



1804

27th Field Ambulance,

Malaya,

30th May.

1941

My dearest Eileen,

I am still writing to you every day and I still love it. Today's diary will be short but I must tell you something which you have never heard before - I love you, my darling, and I shall always love you! I could not love you any more even though you were here with me now - being separated does not make any difference to my love for you. We have many weary months ahead of us - months of waiting, uncertainty, and, may be, disappointment - but no matter what is to come, Eileen, I can only love you more. I only live for the day when I shall see you again - I can never grow tired of waiting or become downhearted as long as I can think of that wonderful day. Will you be surprised if I just stand and look at you for one whole minute before I kiss you. Oh, my darling, will you really not mind if I do kiss you. Long ago, when I was young, I thought it would be an awful crime for anyone to kiss you; and now that I am old and wise (?) and wicked, I think I should have kissed you long ago.

It is midnight and I have just come back from having a fish dinner (Friday) with Mr & Mrs Winsey - the Mayo people I told you about. The husband came 10 miles in his car and collected me at 6.30 p.m., took me out to their home, and left me back at the hotel. You cannot imagine how decent they are to me - they consider



that I am an orphan in the storm. I went out to night because I needed it and because my nights out in this particular place in Malaya are numbered and soon the Winseys will be left hundreds of miles ^{behind} from me! I cannot tell you more!

Instead of ~~reporting~~ soldiering this morning I donned boots at 11.30 am. and went off for a swim in my stream in the mountains. Two other officers and 40 men came along too. It was a very hot morning so you may guess how welcome the swim was to everyone. I ducked a few of the more playful of the men who wanted so badly to "thuck" me - we had grand fun. Your Frank was one of the few who swam the whole length of the pool against the tide. Yes, I am yours, Lileen, and I shall always be yours no matter what happens. I have been yours ever since I first met you and I shall not change now.

I am very sleepy, Lileen. Good night my darling, and God bless you.

May 31st. Today should have been a "day at the races" for me as it was for all the other officers and 50 of the men. I did not like the idea of spending a hot, sticky afternoon in the sun stoned up in uniform and perspiring profusely under the collar! So I spent my afternoon swimming with the men who were unlucky enough to draw a blank in the raffle for seats at the races. I bought them two large rubber balls to play with in the water. We had a grand time and spent a couple of hours playing around; then we had iced lemonade! On the whole I think we were more comfortable afternoon



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from the racing folk! I am becoming rather well-known on all the roads and when the small boys hear me coming they put up a wild cheer and salute very smartly - and I always salute and wave to them all! It is good to be alive sometimes, Cileen! At other times life is not so grand because I am so far away from you and yet one thing alone makes me very happy and that is, that we love each other. That love can easily bridge over the thousands of miles that lie between us - we are really very near to each other, Cileen. I pray for you every morning and every night and I tell you so many times daily that I love you. Please don't think I am being ridiculous in all of this because I must love you, ^{like this} and tell over and over again about it. I am selfish in not thinking how awful it must be for you to read it so many, many often.

Cileen, my darling, I am still waiting for your letters. Only one has come as yet and that arrived last February when I was in Rawalpindi. I would give anything and do anything to have a letter from you. If only I could tell you in words how much I love you, you would understand how I am longing for your letters because letters are the only means we have of coming very near to each other. I know you have written many letters since your first one, and I understand all about the delays 'en route'. Now I wish with all my heart that there was no Hitler, then there would be no war and I would not be in Malaya, but in Ireland. Yet in a way it was Hitler and his war had something to do with bringing us together, but again I think it was God. My darling, will you please from Heaven and beseech everyone up there to send me home



to you in the near future. I would be more useful as a soldier at home than I am in Malaya at present. You may think Omagh a dull place but just wait till you hear the tale of woe that I shall have to tell you very soon when I reach a new destination in Malaya! You have your Golf, Lileen, and you seem to love it as you love all games. I have a tennis racket here but it's of no use to me even in this modern town!

I was terribly jealous when you told me about all the nice Queensmen you met in Omagh! No, my darling, I shall never be jealous - it is enough for me to know that you love me and nothing else matters. And you will never have any cause to be jealous of my female acquaintances because they are so very few, but they are decent, and I only love you, Lileen, and I should never love anyone but you. Do you mind if I write and tell my father about us? He would be terribly pleased to know that you are someone after his own heart and that you are a relative of his friends the O'Kellys. I want so much to tell him everything, but you must agree to it first.

Next time you write, Lileen, tell me all about Felix and what he intends doing with himself. It would be rather nice if he could get a practice near home instead of going further afield for one. Poor Chap used to give me a pitying smile in the old days at Queen's when I sent my regards to you through him. He must have thought I was crazy - and may be he was right at that time.

Good night, Lileen, even though it is good day in Ireland at this moment. God bless you and keep you safe from all harm.



WHIT-SUNDAY - JUNE 1ST.

