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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, July 29<sup>th</sup> 98

My own darling Boy,

I have just this moment received your two letters of July 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> & feel heart broken when I think of the terrible disappointment in store for you at not seeing us on the 30<sup>th</sup>, tomorrow. You will of course, have seen Zack Wood who will have told you of our little Flora's very serious illness, even if you have not received Regie's letter as well as mine telling you of it. Everything seems to be against us, dear & God alone knows when we shall meet again. Your transfer to Dawson will make it almost impossible for about a year at least, as I fear the winter would be too cold for me to go up this year with the children. Flora was dressed for the first time yesterday & her legs are so small & thin she can scarcely toddle around. She is picking up, her appetite being fairly good, but she cannot eat anything but eggs, beef tea, [bract], broth, port wine, milk & soda biscuits. I shall have to keep her on this regime for a long time yet as a slight return of the disease [reverse]

would finish her. She looks perfectly lovely, like a flower, her face pink with the flush of the rose, & her fair hair with the curl all out, like a halo around her face; I have so much to say I do not know where to begin but must tell you I was surprised on Sunday evening by a visit from Jim Clark. he looks well but has turned quite grey & is disfigured by something near his eye. I cannot say what but looks like an old wound healed up. he is such a nice fellow – I did not see as much of him as I would have liked to, on account of Flora & because Alec & Mrs. Mac came up Monday a.m & the former monopolized him. Jim was staying at the Macleod & I asked him to lunch. Alec on his way from the station heard he was here & went at once to see him coming up to lunch together. I saw him for a short time after then Lex got hold of him & they were together until four when they went down town, dined & then returned – spent the evening then of course Alec went back with him (pretty late & rather under the weather, very little when he returned) about one in the a.m. Jim advised me not to venture up until we knew more. Alec says he

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told him Mr. Perry tried hard to get the position given you but Jim stepped in & spoilt his plans. He also said "Mr. Herchmer was going to lose his present berth & that you were going to be offered it – if you accept, Perry gets your place in the Yukon – if you refuse, he gets the position in Regina". Jim seemed anxious that I should not go now & told me I must not worry over your mining business. he gave me to understand he had come up purposely to settle your business & asked me not to worry – he has gone on to Rossland & will more than likely return this way to see me. Alec came up to meet William Ross of Steele (Ross & Herchmer) about "the Empire". Ross does not want to let you (all) retain the 1/16 & that is the stumbling block – he went from \$45.000.00 to \$50.000.00 on Thursday morning, still Alec will not close. Jim & he had a long talk about it & the latter told him not to close if he did not get the 1/16. Alec had a drop on board when he came in on Wednesday night & kept repeating he had been offered \$5.000.00 as a bribe but they could not buy him. He went over it again & again & feels quite a hero that he could resist the offer. I saw Ross's offer in

[reverse]

writing so know it is true – he was smart enough to get it in black & white. Min & Alec went up to "The Glengarry" on the train yesterday & return tomorrow. Ross is still in town & will be until Monday. Jim came up again on Tuesday morning to say good bye & to tell me he would return this way – he sent up some nice books to the children & sweets to me. Thank goodness! Alec keeps his senses about him for a while during the day & I hope he will not be tempted to give way. Elmes says he saw him asleep right before the Macleod on Wednesday evening & every body laughing at him. isn't it horrible? am glad Alice is not here, for they are at it all the time & it is awfully disagreeable to have this bickering all the time. Regie got the appt. at \$1.000.00 per annum to his surprise on Wednesday last & accepted. Dr. Meade was very ill & he was detained. Dr. Meade died on Monday morning of pluro-pneumonia & Regie has decided to remain in Pincher Creek, wiring his decision on ~~Tuesday~~ Wednesday from here. he came down during the night & surprised me at two a.m, wishing to consult me & attend to the matter from here. Not knowing where he was to be stationed, whether there would be any private practice

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at all, or whether he would spend all his time on the trails, exposed to all

kinds of weather & far from you, he decided to refuse. Did he do right? it was very hard to advise him – visions of untold wealth & hardship on one hand, plodding more quietly & more comfort on the other. Knowing you are to be in Dawson & that there are M.D.s there, he felt pretty sure he would not be near you or perhaps see you. Oh! my darling old pet, what troubles & trials one has to go through & how hard it is, when the one you love best is so far away!. Alice is away, having gone up on Monday to pack Regies goods for his trip & she has not yet returned – she is, no doubt enjoying her visit & he is pleased to have her there. He looks so well & is getting fleshy, his limbs looking solid now. He will build as he intended & will have a comfortable little home. The people at the Creek are delighted to have him remain, I assure you. Baby has cut three teeth this week & seems better – he is so sweet & almost talks, repeating words like a parrot after the other two. He rolls everywhere like a ball & covers a lot of space in a short time & is getting to be a big boy. Gertrude looks pretty, her hair having grown quite long & is much browned. She is quite plump.

