

27th Field Ambulance,

c/o Base Postal Depot,

Bombay,

Monday, 8th September.

My own dearest Lileen,

I am still here and I am still very happy. I have not had a letter or telegram from you for a very long time; by this I mean 12 days! None of your Judy letters have reached me yet except the Transpacific one and it was too wonderful for words to describe. The trouble in Iran has probably delayed all air mail letters. How I long for your letters to come and how happy I am when they do arrive. For the past few days (and every day) I have been watching the post in vain - it becomes really exciting when the Despatch rider comes back from town each evening with his mail bag and then my hopes are dashed once more when he shakes his head and says that there are no letters for the Major Sahib! Your letters mean so much to me, Lileen; they are the only real contact that I have with you - I read all about you, your heart, your love, your thoughts and your dreams. And these are the things I want to know about most.

I sent off my usual 12 page letter this morning to you and another Enck (unimportant) of myself. I always register my letters to you, my dearest, because I want to make doubly sure that they reach you safely, you see, Lileen, that the stamps are liable to be pinched! I read over the letter once before sending it off and oh my dear me I am so sorry it is so bad - it is not readable. Nothing seemed to happen during those six days and so I had precious little to write about; I could only tell you over and over again the same old story. Lileen, I do love you so very much that talking or writing about it seems so useless in giving you any idea of how much I love you. You are

ever in my thoughts and prayers each day of my life and you always will be. I would be very unhappy if I were not thinking of you, praying for you, and loving you with all my heart. I know that I shall always love you and that nothing can ever change me. Do you remember one of Mrs. Savage's parties when that dear lady loaned me to sit beside you on the settee - you were very annoyed and asked me to spread myself around and not concentrate off on you! Celen, if you had acted otherwise then it would not have been you. I loved you then as if you were my sister and I had my ideas of gallantry and love, which later matured into real love. How can I ever blame you for sending me away - I would have done the same thing in your position. You were a child and were afraid of me but God knows that I would rather have died than make love to you or terrify you in any way. It was merely hero-worship in those days - and now I still worship you with all of me.

I am waiting for news of our ring and your description of it. I shall love it just as much as you, Celen, because you have chosen it. I have asked you to wire the cost of it so that I may send the money by cable to you. My own dear Celen, when I think that we are really and truly engaged, I sometimes cannot believe it is true - it almost seems too good a thing to happen to me that you should give me your love and that you are even willing to endure looking at me for the rest of your life! I promise you, my dearest, that you will always find that my love for you is a sacred thing; I pray to God and thank our Mother that it will always be tender and loyal and good - and I know so well that it shall. I am still looking forward to September 14th when the priest is due to arrive in town and I shall storm Heaven with prayers for you, Celen, for us and our love; and also for our dear ones. On Sundays I do not allow you to do all the praying at Mass for me - I do my extra but and join you in hearing Mass, by loving

my trial. Remember that I am praying with you each Sunday at Mass. Some day soon we shall be kneeling side by side in Church and you will be Rev. Praying and not Miss. I have my sword!

Well, my dearest, what can I tell you about my day? Nothing much to tell except that I went to town in the forenoon with three other officers to have our photos taken for an identity certificate. Work was all in camp today and that is not very exciting at the best of times. I have to get away out into the country or near the sea - anywhere away from camp! Please, teacher, I am going to bed now. Good-bless you this night.

TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 9th The postal paper let me down again today and passed me by with a large bundle of letters in his hand for the other officers! It is almost heart-breaking when this happens, but thank God it soon passes away and I am as happy as ever once again. It was consoling to know that today's post was only a sea-mail from India and so it could not possibly have contained a letter from my beloved. Oh my dearest if you only knew what one of your letters means to me!

