

27th Field Ambulance,

Malaya,

Wednesday July 9th.

Lileen, my darling,

Do you still love me or have I been dreaming that you love me?

Are we really engaged to be married or is that also a dream? If you could only know the happiness that you have given to me, you would not believe that there could ever be such happiness in this world. Oh, my darling, how perfect it would all be if I were only at home again with you, seeing you and loving you more and more each day. Alas there is a war on and it must be finished first before I can go to you and tell you that I love you. It will be a very long story telling you all about it and may be it will take years trying to give you some idea how much I adore you. May be you know it already and one tired reading it hundreds of times in my letters. Do my letters sound very dull to you, Lileen? They all seem to be crammed full of love. You see, my darling, I love you with everything I have got and loving you is the only thing in my life which matters - that's why I can write about very little else.

Won't it be wonderful, Lileen, when we meet again for the first time after being so long apart. All the love that we have stored up for so long will then be poured out in those few moments. I know that our love will always remain young and real and good; it will be spontaneous and yet it will never die. My darling, the happiness that we shall know together will more than compensate for all the love we have missed during all these years. We shall never be a staid, sober couple when we are married; it just would not be in keeping

with the love we have for each other. With a love like ours we shall always be happy and carefree. I want to share my happiness with others - somehow I think that everyone should know how to become happy. But then, everyone would not see love and life as we now see it.

My darling, a letter must come this week-end. How I have waited and waited and still not a letter. You may have sent one to India as I told you and it would be delayed there for weeks. If only they knew how very urgent it was, they would not keep it for a moment in India. I am so very glad to know that my letters are reaching you, Lileen, and if they make you happy that is all I want of them. I sent off two letters to you this morning by Pan American Clipper. I must have sent about 20 letters since coming to Madaga; you are being slowly spoiled with all these letters! I am sending as many as ever I care so that you may have something to read should the time come when my letters would have to stop. You do understand what I mean, Lileen? I am a soldier now and my job is in the war, so it is not asking too much of me to do some fighting. I think I would prefer a job fighting in a war instead of doctoring.

Like yesterday I did not get out of the forest today and it has left me rather dull, so please excuse my writing today - it is sure to be heavy stuff. I am going away in a "Schemi" all day to-morrow at a place 60 miles away. I love these field days because they are in reality picnics. I am only going as an observer looking for tips from other Field Ambulances. I have to get up very early to-morrow and so must be off to my bed. Remember that I love you and that I shall always love you. God bless you, Lileen; Good night.

Thursday - July 10th - My darling, I am very tired tonight, but not too tired to love you and to write you a short note. I got up very early this morning before 6 a.m. while it was still dark and we set off down the hill at 7 a.m. to the "manuvres" below. I had a grand time pottering around the place and peeping at all sorts of novel shows; in fact it was all very instructive to my civil mind. However I enjoyed the lunch best of all because it was really a pic-nic - we sat down under a tree opened our tin of bully-beef, had our cheese sandwiches, fruit and coffee - and oh, it all tasted good after a strenuous morning. On our way back I did some shopping for the dress and then we sped on our way home at 5.30 p.m. Do you know that I have been thinking of you all day long and praying for you? Don't you ever hear me thinking about you and don't you know that I love you and only you above all else in the world? Don't you feel terribly guilty for making me love you so much that I spend my whole time loving you - I have little time for anything else! Well, you know that no matter how long I may live, I shall love you until I die. Should anything happen to either of us before we have a chance of meeting again, I know that we shall love each other just the same. It would break my heart should anything happen to you, my darling, because you are more precious to me than life itself. It would only make me love you all the more.

Will you be terribly hurt tonight if I can only manage one page with you. I shall make amends to tomorrow night. Poor you have to read all my love letters but I am worse off because I have no letters at all to read! I have great hopes that this week-end will surely bring something. And now that I am half asleep I must say Good night to you and God bless you, Helen.

