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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, Aug 14th 98.

My own darling Sam,

Your dear letters of the 25th, 26th 28th & 30th all came to me on Friday afternoon & needless for me to say what a warm welcome they received. As all your others have been acknowledged & answered, I turn to the first mentioned above. When I think that the time is fast approaching when you can write but twice a month, I feel as if my heart would break!. The B.C. papers mention the large number of people who are coming out without any gold, but like flies they will, no doubt, return next spring. Elmes thinks a great deal of Inspt. Belcher & declares he is a splendid man – one you can trust & have confidence in. I sincerely hope I shall get on nicely with Gertie & Richard & that our little ones will agree. Of course, if they do not, I will find another boarding place. I would take a house myself, only do not like living without a man in the house in case of accidents – one of my brothers might come to me, but Frank & Antoine will be the only ones with Mamma. I shall be as particular as possible concerning the sanitary arrangement etc. Gertie lives on the same street as Mamma only above Sherbrooke. I do not know the exact spot. I shall have Gertrude & Harwood vaccinated almost as soon as I arrive & will, as you know well, take every possible care of all. I feel double responsibility as you are so awfully far away. You know, my darling, if it is in any way possible for the children to reside in Dawson, I shall be only too happy to join you as soon as I can & so will they, for they are heartbroken over the change. Now, that you are gone from here, people have learnt your worth dear, but I must confess they do not as a rule show it very much to me, in any way. If Mrs. Walsh is in M. I shall call on her. I do not think matters were exaggerated concerning Richard mind you – long before we married, he was in trouble of the same sort & was looked down on by many – however he may behave well from this on

[reverse]

& the lesson may prove a profitable one. I sincerely hope he will get on on account of his devoted wife. Gertie seems delighted at the prospect of having us. I shall pay my board regularly & she will always have something

to go on, you see dear. The children will never go out alone & you may be positive, I shall look out for carriages & cars. That letter in "The Irish Times" is very interesting & pleases me immensely. I assure you there is a very nasty spirit in Barracks at present. Congdon has been here since Moore left. The other day he asked me "if he was supposed to get Miss Harwood's horse?" I said "Yes, but that he had very seldom done so – "Then I shall return to duty". I am willing to do anything for you, but positively refuse to do anything for any one outside the Force". I had it hot & tight with him, telling him "Miss Harwood was my sister & guest – that what was done for her was done for me etc etc". I said if you had been here that there would be none of this – that the others had always done it in fact, gave him a good raking over. Then I went over & told Mr. Casey who came with me to Capt. Deane. He was returned to duty at once & Capt. Deane gave particular instructions that he was to be given hard work to do. I noticed that he seldom did what I told him with regard to the saddle etc & when Alice spoke he scarcely answered, but attributed it to ignorance. [Lefairn] is another who used to bring round the horse & who was rude to her, but polite to Elmes, because the latter lent him his horse & saddle to use sometimes. Congdon was rude to Elmes, & wanted Marie to be too, but she fortunately was not. You cannot imagine how awfully disagreeable life is in the Post now & how pleased I am to leave – they can make life so unpleasant in every way. These men are among the next to go to the Yukon & I hope you shall give particular orders that they be kept hard at work. Congdon is a lazy fellow, who did the milking, the lamps & now & then got the meat. that is all he has done. he scarcely lifted a hand to help me with anything of the packing that has been done so far, is in fact, spending his time reading novels lying on his bed. he will have to work now I hope & make up for it – he is a nasty, deceitful,

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mischief maker – several of the old men have the same idea of working for outsiders & will not bring Alice the horse, even when ordered, at least, they say they will not do so. Is not that a nice spirit to have in Barracks? as I told you life is horrible now & I am very glad to go. Mr. Casey is all ready & leaves Thursday I believe – he cannot get a day off duty & is furious at the O.C. I have had the furniture piano & glass ware I wish to dispose of, in view for two days & no person has come up. I fear no one will buy, but thank Goodness, I have transport for my furniture so I do not care. If I gave my good things away, there would be purchasers. Flora will likely go to school with Gertie's two eldest. You know the youngest, [Hermine] is four &