You have not advised me as yet what I should do with myself when the war is over. Cilem, to tell you the truth, I would rather go back again and become a General Practitioner at home. I would not and should never ask you to become the wife of an army doctor. My own dearest, it would spoil everything for us - there would be no real home life for us, it would all be artificial and unlike anything we had ever dreamed of or planned. It would be unfair to you and our home to spend 5 years in India, 5 years in the near and middle East, 5 years in the Far East - always on the move. It would mean separation at times and I never want that to happen, Cilem; I never want you to have a moment's unhappiness as long as we live. My ideas of our home and what it will be like, differ so much from the home of an Army officer. Our

home must be built on a rock; it must be a haven of rest and security for us; it must be a fixed thing and not to be moved about all over the globe. We shall always find happiness and holiness there; and we shall always love it and think it as our very own. You have said that you are willing to join me in any part of the world at any time and marry me - God bless you for saying this, but I must go to you at home in Ireland and there we shall be married and always live there. Celine you know that there is no country in the world to compare with ours. So when the war is over you will find yourself the wife of a very modest country doctor somewhere in Ireland! No matter where we settle down, my darling, it will be home to us and we shall never leave it. By the way I must write and ask my father to look out for a good practice in the north somewhere. Do you fully understand, young woman, that being a doctor's wife is an awful business? You see, he is always being dragged out by patients at night and it is then he becomes so angry with his wife - she always suffers! She has to listen to the most appalling language from her husband on these occasions! You will always find that I love going out into the cold night for any patient, especially if I can help some unfortunate person or ease some pain. Between us, Celine, we could accomplish such wonders; we shall make others happy and bring them comfort when they need it most. Maybe we shall have something worth while to show Him when we die, our life will not have been in vain.

Today has been a busy one but all my day was spent in camp. "To morrow to fresh fields and pastures new" (Milton?) - we are going out for the day on training. I have been happy with my men; they come to me with all their woes. To night before dinner I went for a stroll in the camp. It was very dark but that was an advantage. The men were very happy; some singing as they wandered about in the darkness; others were creeping into bed and tucking in their mosquito

beds in the dimly lit barrack rooms (wooden); and others sat around and talked of today and wondered what tomorrow would bring. Then I came across my "Communicative Society" rehearsing in a small tent - they were all pouring over their songs and saying their piece in a loud voice! I am still vain enough to say that they all love me and I them.

Good night, my dearest, and God bless you.

WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 10th.

I have not been outside the camp today for long. I was left behind to look after the house while the others were out training, but I had time to go to town for an hour and pay the local tradesmen's bills due by the Mess. I did my good turn for the day when in town by making a very sad young man a very happy one. Poor chap has been lying in hospital ever since we reached this station 6 weeks ago and he was becoming depressed about himself. May be I have told you about him - he is a young Indian doctor who belongs to our Field Ambulance. He is such a quiet, gentle, and good lad that I just had to like him from the very first; I am trying hard to get him back to India for a few months on sick leave, he will never get well in this climate. When in town I found out the priest's programme - two masses on 15th, 16th, and 18th of this month. Three of these masses I shall offer up for you, my dearest, and your intentions while the other three will be for us both. Don't it strange (maybe it is not) that the more I love you, the better I can pray for you and all my dear ones at home. Is it not so strange when I think it out - our love is good and holy, and so the deeper my love the better become my prayers. My dearest, we are lucky to have a love like this and I am lucky, so very lucky, to have your love. I shall always love you in this way with all my heart and soul; nothing can ever change me.

What about this war, my dearest. Already I can see the beginning of the end - God should never let us down with his prosperity! The tension has eased a bit in these parts, but it may be only temporarily. Thank God the bombing at

home has ceased and the German people are now suffering as we did in Belfast. Do not worry, Eileen; your Spring Villa and our Beechwood will both be standing when this war is all over and we shall have many happy days together in our homes. And then we shall have a home of our own and we shall know happiness and contentment that the world cannot give; and we shall know with certainty that no bombs will ever shake the peace of our home.

I wrote you a two page letter this evening to accompany some scraps which I shall send to you to-morrow morning by sea-mail. They are enlargements of scraps which you have already received, so it is not very urgent and it is rather heavy. I am sending you another "Asia" to-morrow also. What have you done to me, Eileen O'Kane? I imagine writing to anyone twice a day!! By the way, my dear one, do you mind very much if I continue to write "Eileen" on the addressed envelopes which you receive or would you rather have the more correct thing "Miss E. O'Kane B.A. etc."? Please let me know about this. I now understand why your telegram is delayed so long - you must have sent it to Base Postal Depot, Bombay (and that is correct). It will take at least two weeks to come by this route. One of our Indian officers had a telegram from India today which was sent on 25th August! So please send everything to Malaya in future my dearest, it will save a lot of time and worry even though it is not the correct address. I hope and pray that all my letters and telegrams reach you safely and that they may bring you some happiness. My letters get worse and worse as the days go by, because I am in this dullness and nothing ever happens. The monsoon has arrived and so we are having a wet time of it - rains all day and all night in spasms! However it is much cooler and that is a blessing to be thankful for.