[reverse]

I have had to water the ink, as I am scared to ask for any in the orderly room, when the Autocrat is here. Your dear letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> of July is the one I am going to answer first. Yes, I told you of Mr. Woods letter which was very unfavorable indeed – any way, I could not have gone as I wrote & intended Flora falling ill on the 5<sup>th</sup> & could not possibly think of moving as you now know. You cannot imagine how awfully disappointed I am & I would do all in my power to be able to go, but fate is against us. I did not send the cow, you know why. Lex & Elmes do not speak at all nor do they meet here – it is very unpleasant & I will be glad when I get out of it all. Jim Clark will write you from Rossland he told me. Perry did all in his power, but did not succeed. I find in reading that I answered yours of the 7<sup>th</sup> before, but never mind, there is no harm done. You must let me know whether you have heard of the English goods I ordered. I have had no reply of any kind, so do not know what to do. Will I send French books & geology as you asked when I get East? As you know the claim is not sold. Mac was premature somewhat – he has gone to see about the stock & hope he will

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he will decide to sell as I asked him to. Your dear letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> was short & being answered, I turn to that of the 12<sup>th</sup> which I mentioned as coming in this morning. I must first tell you of two telegrams which came on the 20<sup>th</sup> one from Major Perry, sent upon receipt of your letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> & the other from Seattle to be replied to [Chas E.] Peabody. I answered the latter, at

once, but not the former, knowing Zack Wood would see you long before & tell you I could not leave. The citizens of Skagway must be glad to get rid of "Soapy Smith" & his gang & will enjoy the peace their absence will bring. I fear you did not always take my letters as I meant them. I was anxious to go up & have been all along, but if you only knew all the petty annoyances I have had to contend against you would not be surprised if sometimes I got the "blues" when you are too far away to turn an ear to all my worries & comfort me. Mrs. Zack will no doubt enjoy the quarters you took such an interest in, my dear old boy, although she gives you no credit at all for her husband's promotion. Major Perry did it all & he is the God there now. You cannot imagine

[reverse]

how I regret that we are not to live in the little house you had taken such an interest in. You must have been surprised at your promotion, in a measure & totally unprepared for it. Will you need your uniforms? sword etc – be sure & tell me so that I can send them up. Your dear letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> is now open before me & when you speak of the troubles I had re the concert, they seem comparatively nothing when I think of what I have gone through since & which you know of now. I think all your letters except those I sent to Washington for, have reached me being sent on from Vancouver. I would have stuck to my decision of going but for Flora's illness. Regie now says my life would not be worth living if I went up as I now am, as I would suffer such intense pain, as time went on & my life would be a wreck. I am sorry I did not consult Mewburn before, but Dr. Haultain assured me there was nothing wrong, so I feel it all the more. I need several operations & must have stitches put in, having been torn when Baby came: that is the cause of my being so weak & bothered as I am.

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I had no idea such good furniture could be got in Skagway. I bitterly regret that we are doomed not to be together for some time yet & know you will think me awfully changeable etc, but I cannot help it & hope you understand the reasons why. I enclose a letter from James Gill which speaks for itself. The nuggets reached Birks O.K. Auguste says they are lovely & the bracelets are made in their rough state & await my coming to be finished up. He is delighted at your thoughtfulness in sending his future wife a gift & she appreciates it very much also. Capt. Deane & myself have commenced a correspondence re the lost numnah I mentioned in my last letter. I am determined they will find it & told them "I valued it on account of its worth & the giver" – the Sergt. Major told Elmes the other day it was not

worth more than \$1.50 cts. but I said "I did not care if it was worth only 5 cts, I want it back". Mr. Harwood expects to leave tonight to meet his wife & children in Winnipeg so that the cow will have to go now. I am trying to get [reverse]

milk from Moore – he is milking several cows & getting on nicely in his place at the station. I have spent most of my leisure writing you today as Mrs. Mac will be here tomorrow & I will not be able to do so then. she talks of going East in Sept. as her health is not good & she needs a change. Sir Roderick Cameron was here for a short time & called on me Wednesday a.m. he is awfully pompous in his manner & puts me in mind of the late Dr. Allan – he wanted Lex to work for nothing, but I think the latter objects to such proceedings. We are having rather nice weather at present – I miss the garden getting very little green stuff, it being rather expensive. Your papers & books I had better bring down with me, as I can look after them & I fear leaving them here in the Q.M.S. Mr. White wired Capt. Deane "When does Dr. Harwood leave for Yukon, is Mrs. Steele going" on Tuesday, but I explained matters to the O.C. who wired & said he would write as well. Then Regie came down himself.

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Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Well, my poor old dear this is the day we were supposed to meet in Skagway & still we are as far apart as ever. God bless you my darling & keep you safe is my earnest prayer. There is a long piece in one of the B.C. papers about Fort Steele & the Empire is mentioned. It says "The Empire & Blue [Grouse] mines have been recently [bonded] to the Hall mines Ltd. The Empire was discovered in 1889 & is owned by Major Steele, the head of the N.W.M.P. in the Yukon. It is a high grade copper proposition carrying values in gold". The Blue Grouse is a direct extension of this claim & is owned by Langley bros. of Ft. Steele & was recently [bonded] for the sum of \$25.000 upon which a considerable payment was made. A contract has been let for a 150 foot tunnel". I want Alec to see it so that he may keep his head level. There is very little news. Good bye dear & heaven bless you. Pray God my troubles are soon to end & that

[reverse]

all will be bright & clear. The little ones send many loving kisses to you, dear, in which I join.

Your own true, devoted, warm hearted, loving

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Maye.

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