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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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26 Ste. Famille St. Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 99.

My own darling Sam,

I have a large number of letters before me all from my own dear boy & although I may have answered some before, in reading them over I shall know & you will forgive me if I respond to them twice. Yours of July 14<sup>th</sup> reached me on or about the 14<sup>th</sup> of Aug & must have been answered, but I see I merely acknowledged its receipt while in Welland, not having it near: so I proceed to [dissect] it; as I usually do. Owing to press of sewing preparing for the seaside, I was unable to reply to those that came a few days before we left. The attack made upon you was horrible & as you say, no sensible person would believe it. I acknowledged receipt of draft for \$25.00 which came in beautifully during my absence – we have no servant yet, but are trying to get one. they are difficult to find, especially good ones, so hope to be successful soon. I feel better since my trip, but I am not strong.

[reverse]

parting from you, my darling half killed me, although I have tried & still try to be so brave about it. The children are hard to manage & worry me at times, but in my foolish affection, I hate to let any one else have charge of them. I hope to get stronger though as time goes on & I can find leisure to carry out all the Dr.'s instructions. I am so glad to know the weather up there is so pleasant & that you enjoyed your summer. It is too bad such men as the Inspr. you mention should so far forget himself & his nice wife – that is one of the things that makes it so hard for the poor little wife left behind. I see he returned in time for the hanging of the poor wretches on the 4<sup>th</sup>. It pleases me very much to know your garden supplied you with a few luxuries in the way of vegetables & hope the hens still keep on a laying & that you will have a few chickens to feast on this winter. Surely all will appreciate your efforts to make things better, building trails, etc. Your next dated July 15<sup>th</sup> is very short & contained draft, already acknowledged my darling. I have just taken up your letter dated

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[pg 2]

July 5<sup>th</sup> & on perusing it, cannot recollect whether I answered it or not. Flora was delighted to know you gave the sweets in her name to the little boys but would have preferred Papa to enjoy them all. they must have been very stale, by the time they came into your hands. The letter is answered except that I have not received the midnight group to my knowledge. I hope it was a success & that I shall get one. Your letter of July 28<sup>th</sup> reached me in Willard, as well as one written on the 27<sup>th</sup>, but I put them carefully away & in unpacking cannot say where I placed them – when I find them, will answer them. Yours of the 29<sup>th</sup> is a short one & in my hand. In it you mention receiving photo's of children. Flora is pretty, but is changing now – she makes a good photo, but while she may look angelic she is very far from being an angel. She still has the haughty look, but her eyes soften & brim over with love at times, when she thinks or speaks of Papa. Gertrude is considered lovely by many – she has a piquant, arch little face, with one dimple in her left cheek, tantalizingly near her mouth & her eyes shine [reverse]

like stars sometimes. she is very affectionate & sweet-tempered – she is at Flora's left, but I do not find her photo does her justice. Baby is at Flora's right & looks what he is, a fine, big manly fellow. He was not two when that was taken you know & has a lovely disposition – is in every way a darling. So the three are all ours, my pet & would suit a most fastidious father I fancy. I received the \$5.00 my pet, & must say you are very generous to me, dear. I was going to write to Hicks & Sons when your letter came telling of your receiving the patrol & scarlet jacket. Yours of Aug 1<sup>st</sup> lies open before me & I feel sorry at not having sent you any papers. I was under the impression that you got a lot of papers, so neglected sending any, as I was told they only commenced bringing them in late this summer. You never told me whether the two parcels of "Star's" sent ever reached you, so be sure & tell me when you write. Yes, the country has improved to be able to come from London to Dawson in twenty one days!! –

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Well, my pet I found the other letters I am glad to say. I know you must sit & contemplate the little ones photo often, & know too that you will feel lonelier now that you see them & can realize all the happiness you are deprived of by this long parting, however, it makes you feel very proud to be the father of three such as they are, I am sure. Flora was charmed when I told her of your remark about "the motherly way she had her her [sic] arms entwined around the others." I have been taking port wine regularly & find it does me

good. I hope you will get the necessary clothing before winter sets in & have everything for officers & men that you require – the men are too fine a body to be neglected in that way. I now go back dear & take up your dear letter of July 25<sup>th</sup> trusting to write more interestingly than I did this afternoon, when endeavoring to amuse the children & write at the same time. Your first paragraph announces the departure of Miss Scott. I hope to have the pleasure of