does not speak yet. she must be dumb or has something wrong with her tongue. It is certainly very nice to get the promotion to Lt. Col. & all your old men are pleased. I see something about the medal in the papers & as you say, suppose it will take a long time to get it. Alice will be married the first week in Oct. Fred intends leaving Mexico about the 20th of Sept, the day Auguste thinks of being [spliced]. Flora is picking up wonderfully although she will not take the tonic Dr. Haultain ordered – she is as hard to manage as ever sometimes & hates to have us allude to her illness: she wishes to forget all about it. We all kissed the paper where you did, dear, & Flora wept so much that she made me do so too, & could not tell Marie why we were all in tears. She is a peculiar child & thinks more of you than any one in the wide world! – I had all your books packed only the day before your dear letter of the 26th came to hand, so tomorrow will repack them, sending you your military books. I will also send paper of all kinds bought at Eaton's to bring up, which I hope will be of use. the envelopes were not what I wanted & some of the paper is ruled, however they may come in handy. I have your civilian overcoat here & your green felt hat & really am at a loss to know what to do with them. I imagine you may need them & again wonder if you will. I will also send up a cloth hood which I think belongs to your heavy blue military overcoat, but cannot get moccasins here. Your English goods have come as you will know by my previous letter so I suppose I must send for a blue patrol. I got a nice tweed suit in last order. I intend leaving on the 29th of Aug & my address will be "508 St. Urbain St." for some time anyway.

[reverse]

I see now it would be perfect folly for me to go up without being attended. I have been so ill this week & at this moment am suffering intense pain. Never talk of loving me by your letters. You know, my darling I love you too much & too sincerely to ever tire of the dear words you pen to me. Baby is so tall & heavy that it fatigues me very much to carry him about & he cannot walk, although he rolls all around like a ball. Your dear letter of the 28th in answer to mine telling of Flora's severe illness, now lies open before me. Yes, dear I had an awfully anxious time when she was so ill. She seems to be doing well & her limbs are filling out. She is a fine character, proud & sensitive, but at the same time very hard to manage. I think the change will do her a great deal of good & she will not be as nervous as she now is. I hope & pray all will be well & that Heaven will preserve us all in order that we may all be reunited some day. You are very kind to allow me \$1200.00 a year to live on & I feel sure I will be very comfortable on that & may save some & pay off our debts quicker. If they can only sell the cattle

soon, McFarland's note could be paid much sooner. no more re "Empire" have I heard since I wrote last. I will attend to McFarland & Cowdry as you tell me to & will do my very best. McKenzie is off on the Commission & do not know when he will return. Costigan had to give up, as he was drinking terribly I think I mentioned it in my last letter. You may be sure I will write as often as possible & that my thoughts morning, noon & night will be always with you – it makes me feel very sore, when I think we are to be further apart than ever after this!!!. Elmes went on a great spree when Alice was in the Creek & I now have very little use for him. I think it was very shameful of him to act like that when I was here alone. He did it when she was here ever so often & was surprised she would have nothing to say to him, when as I said in one of my last he was on the verge of D.T.s. He thinks very little of himself & humiliated us before every one – the men do not seem to have the same respect for him as they had before they saw him or knew of it. Notwithstanding all the anxiety I had gone through, he added that worry to the rest – if he does not look out, he will lose his position – he is assistant Auditor, Mr. Harwood being Auditor. I made a mistake

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He seems to fancy he is a paragon. I know he works well, but men are easily found & if he does not take care of himself, he will certainly lose it. Even now, he does not seem to care a pin at the way he treats me – he told Alice she was away but she told him I was here – he cannot comprehend the difference & seems to think me a [mite]. He will soon be left to himself. I brought him here to keep him from bad companions & he appreciates it eh? does not he deserve to be left to his own wise self? as for advice, Alice has given him lots of it; he does not care enough for me to listen to anything I may say. I may simply add, that for your dear sake my Sam, & because he was one of yours I am kind – now, I will be perfectly indifferent & do no more. Morris told some one he would do anything in the world for me & respected me highly – that Alice was the cause of his queer behavior, but I fail to see why. I really think Congdon told lies about some things & made trouble – he is very untruthful & if he ever goes up to where you are, do not trust him too much & make him work – do not forget that. The H. B. Co. sent me an account yesterday of \$80.82 cts. I asked for it in detail, as I owe nothing there to my knowledge or very little of anything. If it is given in detail & I think you got the articles, I will try & pay it soon. I weigh 97 now, & am getting thinner all the time. Yes, I attribute Flora's illness to too much fruit no doubt & may be a little cold, the weather is sometimes so changeable. It is now late & I feel tired so I will say good night my own