Well, Eileen, the months are slipping by and now it is mid summer at home and you must be looking forward to holidays. I suppose you have chosen your favourite spot, Killough, or did I hear once upon a time that you went to Waterfoot one year. Now I wish I were at home now and getting ready for holidays. May be we could arrange to go to the same place - then I would see you all day long. Just let me make plans for a single day with you at the seaside! I think we should arrange to meet at 7 a.m. every morning and go off for a swim before breakfast! After our dip we would have a quick walk home and would we be hungry or would we? Would you like a round of Golf after breakfast, Eileen? We should have another swim in the afternoon; another walk and please, darling, I want to climb up the highest sand dune with you barefooted and hand-in-hand I want to run down to the bottom as fast as we can run! Oh, my darling, we would be so happy together always. Would you like a game of tennis after tea? In the evening we would walk along the strand by the water edge where everything is so peaceful and calm. Please do not talk, Eileen; just let us whisper, because talking would spoil everything at such a time. I have so many things to tell you and its then you will hear them all. Dont you think its time we said good-night - its getting very late and the O'Hane family will be wondering what has happened to their Eileen!

When you really do go on holidays this summer will you think of me often and just keep one day for me? I do miss the holidays out here, Eileen, and how I long for them once again - much



more now that we really know each other and love each other. I have had no leave since coming out to the East and I shall never want any! I am much happier working and just now there is not a lot to be done because we have settled down in Malaya. You may have guessed as much when you hear of my almost-daily visits to the mountain pool!

As there was nothing doing today we (five officers) decided to have a swimming picnic up in the hills we set off at 11 am. all loaded up for our mountain retreat - we even brought a folding table and chairs with us! We had a perfectly wonderful morning and afternoon in our mountain stream - even though the sun has played havoc with my shoulder! We were ravenously hungry when lunch-time came - the cold chicken, ham, and duck quickly disappeared - as did the cheese, fruit and coffee! I tried to take some snaps and I wonder how they will turn out. I was sorry the troops did not come along with us but my pleading was in vain - the others (V.C. etc.) decided against it because they thought the men are a nuisance in the water!

After tea today I sent a telegram all the way to Springfield Road, Belfast, telling my best girl that I loved her and that I was sending weekly letters to her via America. I think you would like her Cileen, because I love her so very much and because you are a very dear friend of mine! I haven't seen her for such a long time and I am wondering what she looks like now! That's why I want you to have a photograph taken, Cileen, and send it to me. I want to see you as you are every day at home and not as the Schoolgirl I now see before me - and yet I loved that same Schoolgirl the first time I saw her.



So please, Helen, have that photograph taken. I haven't changed about you since yesterday except that I love you a little bit more today! If you knew how much love I am giving you each day, you would never be able to carry it around with you all day!

Good-night, my darling, and God bless you.

~~MON~~ JUNE 2nd : This being Whit Monday the holiday spirit prevailed in camp today, but yours truly was working all morning. Another swim we had in the afternoon. The O.C. and I were in charge of the party and when we saw them settled for their afternoon fun, the former decided to go off to a smaller pool further up-stream. Unfortunately there is quite a current up there and the O.C. was almost swept away with it. I was sitting on a log at the time and my legs dangling in the water when the "old man" approached down-stream all out of control. I managed to get him out somehow - and he was a bit exhausted. He really was in danger because he was travelling very fast and even on the brink of the rapids when I pulled him out!

It was our second-last visit to the mountain stream - Wednesday will find us far away from here! I shall probably have to finish this letter in my next station. It is really a move from "Somewhere-in-Malaya" to "Somewhere-else-in-Malaya". I hate all this moving about; I like to be settled in one place and get some real work done. This will be my 9th move in 16 months - and I am lucky not to have more! What a pity I cannot tell you all about the places I see in Malaya - you could look them up on a map and have some



idea of the country I am living in. It is not telling you a secret when I let you know that there are rubber plantations everywhere in Malaya and tin mines fill up the spaces in between! I am terribly interested in jungle and am longing to explore it in spite of the leeches, and snakes and tigers and elephants! I met the District Forest Officer to-day and he has spent 18 years in jungle and loves it. He has been lost for days in it quite often, has shot big game, has been up and down remote jungle rivers in a canoe, has met the aborigines of Malaya in the wilds, and is one of the characters in a book called "Four Frightened People."

Cileen, my darling, I was terribly disappointed today when no letter came from you in the Indian mail. I had a letter from my boy friend John R. Frank F.R.C.S.; he has been appointed as Surgical Specialist to a big district in India. You'll have to meet him, Cileen, when the war is over - he is a grand chap; and how he and his wife love each other. Poor old dear not know whether to leave her in London or bring her out to India - both are so very dangerous alternatives. I also had a letter from a little Welsh girl called Jones! I sent her a wedding present just before I left India - a pair of jiv!! She married a Captain in the Indian Army and a more charming couple you could not meet. I have a soft spot in my heart for two young people who love each other! Little Miss Jones was very decent to me when I was in hospital in Rawalpindi - she was the Officer's ward sister. I didn't tell you about my baseball accident in India when I spent a week in hospital nursing a twisted knee! Please don't lecture me, Cileen, about rough games - I could not take it!!!