FRIDAY - JULY 11th - My Darling, I am sorry I could only manage one page yesterday. There were so many things that I wanted to tell you and now I have forgotten them all! I want to tell you now that I love you more than ever before. Another snail came today, Helen, and no letter from you yet! Can't you please write to the Home Secretary or somebody about the delay in your letters reaching me! Here I am just longing for a letter and it just does not come. I do not really mind, Helen, but I love you so terribly much that I must have a letter from you soon and yet a letter could not make me love you any more than I do to night. Why should I need letters, anyhow? I am the happiest man in the world because I have found the love that I have been waiting for all my life. Helen, my darling, if I am so happy now, what will it be like when we meet again. I have about a million things to tell you and a million questions to ask you! I often try to picture what you are like now, Helen, whether a very pretty young lady teacher or still the same gay person I have always known you to be; I try to imagine how you dress your frocks and hats and shoes. That is why you must send me your photograph; I want to see you and talk to you again.

I have an awful cold at present and so my Grey matter does not function too well nowadays. You will find that this letter will be awful throughout - I am making grand excuses! It is very cold and wet to night and I can hear the rain drops pattering on my thatched roof. I have worked hard all day in "men's camp" (mine camp) and then played a hectic game of football against the local police team. We are still unbeaten in these parts! The rain started late in the evening and has kept on all the time without a break - I actually have my back window shut to night! My darling, I shall send you a small box of my snuff soon and I want you to keep

them in an album at home if you can - just call it Malaya and then I shall remember it all when I get back home again. We have so very many things to do when I see you again. We are actually engaged to be married and we haven't even filmed each other once yet! I think it is disgraceful and something should be done about it. I discovered yesterday that I am not allowed to even read your any more at the end of my letter as I have been doing recently because the censor considers that there might be a code among all the crosses! You may have noticed how worried I have been about what the censor thinks of my love letters. I have started a new scheme of registering all your letters, Helen, because in some cases you might not get my letters as the stamps are removed and the letters destroyed. I may tell you that that is quite common in India.

Did I mention to you, Helen, that in a section of the 1st Field Ambulance there is an officer who has longer service than I have and still he is not a ~~capt~~ major. This section is in another part of the country but great efforts are being made to put him in my job, promote him, and de-mote me. Actually this would be quite fair and just because the next senior of the junior officers in a Field Ambulance automatically becomes second-in-command and is made a major (acting rank). So you Frank may find himself a nice Captain in the near future! Would you love me just the same, Helen!!! I know that I would love you as much as ever no matter what happens. My O.C. is making great efforts to keep me in my present job but the powers above think it is very unfair to the other chap who is very good at his job. I can only wait and see what happens. To me rank means precious little in the Army - the higher I go the more I hate snobbery!

My darling, the mosquitoes are biting hard tonight

as the rain has made them come indoors. If you do not wish me to get Indolence you will send me off to bed now! Good night and God bless you my own darling. I shall always love you.

SATURDAY, JULY 12. - This day is called the Grand and Glorious Twelfth at home but Eileen, today it has been the most glorious in my life. Your first letter has reached me at last and I am so terribly happy that I want to tell everybody about it. It was dated April 21st and addressed to Ranalfundi. My darling, why cannot I write letters like yours. Mine are so disconnected and sketchy - and now you have made me thoroughly ashamed of them when I compare it to yours. How did I dream that you would write to me as you now do. I am terribly sorry that my first letter was lost. I sent it from Ranalfundi and I just poured out my heart to you in it for the first time in my life. I am too happy to write coherently to night! How can you expect me to ever love you enough in return for the love that you have given to me. How could you say that you had ever treated me badly when you know how awful I have been to you in the past - it is I who am to blame.

Have you realized, Eileen, that we owe all our happiness to prayer - to your prayers and the few that I have stormed Heaven with. It has been a miracle and we must always thank God for it as long as we live. Now I thank Him for making you write to me last December. What an awful tragedy it would have been if either of us had ever married someone else. I could never have been happy with anyone except you, Eileen, and I have known this for years. My darling, we have had a narrow escape and we almost missed each other in the road of life. I knew in my heart when your December letter came that you were in a Quandy and that you had some

terrible decision to make. It was a dreadful position to be in - you had to choose between someone whom you loved and saw very often at home, and somebody else whom you had not seen for many years and whom you loved too. And I have been lucky, Eileen, so terribly lucky. All I can do is to give you all my love - and you have always had that, my darling; it will always be yours. I shall never change as long as ever I live.