darling boy. God bless you & keep you safe until we meet again – Monday evening. Now that my little ones are all in bed I come once more to continue this letter. I only got this far when Mr. & Mrs. Harwood & a friend, Mrs. [Annsley] who is staying with them came in & remained until now, 11.30. Mr. Harwood is very nice & seems gay he is very much pleased at having her up, I can tell you. I am getting ready for my trip but it takes a long time to pack – poor old [Donie] came up & packed a sett [sic] of dishes for me tonight & will come up when he can – after all, with all his faults, he has a heart in him & it is in the right place. You will be very busy, I have no doubt. Your detachments are so numerous. Will it not be hard to have fish for so many dog trains? As I told you, Flora is picking up, but will have to take medicine when we get to Montreal – she needs it, as she has not sufficient [lime]

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in her bones – she will have to take something for that. It strikes me you are rather fond of crossing your [L.s] in darlings, but they are that with [T.] & [L's] any way. Mr. Ogilvie is on the way to you for I see his arrival in Vancouver. I have packed a box containing your civilian overcoat, some note paper, two pipes, tobacco, sponges, a sponge basket, your military books etc. which will, I hope reach you in good shape. I have also sent my pistol & the ammunition I have, be sure & take good care of it, as I treasure the pistol very much. I will ask Major Perry to buy more ammunition if possible. I trust all will prove welcome & I assure you if I could pack myself into the box, I would do it & give you a nice surprise. Mrs. Wood will be with her husband very soon & his loneliness will disappear – if she can face the cold she intends remaining for the year or more. You must not imagine my darling, that the children will forget you, for we speak of you all the time – hardly an hour goes over during the day that Papa is not mentioned, so you must never fancy that you will be “only a memory.” Mrs. Mac expects to come down to Montreal when I go, if she can possibly manage it. They gave de B. his walking ticket a week ago – they could not stand him any longer – he could find nothing to do. Sir Roderick Cameron would give him nothing & no one else either. I think my mother has gone on a short trip with Antoine as we have not heard from her for some time. Gertie answered the last letter I wrote Mamma, re boarding with her etc. Mamma has Louise & her boy & they would be sufficient to keep me from going there, as you know there is nothing in common between Louise & myself, as you are well aware. I do not suppose we will be very gushing towards each other, however I will not worry over it. Willie & herself can live without

me, as I can without them. Well, another day has passed & no one came to see the furniture but my transport is O.K. There is not much news in Macleod. The Deane's leave for Banff & the coast on the 31st of this month. Eva [Murcot] marries a Mr. Reeves the manager of the Montreal Bank in Lethbridge on that day & Lily Deane is bridesmaid. The wedding is to be something

[reverse]

grand, Audry Neale is to throw flowers at Eve's feet when she enters & leaves the church. 25 people to breakfast, everything in great style. Tuesday. I had to give up last night it being 12.30 - & I felt fatigued. Sergt. Murison buys his discharge, cannot stand it any longer. I send off your box & hope it will reach you safely – did you get the other box sent in June c/o Z. Wood? you never acknowledged it & I am anxious – also tell me if English clothes are all O.K when you write, do not forget all these things. I have written Major Perry & asked him to purchase two pair of moccasins & 6 boxes of Central Fire Cartridges 32 cal. for the pistol I send. Will write Hicks & Sons re blue Patrol & have it forwarded direct to Vancouver. Hope the tweed suit & serge will fit to perfection. God bless you, my own sweetheart, & bring you home safe to us all who love you so dearly. Take good care of yourself my darling. Forla [sic], Gertie & Dubbie all send many sweet kisses to their darling Papa as well as his own devoted, true, warm-hearted loving, never-forgetting, faithful wifie

Maye.

Alice is well & sends love: it is so hard for me to write at times with the talking that there are many repetitions, which you will forgive, I hope. Clary came up on Thursday's train to take a position in the C.N. line, fell ill on Friday & has to return to Winnipeg today without doing anything – is it not terrible? always the same neck trouble. We saw him for a few moments only as he has been in bed at Haneyville ever since Friday. In haste,

Maye.

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