[reverse]

seeing the lady if she comes to Montreal. You know according to some of your last that I carried out your instructions to the letter & got the Miners license at once, so it is safe in your hands. I think I must not be too much surprised at the mischievous ways of our little ones, if you were such an imp at two years of age. Wade is down here at present, is he not? The rape case was peculiar & there can have been no truth in it, if she took so long to make up her mind before laying the complaint – modesty does not, as a rule trouble such persons much, so I do not suppose that was the reason of the delay. Is Mrs. A. pretty or the cook very fascinating? the latter also has her husband to protect her, so it seems queer taken all together. I hope your quarters will be as comfortable as possible for winter & that you will take good care of yourself, my pet. The Wood's have no doubt paid you a visit by now. I hear she puts on any amount of style & patronizes all the women at Tagish to a great extent. she loves being the big duck in the puddle, that is certain. Yes, dear I will be terribly disappointed

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disappointed if you do not come next summer, still, if it is an utter impossibility of course, I shall have to become reconciled to the idea & make the best of it, as I always do. I will find out who Tom Howard is & let you know. I now take yours of July 27<sup>th</sup> which was also forwarded to me to Willard on Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>, pretty quick time, eh? The children, thank Heaven have been very well all through the summer & now that the heat is about over, trust they will continue in the enjoyment of good health. Flora is very partial to fruit & needs constant watching but I do the best I can & she sometimes is very reasonable. I regret hearing the bad news about Mr. White-Fraser. He would have done much better to have kept to his ranch, poor fellow. Who is Randall whom you say was at Wrangel? I do not remember him & is it Mrs. W. F. who was indiscreet? but that is nothing new, dear. She will continue her old flirtation with Baker if she is in Regina by herself. I sent Clare a nice wedding present, in order to return the kindness shown to me by her father & their kindness to the children when

we were all in barracks together.

[reverse]

Alice likes Colorado fairly well but has not got over her illness of last winter. She may come & spend some time here this winter, as Fred cannot come down from the mine from Dec until April or May, on account of the great danger from snowslides. She finds her life somewhat lonely, I believe. I have yours dated July 28<sup>th</sup> open by me. You have indeed a busy life & must have unpleasant duties to perform at times. I regret that the Mac's are so hard up, but they got part of the estate money since she wrote you. She has married off Marguerite to Sergt. Major McD on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Aug & they are now, I suppose near their destination. You will have the pleasure of seeing her in that far off country some day & I feel sure, she will give you a hearty welcome. They blame the mines of course, & imagine if they had not gone into them all would be well with them. It is hard I suppose, but if Alec should go up, she will I feel sure come east, as she says she dislikes the west now. You sent me a photo of Capt. Clarke & tell him to call on his way back. I owe Elmes a letter for a long time, but I cannot find leisure to write – will try to do so soon. He is a good fellow, if he did not forget himself sometimes & act like the old [mick] – he has spoiled many good

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prospects on that account. I know nothing of "Empire" as Alec did not write, but he went up to Fort Steele lately I believe. Why should that mine not prove a good one, when the others, above & below it are such splendid properties – is it fate? I shall indeed be very glad to see Mr. Starnes, as he will give me late news & tell me how you really are, poor dear. Mrs. Auguste & her boy are spending some time in Terrebonne. Auguste comes in now & then & says the baby is doing splendidly, getting quite fat & rosy. They are very proud of him, I assure you. He came in [to]day & has just gone bringing out a servant who came up from Rimouski [...] some of those places this p.m. She will write at once & get a friend of hers for us. Your next unanswered letter is dated Aug 4<sup>th</sup> & tells me of Vivian writing you about my visit – they were all so kind to me & asked me to return. I may go for a day or two sometime this autumn if there is policy in it particularly. Elmes has something to do in the freight shed of the C.P.R. in Winnipeg – his mother desires him to remain there, as the climate suits him & Katie there to look after

[reverse]

him, should he perchance fall ill. Clary is one of the city Assessors & that a good thing, if he can only keep well. I did all I could for Elmes, but did not

always succeed in my good intentions, I must confess. I find it strange you did not recognize Dubbie's photo! he is so much like you he has your way of looking askant [sic] & is so like you in many things, poor pet. He talks so plainly & is so cute. Well, dear we enjoyed our trip to the seaside very much. It is a pretty quiet place about four miles out of Portland, with electric cars everywhere. One can be very quiet or gay just as the fancy suits. Living is cheap, the fare good & the bathing & sea air lovely. The little ones came back looking splendid, so did Mamma. Antoine accompanied us & enjoyed every moment of his [stay]. I shall have to bid you good night & continue this later. Sleep is overpowering me & I cannot keep my eyes open. Kiss Papa for me – Mamma sends fondest love & trusts you are feeling well. God bless you, dear, Will write again in a day or two. With fondest love, my darling, believe me  
Your very sincerely, & affectionately  
Maye, as of old, your truehearted wifie.  
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