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Marie Steele to Sam Steele

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Macleod, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1898.

My own dear old Boy,

Your three letters dated July 3<sup>rd</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> all came today. I also had two post cards from the dead letter office in Washington D.C. saying two letters addressed to me where [sic] there for insufficient postage. I feel sure they must be some you wrote me between the 20<sup>th</sup> of June & 1<sup>st</sup> of July & as none have come between those dates, I sent for them at once. They came (the others) to me at once readdressed from Vancouver. I saw about poor Mr. Lyons sad death & knew how bitterly you would grieve. My last letter will have told you of our dear little Flora's illness. Thank God! she is on the mend, although not well enough to sit up yet – the Dr. would not let her up today but may in a couple of days. Mrs. Monty left tonight after being here fifteen days. Flora was attached to her & wept bitterly when she bid her good bye – she certainly was very patient & nice to her. I will be awfully busy for a time looking after them all. Regie has decided to go up at \$1,000.00 per annum & wrote Alice a line tonight to go & help him pack, as he leaves in a few days. I hope he will not have a hard time of it, as his [reverse]

lungs are delicate & no doubt he will be stationed at Tagish or Bennett – is there any chance of his being with you? Of course from my last letter you will not expect me, as you will be on the move to Dawson. I feel sure you will not want me to go up with the children until you spend a winter there yourself, in order to know what the climate is like, on account of Flora as well as the others. I did not send the cow, as you told me you had bought two & I feared she would not give milk far on. Mr. Harwood bought the cow, although I am still using her. I now take up yours of the 6<sup>th</sup>, in which you tell me of your trip to Lindeman & the risk you ran – for Heaven's sake take care of yourself & do nothing foolhardy. I am pleased the hens are laying & hope you will enjoy the nice, fresh eggs – if you go to Dawson, can you bring them with you, if we are to go up? By the by, will you tell me if the saddle, numnah, bridle etc you used were your own private property? we are having a lively time of it just now. My numnah a fine one was taken a

few days ago & an old one left in its place. We are raising Cain about it – everything but the bridle you used is gone. the Sergt. Major told me shortly after you left that the saddle belonged to the D. division. I sent it to the saddle room & now they tell me there is nothing there. Brindle says there is nothing there, so they are going to see Moore & Macdonald – be sure

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& tell me the first time you write. They also sent for the carbines. I sent the Lee-Melfords & the two Martin Henry's back, getting a receipt for them. They wanted a Winchester, but I said I thought Skirving had taken two with him. They asked for your belt & revolver but I said you brought that with you. I do not want to be compelled to pay ever so much for all these things that may be missing, I have enough expense without that! – They are going to transfer three pair of blankets to Regina as you took three pair with you that they say belonged to the store. I told Sergt. Pattison I did not want to pay for them either. You know by now, that you are Comr. in the Yukon & ordered to Dawson, so I need not write all the letters you wished me to, under the circumstances. Uncle hinted at something of the sort in his letter, but I did not know what he could mean, so said nothing of it when I wrote. "The Empire" deal has fallen through as you know. [Ross] did not come up to [time] so there has been nothing more about it. I am sorry as I thought it might come to something. I enclose a note from Mr. Galbraith to Elmes which came today. I am trying to sell the stock & if we succeed, well, I will not want the loan. I will say nothing re the devil to pay in Dawson, but people will be much surprised when they hear of it. Mr. Sanders is very indignant at Mr. Wood's

[reverse]

promotion & is going to kick very badly about the whole affair – he is down today & has spent his time visiting I hear. Major Perry's wire pulling did not amount to much – he is appointed Commissariat Officer at Vancouver, but his wife will like that no doubt, it being such a nice place to live in. Flora is as thin as can be, her poor little wrist not being as large around as a fifty cent piece. Gertrude keeps well, thank God! Baby is suffering from his teeth & was not well; I have to keep doctoring him up all the time – he is very sweet & cute, trying so hard to talk. Flora almost left us, I assure you – she was just at death's threshold & I cannot tell you the awful agony & suspense I have been through, since you left me. Everything seems to have gone wrong since your departure & sometimes I cannot tell you how I feel. then this indecision about the trip worries me, still I think that you will tell me to go East. Capt. Deane asked me last evening what I was going to

do about the furniture. I said "try & sell some if I could get anything for it" – he seemed to fancy they would not give me transport, but Mr. Herchmer said he would, when he was here in May. I suppose I shall have to write Mr. White about it. My money has dwindled down to only \$100.00 now & I have many expenses daily, & no pay coming until the middle of Sept. I have to buy beef jelly for Flora that costs \$1.50 a small jar, but that was all she could take for many days & still have to keep it up. Mrs. Monty cost

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two dollars a day, so you can see for yourself, my dear, my last letter will give you an idea of how the rest of the cash, the advanced pay & the \$104 from the Building & Loan went, all in paying bills – do not [curse] inwardly dear, at my troubling you about all these things but I must, as I cannot ask people here. Clarey being so ill, Elmes has to help them all he can & Regie is off in a few days. Of course, I can ask Mr. Cowdry, I suppose he will not refuse me.

Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>. I had to cease writing last night in a hurry as it was 11.30 & I suddenly got tired. I had Flora carried upstairs & she slept with me – she rested fairly well & is in good humor this a.m – she is down in the drawing room in Gertrude's cot where she has been ever since Mrs. Monty came – the room is all upset as I had commenced packing when her illness came on – she is almost three weeks in bed now, but is too weak to stand or attempt to walk. You cannot imagine how near death the child has been & the thoughts that crowded through my brain as I sat & watched her, made me heartsick. I did not know how I could ever break the news to you dear – she told Marie one day "If I die, I know it will break my dear old Papa's heart, when he is so far away" – Marie cried – poor little thing! she was so quiet, so patient & suffered so much! she is peevish & somewhat cranky now that she is getting better. Her whole stomach & bowels were inflamed [sic] & sore, the latter were perfectly raw – the blood [reverse]

& mucus she passed were awful & frightened me. Mrs. Monty says "her illness was very, very serious & she must have have [sic] suffered intensely". Thank God! she is doing nicely & I can thank the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in whom I have such confidence & under whose protection I put her as soon as she fell ill – then Dr. Haultain whose attention & care were untiring, & who says "he never had or saw such a serious case, so hard to cope with, & so obstinate to check". Regie also did or suggested what he thought right & Mrs. Monty was devoted to her – so you see dear, if you did a good turn for the latter, she did not forget it in my trouble. We are having

a lot of rain now, but I have no garden of any kind this summer – we are treated to lettuce now & then by Mr. Tabor, who has more than he can use & who gives it with Capt. Deane's permission. I am so glad the hens stood the journey & are laying, for I know how fond you are of fresh eggs. The S.M. is distinguishing himself just now, by entering through back bedroom windows in the Mac's old house & is, I fear not very far from discovery. Some of the Officers know it & it is time he was known in his true colors. O! he is awfully cheeky, Sam, & is more disgusting than ever I find. If you were only near, but I cannot write what I would speak. Well, my darling, do not think me crazy because I do not go up, for I have thought so much, that my hair is almost getting grey, still I think you will not want me to go as you are to reside in Dawson. Perhaps next

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next year you may be able to come down & then we could all go together if you judged it best. There is little or no news of any consequence. Another investigation re the death of Frazer & McDonell, diptheria [sic] victims is going on. The C.P.R. is going to get the most of it every person says. Kennedy puts all blame on Mewburn, I hear. Mr. Haney may not return here, if he can get out of it in any way. Did you write & explain "Empire" business to Galbraith? it would be a good thing to do. I do not think Alec will do anything with it. He sometimes drinks terribly, has the reputation & no one seems to put any confidence in his transactions. The time of the mess affair, he went in about eleven & said "I cleared \$30.000.00 in a mine today" Capt. Deane said "what mine? I would like to know as I am interested in some". he had a glass filled with whiskey in his (Alec's) hand which he had just poured out & looking at Capt. Deane, swore an oath & dashed the glass of liquor at the wall which is stained, & then fell over some important papers lying on the table. He was at once ordered to leave & next day a letter & the papers came over, with orders for Alec to have them copied & returned in good order. that is the synopsis of the affair, but of course there was more than that – he has orders never to set foot in the mess again – is it not humiliating for us? I cannot tell of the row between Elmes & himself &

[reverse]

as soon as Elmes left the house, Alice & Alec had it hot & tight – he was under the influence & the whole thing made me very ill. It is perfectly horrible & I have cried for you, my darling many times, when all this worry & bother comes to me. I have taken a vow many times that I would never live away from you again, if there is any possibility of getting a room near you –

now my darling boy, I must leave you. I hope your salary will be increased & make up, in a measure, for the inconvenience & trouble we are put to by our long separation. God bless you & protect you until we meet again. The little ones join in fond love. Alice speaks of going as soon as Flora is well enough – she will likely be married at the end of Sept. & wants to get her trousseau. Write soon again – will likely be here until the last week in Aug, then address your letters to Mamma's care, unless I go to you. Hoping to hear soon, believe me darling,

Your own true, warmhearted, devoted wifie

Maye

Excuse haste. The repetitions are due to Elmes & Alice talking like magpies all the time when I am writing & I can hardly think sometimes –

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