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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, Apr 28th 98.

My own darling Sam,

It is now my turn to complain of getting no news from you, as I have had no letter from you since the one dated Apr 8th & answered at once, as well as another written you on the 21st which I sincerely hope reached you safely in due time which will I suppose be sometime early next week at the very latest. Well, my darling boy I hope you are feeling better, but if you are not, you should try & make arrangements to return at once, as there is really no use undermining your health to satisfy a capricious government & for which you shall get no thanks. I sincerely hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon, for I really feel that I only exist & do not live happily with you so very far from me. My little ones keep me very busy, but I do miss you so much my own darling boy & oh! what a moment of bliss is in store for me when I hear your dear voice again. Alice & Elmes had gone over to the Dance which was to take place this evening, but owing to bad weather it has been postponed & they have come in, so do not expect a very connected letter this evening. Alice goes over & keeps up a fairly brilliant conversation while Elmes enjoys the mazy to his heart's content. It is the old "Quadrille Club" which is I suppose on its last legs, as so many of the old hands are leaving. Morgan goes on the 1st, Moore left yesterday as well as [Uriack]. By the by, Corporal B [Macnair] has been suffering from fever in Wardner & today shot himself while delirious.

[reverse]

He was not dead when the messenger came, but was not expected to live. Sergt. Murison came over to ask me if he was related to George Hope J. I said "no, but are intimate friends & from the same place in Scotland". They at once telegraphed George Hope to come down. I feel so sorry for the poor fellow as he was a favorite, was he not? The Sergt. Major has been distinguishing himself again lately & I quietly told him to mind his business. He stopped Marie on Sunday night & gave her a talking too [sic]. she was very indignant & he came in on Tuesday morning to tell me. I set upon him to use a slang term (which I hope you will pardon) & rather surprised him.

Wait till you come home & I will open your eyes about him. You will wonder what you were doing when you hear all. He is afraid you are returning soon & wants to keep in with me now, but he showed his hand too soon & played his cards very badly, the traitor that he is!. There was a rumor around Barracks that you were coming in a couple of months & the intense joy of the men was good to see. I do not intend being nice to the S. M. again I can tell you. I was shocked on Saturday last to open the "Star" of Apr 18th & to read of Uncle Willie's death on the 16th in Vancouver. He was Dr. MacGillis as you know & died of pneumonia almost suddenly. None of the family were with him, as owing to the telegrams sent Alec being A. "W. R. Macd." instead of "A. R." they did not reach them until the 22nd, the operator in Lethbridge being evidently too stupid to inquire, although the wording was very explicit. Minnie wrote that if none went up from Montreal, Alec would go out to see that he had been decently buried. The B.C. papers speak nicely of him, saying "he was a prominent medical man & an old

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resident". The funeral was attended by all the medical men etc etc" – three out of the family in less than ten months, poor Papa, Gertie's little boy, now Uncle. I have not seen him for a long time & he was very eccentric, but Alice says he spent a few months in Vaudreuil two years ago & was very nice – she liked him. Eustache came in like a hurricane yesterday & was in a very cranky mood. he has been ill for a fortnight & does not like Kennedy's treatment – he is not very attentive. there was some row about bringing his meals to his room, mind you he has been up & about since Monday but has not gone back to his work & he left Haneyville coming into town. from the way he spoke I conclude he will leave his place. It was the cook who objected to bringing up any more meals saying "Kennedy said he could go to table with the rest" & his indignation knew no bounds. He did not work today either, Elmes says, & the general opinion down there is, that he is ashamed of having remained away so long. What a queer lot they are anyway. I mistrust him & hate to see him come to the house, as he is a terrible mischief maker & invents stories to suit himself. The Comr. is expected in a few days I hear, to hold an investigation into the Sanders, Cuthbert & Haultain troubles no doubt. The latter they say, got the best of it so far, but of course, I hear very little now. Capt. Deane, I have not seen for a long time. I never ask for a team or any favor, since they refused the horses & will be, indeed much pleased when you are here once more. Mr. Duncan J. Campbell is laid up with inflammation of the lungs & is staying at the Kennedy's – his wife is in Halifax, having gone down some six weeks

ago. The children are on the mend, but they keep us busy running up & down

[reverse]

as they get terrible coughing fits. Mr. Harwood kindly sent me a bottle of honey which seems to loosen the phlegm very much. & of course, it does not take much coaxing, as Gertrude is very fond of poney, as she says. Well, my darling, it is late & I will have to say good night – God bless you, my pet & keep you safe from harm –