I am off to bed now, young woman, and not even you

could awaken me until 7 a.m. to-morrow morning! God bless you, Cileen.

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 11th I do feel ashamed that I have so little news to give you of myself in these lines, but my dearest when interesting things just do not happen how can I tell you about them! This morning there was a parade and inspection by the C.O. I was in charge of the parade and I know that this is the last time - so it was tinged with sadness. All the men seemed to understand too when the new second-in-command appeared with the C.O. and inspected the lines. At next week's parade the new officer will be in charge and Capt. Murray will be a very insignificant figure in the background. I never did like the limelight anyhow and being a Captain again cannot make any difference to me. I do know that I shall only love you more and more, and that no amount of changes in rank can ever alter my love for you. The only thing in the whole world that has any value for me is your love, Cileen, and I never want to lose that - I just could not bear to lose it. Oh, if only the war were over and we were together again, what a difference it would make to our love and our lives. We could be married and have our own home - I cannot imagine anything more perfect. We would be starting life together full of hope and courage ready to face the future side by side. Have you ever pictured us walking down life's broad highway hand-in-hand singing with joy, meeting happiness with open arms and sorrow with a smile.

I wrote to my friend Gony this evening after tea. I told him all about you and our engagement, and asked him to meet you some time. He has been a true friend to me during all these years and I think he improves with knowing - as someone once said about you, Cileen. And now as I sit out here at my small table writing to you, I can hear a chorus of British troops whistling "The Steady Bear's Picnic" - and that reminds me of Mrs. Savage's party and her records

And you my dearest. All roads seem to lead to you, Eileen, no matter which way I look or which way I think. Yes, it is still all you, all day long - in my work, and play and thoughts. You may imagine that I have nothing else to do, but listen to me young lady, I am a very busy man during the day and should not really have time to think of you at all!! I shall always think of you and love you every moment of every day for the rest of my life. You do help me to face up to things and endure lots of things that otherwise would be hard to bear - you have made life too easy for me, so hardships and trials have ceased to exist for me.

I hope you have written to tell me all about Felix's marriage and what his plans are for the future. You mentioned that he was considering buying a practice. Did it come off? Will you mind very much if we settle in a small sea-side town of the half-sea-half-country type - golf course etc. It has always been my idea of how I should like to live. We would be within easy reach of the city and its shops and amusements, and the hills would see us when the country was calling a bit - but it will never fall with me, Eileen. If you would rather live in the big city, then it is already done - I do not want you to be hidden away in the country with me all your life. Have you ever talked all the pros and cons over with your father or mother - parents can give wonderful advice at times. If ever I wanted to meet two people, your mamma and daddy are they - we love each other already and I have not even met them yet.

There is a big march to-morrow morning lasting many hours; I love marching, but this particular one will end with a swim and a ride back to camp in the ladies. The Clipper is due at Singapore to-morrow, and may be there will be a letter from you on board. Still I would rather you did not spend your money on expensive letters to me - it is my privilege to do all the spending

on you, my own dearest. Good night and God bless you.

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 12TH - Again I ask you the same old question - Aren't

you ashamed of yourself making me love you so much? If I were not in love with you, I would not be counting the minutes each day waiting for the post to arrive and only wanting one letter - yours! I would not have to write to you every day of my life - in fact I would have no worries in the world!! Oh my dearest, you know that I want

to love you more and more; I want to wait for hours each day awaiting your letters; I want to write to you twice each day. It has all made me so very happy and I think you are a very wonderful person to be able to give such happiness to any man.

