all, & many sweet kisses, believe me,  
Your own true warmhearted loving wifie,  
Maye.

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