I was charmed to hear that you have taken up cycling - I have liked it always. Do you remember my cycle trips to Costlemetham? Now I wish I could accompany you on your cycle tour of Dargal. I hope you are now having a wonderful time amidst the beauty of those hills that I have loved so much. If you go to Lough Derg do not forget to pray hard for me and remember that I have traced the same stony ways of that island at least six times. I was there when there was no Grand Basilica and nothing but a cold wooden church built out on the water's edge! If you come to see my battling costume you would spot my large St. Christopher medal ~~the~~ seen on the front of it with the sword - a souvenir of Lough Derg. Many people examine my medal because they think it is the badge of some famous swimming club!! Anyhow, I hope you are having a grand holiday no matter where you may be.

It was good news to hear that your family had left Belfast before the raids began; it will be such a comfort to you to know that they were safe. I suppose your father must stick at his post in Belfast. Surely he must know all about our home as well as your mother, Felix, and Frances. You have got no many people, such as your Rev. Mother at Dinagh, to confide in - I have got nobody, so I'll just have to burden you with everything. You may be sure that as when I tell my father about it, he will confide in your Uncle Eddie! The latter

will have to give glowing accounts of you before my father will be satisfied about you! I don't really mean this, Celen, because I know that he would never ask a question about my future wife.

Will you please tell Frances that I love her very much and that her Roland had better beware of me as a potential rival! Just tell her that all the girls fall for me and eventually she will too!! Don't you like my modesty, Celen? I was sorry to hear of young Mr. Colosheps' death (R.I.P.). It seems such a short time since I spoke to him on the Linsford boat a couple of years ago. I am sometimes glad in a way that we are not married, Celen, because should anything happen to me and you were left to fight alone - it would be awful. But we must not and we shall not live each other now. I shall come back to you soon again and we shall be so very happy together. Already I am looking forward to your next letter, Celen, because I know it will soon be here. Life is grand just now since your letter came. I tried to send you a cable this evening when I had finished work but they would not accept it after 5 P.M.! I shall send you a long cable on Sunday with lots of love in it. I have spent many hours today and yesterday "de-bugging" the barrack rooms! Thank heavens these creatures have not invaded the officers' quarters as yet! We have all been out to dinner tonight at the local Rest House and we had a meal fit for kings to eat. And now it is 12.30 a.m. on Sunday morning and no brass to look forward to. Please pray hard, Celen, that I may have brass more frequently in this place - not brass since yet and I have been here 5 weeks. I think the priest is on Retreat but he has promised to come. Good night and God bless you, Celen. I am very happy.

Sunday - July 13th : Tell me very soon, Helen, what you think of these awful daily letters. May be it gives you some idea of how much you are in my thoughts each day of my life but it must be poor reading for you. Nothing much happens to me in my daily round; it is mostly routine; there are no friends to tell you about, no real news to give you. So my letters are mostly thoughts and not events of interest to you. Even the Snaps I have sent to you may give you little idea of what life in Malaya is like. My darling, won't you please pray very hard for me at Mass and Benediction on Sundays, because I sorely miss it all in this wilderness of beauty. When you receive Holy Communion remember me very especially because I am longing so much for it. It is now about 5 weeks since I have been to Mass and I would give anything to be able to go. It is really only when one cannot have Mass that one fully appreciates it - at least that's how I feel about it.

I have just come back to camp from tennis - had five good sets with three other chaps (two Indian and one Malay). It was my first game for so long as my racket was being repaired and now I feel fit again. I have been very busy without my favourite hobby or game. You will never be able to convince me that Golf is a better game than my tennis - I have found Golf the most aggravating game that exists! However I am willing to become a convert to your side and soon I may be able to start in real earnest. Alas there is no professional to put me right when I make mistakes and it is fatal to start Golf and develop bad habits which later are difficult to eradicate. You would be very annoyed with me if I were your pupil - I cannot concentrate on that little white ball on the ground and think of all the "blows" at the same time! One should not have to concentrate on games, and yet in a way I concentrate

a little on tennis.

