

23th Field Ambulance,

Malaya,

15th July - Tuesday.

Cileen, my darling,

I have some tidings for you - you are hereby condemned to the awful fate of having a letter from me every day until the next is out and we meet again! I do offer you all my sympathy, because you need it all! When we meet again and get married you will have those daily letters for the rest of your life but they will not be written letters, I shall say them all to you. You will have to listen to my story each day - my successes, my failures, my work, and my thoughts. You may even grow weary of my tale each evening, but I promise you that I shall make you smile every day and you will be happy, because I shall do everything to make you happy. Oh Cileen, my darling, have you ever tried to picture our home - the peace and security of it all. We are so very lucky to have a love like ours that will bring us nothing but happiness. We shall pray hard that God will bless our married life because a lot depends upon prayer - it ~~is~~ is stupid to ask for happiness unless we make our home a sacred place. Surely He will give us all the happiness we need in life when He knows that we love each other as we do. I have told you so often, Cileen, that loving you has always kept me right; it has been a wonderful blessing to me. Once upon a time you had the worship of a dreamy, self-conscious schoolboy and now you have all the love that he can offer you as a man - how deep and strong that love is today, you can have very little idea. He still dreams a bit but the self-consciousness has all gone and now he thinks himself a very important Army officer! No, Cileen,

I shall never get a swelled head over success or promotion. The latter mean nothing to me and the former I shall always pass on to you because all my successes are yours. May be you do not like Byron's poetry, but when I was in my last year at school and very much in love with you, I learned something about it and applied it to you. You must have read it in the 'Golden Treasury' - "Oh, fame if 'ere I took delight in thy praises, 'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases, Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discern. She thought that I was not unworthy to love her." I am dreaming and loving you with Byron, but I wanted to tell you how I felt about fame.

I am still in the same spot in Malaya and unlikely to move from here for a long time. I have become very attached to my home among the trees. I consider my wooden hut a palace fit for kings to dwell in. My King George Stares at me each night with two very black eyes - I almost think he can read what I am writing to you. My room is just the same as in the Snaps I sent to you - I hope the said Snaps have arrived. You would love this place, Culem; it is beautiful and peaceful; it is the coolest military station in Malaya and I should hate to leave it now. The mornings are glorious - everything is fresh, the air is pure, and the birds are singing. It is pleasant in the evenings listening to our Hindus chanting their prayers - the music is really marvellous; while the Mohammedan priest sounds the call to prayer at dusk. I had a strenuous game of tennis today with one of our Indian Officers and I actually won by 3 sets to nil! I was lucky. Will you please give me some tips about driving in golf, Culem; I want to know about the theory before beginning on the real thing. I am still very happy since your first letter came a few days ago. Good night and God bless you.

111

Wednesday - July 16th I often wonder, Cileen, are you as happy as I am. If you love me as much as I love you, then you must be. No matter how far apart we may be it cannot stop me from being very happy. My darling, I never want you to be unhappy for a moment as long as we are separated during this war; I want you to keep looking forward to the day when we shall meet again. That will be a day in our lives we shall never forget because it will be a day of ~~our~~ joy for us. Some day when we grow old and grey we shall recall it and the happiness we had then and every day afterwards - or maybe we shall never grow old! I know that our love will always be young and as pure as it is today. How could we ever have any unhappiness in our home - that word will be unknown. We may have our share of sadness and disappointment but we have so many 'antidotes' to counteract these. I have been thinking about the 'someone' to whom you had to give an answer at home; maybe he loved you as much as I do and yet you took the awful risk of choosing me instead. You have been very brave, Cileen, and some people may question the wisdom of your choice. You know that you haven't seen me for many years and I could have changed a lot in that time - two years in England and almost two years in the Army can make changes in a man. I do not mean to flatter myself, Cileen, but I promise you that you will never have to regret your choice. I know that I can make you happy, just as I know that you have more love from me than any woman has ever had from a man before. I shall never cease loving you for the rest of my life.

