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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, May 12th 98.

My own darling Sam,

Your letter of the 24th came via Lethbridge, so was delayed en route, coming yesterday, after yours of the 29th which I answered when I wrote you by Tuesday's mail. It seems strange to get an answer to my letter of April 4th only now, when the ordeal Baby passed through seems to have been so long ago! It pulled him down very much but he is picking up, poor little man. I had Dr. Haultain examine him thoroughly this morning & he found quite a lot of mucous in the bronchial tubes – he says I must keep him out of wind, damp & draughts. If the climate in Tagish is damp I fear I will not be able to risk the children, particularly Baby. I have been telling the Drs. all winter I feared he had bronchitis, but they kept saying no! all the time & I was trying hard to believe, but could not be convinced. It is the wet seasons, or dampness that will not agree with him especially, as they have all been accustomed to such a dry climate. Now darling, be sure & tell me how the weather is, when you write. Elmes asked Capt. Deane for the loan of a horse last night but was refused. he said he had strict orders & he would never be caught again. You remember the commission

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how he was hauled over the coals, about Percy & the horses – well, that is what he alludes to, however he brought Sergt. Major Macdowell's horse up here & Percy rides him every Sunday p.m & oftener; Capt. Deane has not ridden once since he came here. The four bays & [Macomb] are good enough for him! Fred White is trying to patch up all disagreements but I do not think Mr. Sanders will do it: Mr. Wroughton is endeavoring to persuade him, I believe, but cannot say if he has succeeded. Mr. S. came in night before last but have seen him for a minute only. Capt. Deane still continues invisible, at least to me. I hear he is imbibing rather freely: that too may be gossip, but he is acting so queerly, one could believe almost anything. Mrs. Davidson & her youngsters are still at the Mess, much to Mr. Tabor's disgust, who has actually sickened over all the work & annoyance they give him, he being in bed most of today. I would like to go to you, dear, & think it

terrible if I am going to be away from you for two long years – but you know we must think of our wee ones & if the climate is favorable, well, we will be united again. However, my darling I will not be able to leave for some time yet I fear. I heard, accidentally that McFarland had seized the furniture for that note I suppose. Now, dear do not get angry or annoyed at my telling you, but he could not do that without my knowledge, could he? he might take out a writ of attachment

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though I believe Elmes went to McKenzie & he said it was not true, but this will show you that people must be talking any way. Now dear I am determined not to leave with a single debt unpaid, as they are too eager to throw a stone at one, & as I told you in my last, I will endeavor to borrow a couple of thousand on “The Empire” from Mr. Galbraith in order to meet all, McFarland & the rest of our debtors. You see this month’s pay when all is paid leaves me two dollars (\$2.00) only, so I had to borrow \$25.00 to keep going – not much to meet current expenses, dress children, wages & all, my darling. They have given me back rations, so that will be quite a help for this month, but you will see, dear how utterly impossible it is for me to go East or West with no cash at all to help me – it is simply not to be thought of, & I feel sure you will agree with me. I hate troubling you with all these details but you will forgive me, darling & know that I turn to you as ever in my troubles. I know you feel for me, under the circumstances, for were you near, I should not be bothered in this way. I must say I did not think McFarland would do anything of the kind, but he did not shake hands with me & seemed very much annoyed that only time he called – of course, I cannot say it is positively true but, will know in a very short time. You will think I am crazy when I suggested a diningroom & den, three bedrooms & kitchen, but as Marie wants to come & she would be a great help in the trip & being a tenderfoot still, I presume you will pardon me for asking so much. As I said in

[reverse]

my last, what will I do with all I must leave behind? it seems a Herculean task I have ahead of me. I cannot advise with Regie, he is so busy he cannot come down. I hope my papers will reach you safely – I fear I will miss “The Globe” containing what you allude to. Mr. Casey let me have three but there was nothing in them, so I may not get any more. I sent what the papers said of Major Walsh as you know. You did not enclose Mr. Strickland’s second letter as you intended. I felt when you left me, that God alone knew when we should meet again & fear it may not be for a long time

– if your health does not improve dear, it will be hard for you to remain, however we will hope for the best. It is now very late dear, so I think I will leave you for tonight. God bless you dear, & keep you safe until we meet again. Pleasant dreams...

Friday, May 13th. Well dear, today is Arbor day & was a holiday both in town & barracks. The Golf tournament took place, but as we were watching them on the brow of the hill, a sunshower spread [sic] dismay among us & we could not be tempted to go out again. Alice & Mr. Gurd went down to the tent where she met several of the four hundred as she is an honorary member of the club & he is anxious to join. There is a Progressive Euchre for young folks at the Casey's tonight. Mrs. Davidson is one of them, but this poor old woman is too old for that. Well, the Dr. examined me this morning & says there is nothing wrong with me, in fact it is surprising that considering I have had three children I should be so well – he may say

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so, nevertheless I feel sure I am not as well as he would have me believe, for I am the one who endures the pain so know what I feel. He says I am run down & need a change – now dear you must be sure & tell me whether it is very damp, be sure, for I cannot risk our Baby if it is. my heart is just torn in two – on one side, you who are so near & dear to me bids me come & the little ones sigh for you. on the other, fear that the climate may be too severe & that we may lose them tells me to keep away, so judge of my feelings in the face of all: a wife's deep devotion & a fond mother's love!!... There is not much news. The Comr. is coming tomorrow so that all troubles will end peacefully I suppose. I hear Mr. Sanders & Capt. Deane have almost made up. Mr. Morgan came in with Elmes & I have been giving him some music. he looks well & says he is sorry he left the Force, but you know why he did so. were you here, he would still be in it. Well, my darling, I await your letters with great anxiety, for I know I must soon give up these quarters, at least I think so. the Davidsons are clamoring for a house,.... It is late & my letter is not a very interesting one, so I suppose I had better say good-night. The children are fairly wild with excitement with so many youngsters on the square. Gertrude is looking well, but Flora has another cold & Baby is the same as yesterday wheezing so much. God bless

[reverse]

you my own darling boy. be sure & write soon & often. Pleasant dreams & a fond good-night.

Your own true, warmhearted, devoted wife

Maye.

I am going to Mr. McKenzie myself to find out about McFarland, but will not be able to tell you until my Tuesday letter, as this one will leave before I can add more to it tomorrow. do not worry over it & above all say nothing to any one, be sure. I am not chicken-hearted so do not mind or worry too much over my troubles –

M –

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