This is my second letter to you today as I wrote to you after tea a two page letter and sent myself with it (in a snap); it will reach you much later than this epistle as I have sent it by ordinary air mail. I still send my diary letters via

America; all the ~~other~~ ones go via Durban (by air) and then sea mail to home. I am daily expecting a telegram or letter from you, my dearest - they must come soon because it is ages since your transpacific letter. I want to know about the ring so that we can

settle things up. Also poor Celen is back again in Omdurman far away from the Great City. I know how much you love your job and your subject, so that you must be happy to be back again at work. You will have no respite now until Christmas

and it is always the best time of the whole year at home; have you made any plans for it yet? Do you remember 29th December 1940 - the day you wrote to me when I was in India? What angel or saint in heaven prompted you to write that letter - or was it your heart which did all the prompting? I would give anything to spend

this Christmas with you, Celen; but alas we shall have to wait till 1942 for that to come. I would do a lot to be out of this station when Christmas comes, it will have

no meaning without Mass; not to mention the other festivities which bring good cheer at

this holy season. Should I have to travel 250 miles on Christmas Day, I shall be at home; so if there is any chance of some leave, I shall ask for that day only. Think of me perspiring in Malay's heat while you wrap yourself up in furs and woollies!

There is a big Highland Gathering in Singapore in October 1905 and I was considering going down to have a look at them. There is a 16 lb stone putting event which might interest me! With this end in view I have been practicing every evening among the trees with a very large rock! I have found that I am much stronger than when a student at Cassin. I do not want to see Singapore particularly but I want to see if there is anything there that would interest you. However I expect I shall never even see Singapore as we have so much work on hand, but I shall be at least able to say that it was grand fun looking forward to my trip to the South!

We had a wonderful march to day, Kulu, ten miles along the coast. It was an ideal day, cloudy, but good visibility at sea. It was cool in spite of the thunder in the air - and yet no rain came in spite of all the thunder and lightning. The sea was calm and the poor fishermen could not put out to sea as there was not a puff of air to fill their sails with. We had an hour's rest from 12 till 1 p.m. for meals and as we sat and watched the sea, I spotted a school of porpoises playing around about 20 yards from the shore. However I could not convince anyone that they were not man-eating sharks. The march ended on the shore at 2 p.m. with a swim. Then a welcome night appeared along the beach - our boats were coming to pick us up. We all jumped in and soon we were speeding towards home. The evening port brought me nothing but disappointment - no letter from my beloved. I know there will be one to-morrow, Kulu, so God bless you until then!

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13th I prayed to God this evening - I beseeched and implored Him to send me a letter from you and lo, and behold! it has come! My own dearest Eileen, what can I say to you that will give you any idea of how happy you have made me to night. I have never known such happiness. Your dear mother's note was enclosed and it was wonderful - she just wrote as if I were her own child and signed it "Mother". I know I do not deserve the love of you or your mother and yet you both give it to me - you who haven't seen me for 6 years and your mother who has never met me at all. Was there ever such faith or such trust in all the world before? Your poor darling sending me that post card that was supposed to reach Malaga in one week - it took 10 weeks and 1 day to reach me!! The thoughts of you and Frances were with it and so I loved it just as if it was only a week on the high seas. I shall write to my mother tomorrow - she will always be as dear to me as my real mother and I shall always love her as such.

This is Captain Murray writing to you now and he loves you much more than Major Murray did yesterday! It was published today in Divisional orders that I was de-moted on July 17th; so to night at dinner I turned out with my three pips on my shoulder! May be that was why I was stonning heaven this evening asking for the one thing that could make me supremely happy - your letter, and now that it has come drums and pips are all forgotten in all this happiness. Now I shall hate seeing "Capt." on the back of my letters to you - it will seem as if I had let you down, or disgraced myself in some way. My dearest, will you feel it very much honoring to tell your friends of my de-motion to Captain; I would rather die than have you hint in this way. I do not care about myself, it is only you I am worried about, my dear one. I love you this night even more than I have ever loved you before and yet I can never give you enough love or enough devotion. You were so proud of my successes, but honestly, Eileen, I have not been a failure at my present job. My successor has been 10 years in the Army but although

he is now second in - Command and a real Major he has not taken over any of the jobs that are supposed to go with his position. So, my darling, I am on the same jobs with the same men and in the same company as their commander! It is very awkward at times but the C.O. has insisted that nobody must replace me in H.O.! Some day very soon I shall have good news for you and then you will understand that the powers above really do think something of me. My dearest I do not say this in a boastful manner - I want to be a success for your sake, Helen.