Cileen, I shall never forgive myself for the way in which I ignored your letters when I was in England. You wrote and told me all about your illness, about Dan McSparran, and how W.W.D. Thompson came

to your rescue. Then you asked my advice about your proposed visit to America; you went to U.S.A. and when you came back you tried to reach me again. I was such a stupid fool in those days not to have understood you. You even wanted to give me galping lessons - as a friend of the part! How I wish I had taken those lessons - we should have been married by this time if I had. And now that I cannot even see you or speak to you, we have become engaged after a very awkward proposal by letter - a letter which flew more than half-way around the world to reach you! Oh Helen, my darling, I do not blame you here after the way I have treated you. Please tell me just once that you forgive me.

Are you receiving all my letters? Surely some of them must get through - may be they have all reached you safely and I pray that they have. I have made it long for you to check up on missing ones because I write every day. May be some day you will send my 'diary' for publication!! Wouldn't it make wonderful reading!!! I fear that I could not change my letters now, Helen; I just write down my thoughts and tell you what happens to me daily. I cannot sit down and compose elegant essays in the King's best English, but I jot down whatever comes into my head during the day - may be that is unfair to you who have to read my poor jottings. Do you ever show the said jottings to anyone? My darling, they are all meant for you, but you know that I would not mind you showing them to Frances or your mother or anyone whom you love.

At last we have had a route-march. How marching and this morning as we set off at 8 am. with the troops, I was walking in air! We only had a short march of 3 1/2 hours but it was grand; the

weather was glorious, the surroundings beautiful, and everyone was happy. He started off on the road, after two miles we left that and walked across a river, then into jungle, then open country, then through a tin mine, and home by road again. In the afternoon I had a full time in my office as I was President at a Court of Inquiry - I almost went asleep at times, the proceedings were so dull! After tea I had plenty of tennis and that made amends for my claustrophobic afternoon! I forgot to tell you that I began my day by praying much harder than usual for you; I also took some snaps on the march today. I must send you a load of snaps for our album! Good night, Helen, and God bless you.

Thursday - July 17th

My darling, I met a very important person today and had a chat with him. He is Sir R. Brooke Popham (Air Marshal) who is C-in-Chief of the Far East. I have now met all the notable military men in Malaya - three Generals included; I must say they were all very keen men and very interested even in our small show. It has done me lots of good (as they say in Belfast) to have met such men as these; I could talk to them all quite freely without shaking at the knees in sheer terror! You know that there was a time when even Frank could talk to very few people and now that has all changed. It was not really my fault because in our home at Belfast we did not entertain, we never had visitors, and never met people as we should have. My people just did believe in it; they did not mean to deprive us of any social life or give us a chance of meeting people. Yet I can always say that I had a good father and mother and think there could not have been parents in the whole world to compare with them.

Last night I suddenly decided to have a trip to the nearest town, <sup>this morning</sup> in a shopping expedition and for some fresh air. I went off at

7.30 a.m. in the early morning mist. It was chilly for a bit but suddenly we found ourselves at the edge of the bank and soon we were bathing in the bright morning sun. It was the same glorious trip as before and as usual I was thinking of you, wondering when you were at that moment, wondering if you had received my telegram or not. I made some welcome discoveries during my shopping tour - tinned prawns and tinned sausages! You can well imagine what a cheer went up when I returned to the mess at noon armed with all these delicacies! This afternoon I did some painting of new sign-posts for the Ambulance. I managed a couple of sets of tennis with two other British officers of the local regiment; the fourth was an Indian Officer from our unit. I am half-awake sitting on my camp chair by my table and lamp light - dinner was good to night! The D.C. and I dined out to lunch with the C-in-C at the local Unit's mess.

Before I go off to bed I must tell you that I love you even more today, if that is possible, I could never love anyone but you my darling no matter how long I might live. I am longing to see you again and I shall never rest contented until I do and tell you myself all about my love for you. Only then will you have some vague idea of how terribly much I love you. I am looking forward to next week and the coming of the post to say brass in this district. I am asleep, Calm! Good night and God bless you my darling.