Friday evening. We have had a very stormy day, rain & sleet but it looks as if it were going to clear up tomorrow & the moisture will undoubtedly do much good. The gardens are not touched, but Mr. Casey very kindly attended to our hotbed for me & the rest will be done in due time, I suppose. Stockton has re-engaged as a special & is doing the work. Poor Corporal Macnairs is dead, I hear, but I can say nothing more, as I know no particulars having seen no one today not even Morgan. The mail is late, so you can judge from that that our day has been free from excitement of any kind. Minnie said in her last written a week ago that Alec had heard from you & “that you wanted him to go to the Yukon, but she preferred being poor all her life rather than have him go so far & leave her alone”. I think I re-echo the statement, as my feelings are similar on the subject. Mr. [Godsal] called a few moments ago. he looks well after his trip to Jamaica – he says to remember him to you & he hopes you will come back soon. Well, my dear, have any of my letters reached you? I am very anxious, as I am commencing to think my letters are tampered with. Uncle Henry never answered mine written him at the end of Mar. re moving me from my present quarters & I fear it may not have reached him. Alice wrote Col. Panet to find out, as I cannot understand his silence after my letter.

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We had a very large prairie fire about fifteen miles out, near the Black Springs. the men went out early in the p.m & worked far into the night. that was on Wednesday, & the rain setting in on Thursday eventually extinguished it. They say the Haultain’s want to come into Barracks as she says “she wants things done as the other Officers wives have, storm sashes put up & taken down, etc etc.”. I do not know who will have to turn out, but as the Davidson’s are also anxious for quarters, some will surely have to shift their goods & chattels & if you do not intend returning soon, your wife & family will certainly not be here to welcome you on your return, as they will tell me I must go. What am I to do in such a case? I cannot get a house in town as there are none to rent & I have not enough cash to go

East. Cowdry, the Insurances & my current expenses take all I have to go on. Be sure & advise [sic] me as I really need advice on the subject & I cannot turn to any one else. I know no one sufficiently well, except Elmes & Regie to whom I could turn & neither are very experienced. [Heffernam] went back to Regina last week. he was evidently on detection work in the Sanders versus Deane racket & from a few hints his sympathies were certainly with the former. He is very reticent & guarded but is surely very observant & well suited for his work. He was on the line all the time of his stay in this District & is not leaving as he intended when he came up. I mean, the Force, as he is always at Regina, the Comr. having a great deal of confidence in him. Well, my dear old pet, I trust you are in good health – the climate must be getting nicer as the warm weather comes on. Gertrude said tonight before going to sleep “my heart is almost broken, it is in the Klondyke

[reverse]

with my own dear Papa” – how she misses you! the poor little things, they get so cross & peevish sometimes & I know it is due to loneliness [sic] for you. I said to Baby this morning “where’s poor Papa” & he looked up at your large picture so pensively & earnestly, then cast his glance on me & smiled sweetly. He has not forgotten you either, though it is three months today since you left us. the time has seemed more like a year!! Flora is commencing her old game of catching grasshoppers & she talks of nothing else. this morning she gave a bath to her family of three, washed out the bottle house, & fed them carefully as it was raining too hard for them to find food for themselves. Are they not the queer little creatures, with their odd fancies? she is looking better, but they are all thin after their long spell of illness, but I hope when the whooping cough gets better, that they will pick up quickly. It is late, so I suppose before my letter gets monotonous I had better say good-night. God bless you, my own darling boy, & be sure & write every chance you get dear, for there is a very lonely heart awaiting you here my own. Alice is well & seems to enjoy herself one way or other – she is usually bright, talkative & musical – some of her photo’s [sic] taken with the camera Fred gave her are very successful. The children would shower kisses all over this paper if they thought they would reach you my pet, & I would mingle mine with their’s [sic], but you can perhaps imagine the delight of it. Hoping to hear from you & that mine reach you safely, believe me,

Your own true, warmhearted, devoted
wifie,
Maye.

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Saturday, Apr 30th. My darling husband, good morning, God bless you. Poor Macnair was alone when he shot himself, as Stockton had returned & Bruce had not reached Wardner. He was buried on Friday in Fort Steele. It is sad is it not? There is no news. Write soon, my darling. All are fairly well.
Your ever loving wife

Maye.

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