Now don't be jealous of Miss Jones - she is safely married and very happy. She was engaged to her George before I arrived in India and she was very much in love with him always! And yet she could not love her George one thousandth part as much as I love my Cileen. My darling, I shall always love you and only you.

It is bed time and I must go off now to my cot with my usual good night to you and all my love is with you.

~~My dear~~ June 3rd. I have just come back from having dinner with my Mayo friends; it was a farewell visit, because I am leaving here to-morrow and going off hundreds of miles away. I am leaving these good folk behind me and I shall never forget them. English people are not bad and neither are the Scottish but, Cileen, there are no people in this wide world to compare with the Irish! I am so terribly proud to proclaim that I am Irish, no matter where I go - and I shall always be proud that you are Irish, Cileen, and that you are a good Catholic. I met the Reids today and they were in grand form - Mrs. Reid actually admitted that all the nicest people in Malaya are Irish! She did not mean this to be a compliment to her husband or to me!! They gave me a very strong invitation to come to dinner to-morrow night and I may have time to go as my train does not leave until midnight. Reid leaves on 6th to join the Air Force. He gave me a copy of "The New Northman", the Winter edition - and it has been grand fun reading it again. I felt a bit homesick for my Alma Mater.

My scraps came today and they are quite good. I shall send them in another letter - if the freight will carry! We paid a rushed visit



to the mountain stream to day and this is definitely the last dip for many a long day to come! I may as well tell you, my darling, that conditions for writing will not always be so ideal as at present - in two days time I shall be in my wooden hut with my hurricane lamp. I shall love you much more when I reach my new destination and I shall need your love so very much more. No matter what the place is like, I shall always love you Eileen. Can I ever love you enough? I don't think it is possible.

I am looking forward to my trip into the wilds and wondering what it will be like. It will be a welcome change from living in a posh hotel with lots of comfort and luxury. I am on active service now and should be living accordingly! Eileen, when are you coming out to Malaya?? It's not so very far away and you could easily come for the summer vacation! And yet if you were here I would not be happy about you - I would see you very seldom. Once I go into the wilds it may be a year or two before I come out again!

Good night my darling and God bless you. I shall have to miss a couple of days in this diary but when I reach beyond I shall make amends.

JUNE 6th - Somewhere-else-in-Malaya. I am writing this from the wilds - the wildest jungle I have ever seen. It is 10 P.M. and there are hundreds of queer animal noises all around in the forest. I am sitting in my one-roomed wooden shack and you could not imagine that walls could be so bare! The roof is made of palm tree leaves and the patter of the rain is rather soothing after a sticky day - rain is always welcome.



R. M. G. S.,
BANGALORE.

became it looks everything so beautifully. I am sitting in pyjamas in my camp chair; my camp table is in front of me and a weird light is shed by a very bad oil lamp! My camp bed looks inviting at the moment draped with a mosquito net but I think I can resist it for another few minutes while I say good night to my best girl! In a corner you could see my very fine canvas wash basin and canvas water bucket; there are no windows - just a wooden shutter and the ever open door! There is really no daylight here - nothing but an eternal twilight. I should hate you to think that I am in a bad way because in fact I am very comfortable and I do like this life so much better than hotel life. As usual I cannot give you any details of the place and as usual it will have to wait. I have plenty of work because I am Mess Secretary among many other of my jobs - I do everything except cook the food here!

I have not written so I told you about my move and so you understand that writing was impossible. I had lunch and dinner with the Reids just before I left my last station. At the evening meal I met a judge, a magistrate, and heaps of barmisters! At 8 p.m. I had all the baggage loaded and all the troops on the train, when I slipped off to Reids' house. I had a lovely evening even though I was tired - you have no idea of the work entailed in a move by rail with troops and equipment. I was in my bunk before midnight and had some sleep before the train moved out at 2 a.m.! Spent most of the day in the train and arrived in this forest late in the afternoon; had to arrange accommodation for the men, fix up their food arrangements; had to organize the mess etc etc. I almost slept at dinner last night. I saw a bit of Malaya en route and



it is all pretty and green. I could be in much worse places than this and for that I am thankful. And now I have finished my first day in the wilderness and I have liked it. We are rather isolated from the outside world just now and in a way that is all to the good.

I still love you, my darling, and I shall love you every day. I shall need your love, Cileen, and lots of it while I am in this part - so please send plenty in your next letter! Cileen my darling why didn't we know about each other many years ago. It is my fault; I wanted you to tell me many times but I would not listen. Please let me love you and love you as you have never been loved of before. I shall do everything for you; I would dare anything for you. I just love you, my darling, and I can never love anyone but you.

Good night, my darling, and happy dreams. I shall always love you, Cileen. God bless you.

Love yours,
Frank x+x

P.S. Love to all at home - and Frances.
Frank.