Your letter was sent on 3rd of July; why did you put hardly forward on the envelope. The same address "Malaya" will always reach me, unless I leave this country and if that happens I shall cable you immediately. Only one letter is missing and that is the one you sent to 'Beechwood' last October. Your Transpacific letter came on August 22nd (dated July 30th); your other two July letters have not come yet, but they should arrive soon. There are three ways in which you can send letters to me ① by sea mail throughout (3 months); ② ordinary air mail ($\frac{2}{3}$ rd) - the letters are sent by sea mail to Capetown, by rail to Durban, by air to Egypt, Iraq, India, Burma, Thailand, and Malaya - takes from 6-10 weeks!; ③ Transpacific air mail throughout - takes 3-4 weeks but you must not waste your money on this often, it is too expensive. There are other ways of sending letters via America or New Zealand but I shall not worry you with these. I am quite expert on mails nowadays and even the C.O. comes to me for advice! By the way the postal people made an awful blunder when they actually put the name of the village, I was last stationed at, on the telegram. It was a grand place, Koch, two miles from the border; it would be very welcome just now. I shall answer your letter properly to-morrow when I shall have more space and more time (it is now midnight!). You always write to me of the things I long to hear about - your holiday, swims and walks and golf. I have pictured your pink clothing

in my own mind and it is a very wonderful place - how I wish I were there with you.

A very remarkable thing happened this evening. I received three "Keepers Weekly Telegraphs" from Prof. Thomson's son and they came with your letter, which had lots in it about the Thomsons. Imagine it is 6 weeks since I saw Humphrey Thomson and yet he did not forget to send these papers as promised. Still your letter was read over many times 'ere I glanced at the "Telegraphs" - and I was thirsting to read a local paper again. Prof. Thomson would not remember me as I was not a student at the R.V.H. but you could mention how decent his son has been to me and how much I admire him.

I had a very interesting day and spent it as Medical Officer at the local R.A.F. Station. I had to be present with an ambulance car when all planes were taking off and landing, in case of accident. I met all the pilots and they are grand chaps & what a wonderful life away up in the clouds looking down on its small creatures. I now want to become a pilot - it must be a thrilling life, I know I would love it. I am already an expert on bombers, fighters etc etc and I saw plenty of them today - oh if only they were not used to destroy lives, what a wonderful invention the plane is. They looked like large stream-lined grasshoppers on the ground, while in the air they were seen more graceful. This afternoon the C.O. and the others went off to a small local town to see the "races", while I had to look after my flying men! They were very disappointed to find only a few broken down ponies in the races and not a single horse. They all returned to camp very disappointed and very wet - they were caught in a thunderstorm which raged for hours well into the evening. Of course they said I was a very wise man! I was so happy this evening reading your letter that I would not have changed places with all the race-goes in the world!

The troops had made grand preparations for their usual Saturday

night Rennie but it was all washed away with the rain and floods! They spent about 7 dollars today on Selous paper, Rajas brown, pencils, red paper and decorations - all were destroyed. They were very forlorn when I visited the scene of the wash out after dinner to night - they sat on the stage with hand under chin and just looked into space with a mournful silence. However the local village people are giving the A. L. L. show to-morrow morning at 11 am. and that should cheer them up a bit. The C.O. is arranging a swimming picnic to-morrow for all the officers; however I may be on duty and may not be able to go.

My dearest Helen, I do love you so very, very much and I shall love you as long as I live. I can and I shall make you happy - happier than any wife has ever been. I shall soon be back again with you and we shall never be parted again. With all my letters, I send to you all my love - it is for you and only you. I love your father and mother, brother and sisters as if they were mine. Please do not think me unkind, but I think Forgan is the best of all, and yet I only know him from your letters - you always tell me more about him. He must be a very good boy and how I wish I were only so holy as he is. I am praying harder than ever in my life before and I have you to thank for this. I pray that God may bless you and that many our brethren may continue to watch over you day and night.

Love your loving

Frank

P.S. I am all yours and with each letter I send my love and myself.

Love
Frank

P.P.S. Only 14 pages! I want to write so much more.

More love
Frank