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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

[pg 1]

Macleod, Apr 11<sup>th</sup> 1898.

My own darling Sam,

I was terribly disappointed when the Saturday's Western mail, distributed yesterday afternoon, did not bring me a letter from my faraway absent darling & my poor little girlie's were disappointed almost as much as myself. I wonder whether you have gone on your trip to the summit & that a long time must elapse ere I hear from you again, or whether tomorrow's mail will bring me a loving missive. Not much has transpired since I wrote my last a week ago. Baby has completely recovered from the ill effects of the antipyrine powders. Regie came down on Saturday returning yesterday – he told me it was heart-failure that had troubled baby – just fancy, the poor wee darling! – to think that another might have finished him. Regie gave me a mixture for their whooping-cough which seems to be doing them all good – he found Dubbie had got very thin but thinks he will soon pick up with the fine weather & that he will be able to go out often. He is getting to be so cute. Gertrude still pines for her dear papa – tonight when putting her to bed she told me “no one but Dubbie must sleep on Papa's pillow, not Auntie” – “You know Papa is coming home soon to us Mamma”. poor little mighte, she told me “her heart was all broked” this morning. how very anxious she is to see

[reverse]

you, you can judge from these things. Flora says “she is going to write you a letter & is going to weep so that it will be speckled all over & Papa will know she weeps for him for if a letter or telegram is speckled, people know it means tears” – they are the strange little creatures, are they not? Easter Sunday was a quiet day; the weather was not nice in the morning it being cold & windy. Alice & myself were so tired with our four days without meat, that we could not sing & we were sick all day, as well as Elmes for the same reason. I wanted to have Mr. Harwood to dinner, but we could not find him. The present O.C. went to Lethbridge – he is at loggerheads with Mr. Cuthbert as well as Mr. Sanders & the Dr. – poor Mr. Casey feels terribly bad too – it seems he had everything taken out of Mr. Casey's office

& moved over to the Orderly Room without Mr. Casey's knowledge, leaving only his chair. he says he is going to sit there anyway. Just fancy what they all have to put up with? – I do not know how it is all going to end, they are all disgusted & I believe, think more of you than they ever did before. Your district will go to the dogs after all your work for the past ten years!. it is a shame. I hear he is endeavoring to put an end to all supplies in the canteen & says there must be only beer & tobacco kept – what are we going to do? it will make such a difference to all the housekeepers & why he wants that, goodness knows. is he losing his head at his importance as he now signs himself "Officer Comd.g Lethbridge & Macleod Districts". If you are to return here, the sooner the better, for upon my word, dear I am very serious when I tell you you will have to begin all over again, as you will have none of your old men left. [Murison] goes in June & perhaps others – they refused to let Morgan buy his discharge until the end of the current month, too late for him to get

[/pg 1]

[pg 2]

the splendid position offered him by the C.N. contractors, or Mr. Haney I should say. To give you an idea of how things are – when the [train] came to bring us to church on Easter Sunday, I was ashamed to drive down in it, being one of the big wagons, covered with mud & dirt, no cushions & two filthy, torn robes – horses that looked awful & an untidy harness. had it not been blowing hard, I certainly would have refused to get into the trap – as it was, I was ashamed to be seen in such an outfit & hereafter will try hard to be ready early enough to walk down. I tell you things are changed & I am not what I used to be, since you left me, my darling. I do hope you will soon come back, for the place is simply unbearable, without you. Alec has been telling awful lies about Elmes & Alice had a letter from Mrs. Mac which has, I fear ended the friendship & good feeling which existed between them (Aunt & niece) Alice merely said in one of hers "that she thought Minnie & herself must have misunderstood Uncle Alec, as every person spoke so well of Elmes" & that remark brought her an insulting letter of good advice which will never be forgotten. Mrs. Mac is too fond of the pen & the words she writes are sometimes very bitter, as you well know. In it she also casts veiled reflections on me, all due to remarks made by Alec, I am sure after his last trip. I tell you the truth, Sam, he was scarcely sober – he spent three nights at the mess, drinking all the time. then two nights at Standoff, where as I told you in my last, he

[reverse]

remained by himself, drinking all the time. She sent a copy of the letter to

Mamma, & sent the original to Fred, keeping another copy for herself. I do not know what the upshot of it will be, but I know that Alice is not likely to darken her door again – she rather enjoyed her visit to Lethbridge for Minnie did a great deal to make it pleasant, but Alec marred it in every way. Eustache was speaking of him the other day & told me he commences to drink early in the morning & Alice says it is the case. he has lost caste I assure you. He was blaming you, I believe, at the “B. Diamond” meeting, when Judge Scott turned on him, defending you & spoke very highly of you. Of course I do not want to make trouble, but he is a sneak & the sooner you come the better for us all, for I am sure you are not [coining] money where you are. He has turned out different to what I even expected & age is not making him any nicer, I assure you. I enclose you a letter from George Cowan which came by yesterdays mail. I hope it will reach you safely. I will not give it to Alec before you see it, or would not in any case, not knowing what use he might make of it. Regie was saying apoplexy might take him off any moment as he is so far & his breathing is so labored. I may judge him harshly, but he is so queer, one does not know what to make of him. The B. Diamond is shipping under Gibson’s management I think, but I see nothing about it in the last Tribune (Nelson.) I will tell you how the cash goes for this month. \$50.00 to Permit for Federal Life. \$33.45 to Great West. \$6 to Building & Loan. \$8.05 to S.O.F. \$20 I had to borrow last month, some \$10.00 to Q.M.S so that comes to \$127.00 as you see. I will have to borrow some \$30.00 in order to pay Marie, the butcher & a few little bills, in fact, I do not know what to do, as there are so many things I have to pay at once when I purchase, such as

[/pg 2]

[pg 3]

butter, etc. I should not add these worries to all you have, but you can see that I do not spend much money in luxuries & little expenses will crop up where there are children that one cannot get out of. Mr. Casey did all he could to get the Federal Life not to charge for a permit, as there is really no clause in the Policy except “if living in a country where there is no organized form of Government” or some such words that warrant their charging or wanting a permit & he is sending the whole amt as they refused to take it quarterly & he is sending it under protest so that if later on you want to sue them you can do so. You are in a country where there is an organized government, even in Skagway, so there is no excuse. It is getting late, my darling, so I will have to leave you for tonight. The children are coughing, so keep me on the [jump] all the time. God bless you my darling, I hope you are quite well now. Good-night.

Tuesday, Apr 12<sup>th</sup>. Good morning, my darling. I hope you are well this glorious day. I intend bringing my little ones out for an airing but come to finish this to you, my dear boy. The Lethbridge mail has just come in, but contained no letters for me from any one or any where. I hope you will not think me a Jonah after reading what I penned last night, for it is all really true & not in the least exaggerated. Do not forget to write Mr. Casey some time – it will be sure to please him, I know.

[reverse]

I have not heard a word of hotbeds or gardens but seriously think of getting Moore to do what he can before he leaves. The time is getting on. Be sure & write often. You will not accuse me of neglecting you, my darling, I am certain. The children are about the same & long for you as I do. Alice had the first ride of the season yesterday & enjoyed it immensely. The O.C. is not very likely to allow many rides when he is here. Gertrude says “to [countergraph] Papa to come home”. Well, my own pet, Baby is crying, so I will have to leave you. Good bye, God bless you. With much love from all,  
Your ever devoted & warmhearted wife

Maye.

[/pg 3]