FRIDAY - JULY 18th : I have some bad news for you today, Calm, and yet it is not unexpected. Our Brigadier came today on inspection and he had a special interview with me during which I was told that as there was now another officer attached to the Field Ambulance who had got more service

myself he would have to be made a Major and I would become Captain again. You see, my darling, it is all fair and above board. My successor to the 'Crown' is a very keen man, he was in the Army about a year before war started; he is with a company of our Field Ambulance in another part of the country but thank heavens I am to be left here and not transferred to his company. I am still second-in-command and have all the same jobs as before; the money side of the question does not matter at all to me. I knew that all this was coming and it was just bad luck for me that a more senior officer joined the same F.A. Ambulance as mine. I am very pleased really to be allowed to remain in charge of H.A. Company and remain in this beauty spot. Do you love me as much as our Celest, even though I am a mere Captain now?? My darling, you are not in love with Captain or Major Murray!! I am very happy because you love plain Frank Murray. I know he is really a 'nobody' with more brawn than brain, but he loves you and he will always love you through thick and thin. I know how very, very lucky I am to have your love and I shall always try to be worthy of it. I shall never understand why you could ever be bothered with me at all, Celest; I am not worth it. All I can do in return is to give you everything - my love, myself, and all that I have. You know that these have always been yours and yours alone.

I wrote a long letter to my father this evening and also sent him a few snaps of Malaya. He will be terribly disappointed about my decision, because he is rather inclined to be too proud of his offspring's successes! You should have seen him on the day when I passed my Final - he was terribly proud of me that day and I was glad only for his sake because it was one of his life's ambitions to make me a doctor. It would have hurt him very much if I had failed him. Now I prayed that I would never let him down - and how I worked

too for his sake. Now you understand why he <sup>will</sup> feel my de-motion so much. I should mention that the Brigadier informed me to day that I would be in Command of a Field Ambulance soon and be promoted to Lt. Colonel! However I took that with a grain of salt!

I told my father our secret and he is the only person I have confided in. I said that you were everything that he wanted my wife to be, that you were everything that I wanted in any girl - that I loved you and that I would never change. I did mention that you were a niece of Eddie O'Kelly's, that you were many things (which I must not repeat to you!). I know he will dash off to the Raid Edward and ask for a detailed description of you and heaven help Eddie if he gives you a bad character! I hope you don't mind me telling my father about our engagement, but I think he ought to know that his son is engaged!

The big parade and inspection went off very well this morning and I was complimented on the smart turn out of my parade. All my equipment was in good condition and so as a matter I got another pat "in the back"! I produced a very good lunch for the visitors and they went away very pleased with their day - and with the Field Ambulance! I tried to do some painting in the afternoon but the wretched brush held up the good work! I sent lots of negatives and two films off for developing and printing. There was no tennis this evening as the heavens were opened at 5 P.M. and the deluge came down for about an hour. I like the rain to come occasionally because then I have time to write home - I reserve all your letters for after dinner and that's why my letters are so sleepy and dreamy! I can hear both my neighbours snoring just now and so I am tempted to go off to mine bed!



Before I go, I want you to tell me all about your new black frock - a really detailed description of material, plain or not, does it suit you; what shoes you wear with it; and whether you wear any jewellery with it. You must remember that I had five sisters once upon a time and I have seen them all in new frocks getting ready for big dances. I was not much of an asset to them at dances - I only ruined their pretty shoes! Good night, Celine; and God Bless You.

SATURDAY - JULY 19th I have had a busy day and did not finish work till 8 p.m. - I started at 7 a.m. It has been a very happy day and I owe all my happiness to you, my darling. I read your last letter once more today and I love it more than ever before. What rubbish I write in my letters compared to yours - I can never really explain matters as I would like to. How can I put down on paper everything that is in my heart; it is not possible, Celine, and so you will have to wait until we meet again and hear it all from me.

To night I am dead tired and sleepy. I had a big P.A.D. (A.R.P.) Scheme on this morning and I had to organise the whole show; it meant lots of running about. I made it very realistic by firstly covering a 'casualty' up with earth and making the rescue squad dig him out again! There was a stunt martial of some kind in, too and I had some part in that. At 3 p.m. I went off in a truck to have a look at the scene of a recent accident to one of our cars. As that was 50 miles away and I had to spend an hour making sketches of the place and even taking photographs of it, I did not get back here till 8 p.m. I have been appointed as the unit's official photographer!! We had dinner at the local Rest Home at 9 p.m. and the food did not taste so good! And now I am finished and ashamed of my effort tonight. Good night and God Bless you, my darling.

SUNDAY - JULY 20th. - Please forgive me for only writing a few lines last night, Eileen, but I had to jump into bed quickly else I should have gone asleep over your letter! It is now 6.30 p.m. and I shall not go asleep at this hour. It is growing dark and I am sitting on my favourite place - the steps of my verandah. It has rained continuously all day long and it is still very dull - and I have worked continuously all day long and I am still very dull because I have not been outside the shadow of these trees today! That did not prevent me from thinking about you and being very happy - and yet I must tell you that no matter how happy I may be there is always a pang within my heart that makes me long to see you again and tell you everything that you should hear from me. Surely that day cannot be so very far away now. As the days slip by I always thank God that each day is a step nearer to peace and one day nearer to you, Eileen, and to the happiness we shall know in our re-union. We shall both find each other changed because you are no longer the very frightened schoolgirl I knew in the past and I am no longer the very self-conscious schoolboy who once upon a time pursued you so ruthlessly! May be you have noticed how happy little Frances is with her new-found love, but, my dearest, I shall make you much happier than that because we shall be the happiest couple in the world. It is not premature boasting, it only stands to reason that this should be so because we love each other as two people have never loved before. We must pray very hard that God may bless our love and keep it always holy.

I have been thinking of your mother today and how proud she must be in having one child a nun and another a priest in the making. My dear mother always wanted to have one of her sons a priest but alas it should not

be but she did have the consolation of having four daughter nuns and a fifth very probable one too. Having lived in England for two years and having met all classes of people there and in India too, I realize that we are the luckiest children in the world because Irish parents are the best in every way - there are no parents like them anywhere.

Eileen, have you ever considered me a very deep person? At school, at "Anweis", and out in the big world people always thought I was a very great thinker as I never had very much to say for myself! The art of conversation had never been developed in any of our family and that had its disadvantages later in life when I came to live in England. When I was studying medicine, Dr. McSorinan always called me "the wise old owl that lived in an oak"! I have got only one gift and that is of knowing people's real worth in very, very short acquaintance. I know you, Eileen, the first time I met you and I have never changed my opinion of you since then. I have loved you since then and never once have you been forgotten - and you never shall be.

You will have to give me some lessons on sewing, mending, and darning! I must have spent over an hour putting a patch on my shirt this evening! I cut out a neat square and darning up the hole, sewed around the edges with blanket stitch and another row of plain stitching around the perimeter! Please tell me the proper procedure. I am hopeless with socks and can never make a darn hole like a darn!! I shall have to do my repairs on Sundays as I have no time darning the week. When we get married, my sewing days will be over - that is my chief reason for wanting to marry you, Eileen. I warn you in time that I shall have very large holes in my socks and you will have to darn them! Will you promise me one thing, my darling? Let us both go on shopping expeditions occasionally - I want to see all your

new frocks, coats, and shoes. I am very bad at shopping especially for myself - I don't believe in bargains and never argue about prices; so usually the shopkeeper finds me easy prey!

When I have finished this awful letter I intend reading it through just once as an experiment! If I find it is not readable, I shall tell you in my P.S. and in future shall try to make amends. I hope my telegram reaches you in the wilds of Senegal and that you are very happy there. I shall love you every moment until we meet again and then my love will only have begun. Nothing could ever make me stop loving you. I am yours, Eileen, and never could even a small bit of me belong to anyone else. Do not forget to send the ring sign - I shall manage the rest somehow. Please send your photograph as soon as ever you can. Give my love to everyone at home also to Frances and all in Castlewellan. Please God I shall see you all again in the near future.

God bless you and keep you safe from all dangers.

All my love, Eileen.

Ever yours,

Frank.

P.S. This letter is awful! I am sorry.

Frank.

P.P.S. Do you still love me, Eileen?

F.