Have you ever realised, Celine, that you have been a sort of guiding angel to me for so many years. You know well enough that life in Eastern countries is not good - it is so easy to go astray - but you have always kept me right. I am not good enough for you, Celine, in many ways but I have never gone to the dogs in any way while I was in India or in England. Now you must have been praying for me or else I could never have done it alone. You were always in my mind and so I always did the right thing. Long ago my sister Lisa (a nun in Dublin) sent me a short poem and I think it should have been given to you Celine: "Not what you get, but what you give Not what you say, but how you live Giving the world the love it needs Living the life of noble deeds. Not whence you came, but whither bound Not what you have, but whether found. Strong for the right, the good, the True. These are The Things Worth While to you". And yet I must not tell you what I really think of you. To me you have always been something that is good and true. I need not say any more because you must know what is in my heart. I was very, very lucky to begin life by meeting you because in after-years I naturally compared others to you and they all fell short. Now I am the luckiest person in the world. I shall never have to swear that I will be true to you always and I shall never have to ask you to be true to me. That is the beauty of our love, Celine; it has good foundations and it will outlive time. I could not break faith with you for anything in the world - no inducement how ever strong could make me do it.

I shall now tell you how I began my Sunday morn. I discovered a large brown rat this morning in a small building near the mess. Armed with a stick and clad in pyjamas I tackled it in its nest!

All the officers and servants were waiting expectantly outside while the battle was proceeding within. The rat escaped by the back entrance and scaly ran between their legs and off into the jungle! I was glad in a way that it escaped because I hate hunting animals even though they are dangerous. Today I have even been happier than yesterday and people have noticed the change in me; to-morrow I shall be happy too (D.V.). You have brought me more happiness in the first week than I ever dreamed could exist. Good night and God bless you, Helen.

Monday - July 16th I sent you a telegram this morning, my darling, and I hope it reaches you safely. I have an idea that you are now in the fields of Senegal and I would not wish you to be in a better spot. May be you will say that there is no place like Kellough, but somehow Senegal is different. May be we should have a special corner in our hearts for that country - it was there we first met and that is reason enough why we should love it. I hope and pray that you are having a very happy vacation no matter where you may be, that you have lots of good friends around you, and that the holiday will not pass quickly for you. You know that I am with you every day in thought. I only want to know that you are happy and that will make me happy too - my one job in life now is to give you all the happiness possible in this world, and even then I shall not be satisfied.

I am glad you have confided your big secret to Felix as well as to your mother. He was one of the nicest lords I met at Queens and at times he must have been fed-up with me asking him to convey messages to you. Believe me he did a very wise thing in leaving the Samaritan - experience can only be gained in general practice and the latter is the finest job in the world without exception. A doctor's life can bring happiness and satisfaction that no other can bring; he sees results for his work; in most cases he earns gratitude instead

of money and to me that is infinitely better. The poorer the patient the greater should be the care and attention given to them. I am not just an idealist, Eileen; I have tried it out for myself and I know the joy it can bring.

My darling, can you make any suggestion about an engagement ring? Can you tell me what exactly you would like? I have asked you to let me know the size. The problem now is - how am I going to send you the said ring? I had thought of sending the money to my father and asking him to purchase one in Belfast; if you have any objection to this, Eileen please let me know. Another thought was to ask a London firm to send you a selection of rings and let you choose for yourself. My darling, I want you to have a ring and I want you to wear it when you think you should. If you would rather wait until I can put it on your finger, I am agreeable - I only want you to be happy.

I have had more tennis today with the local police inspector, the District Officer, and another chap (all Europeans); I feel much better for it. It was good to have a decent night's sleep last night and wake up very fresh this morning. I did work today until 5 P.M., so you need not think I am having an easy time! I had a letter today from my Mayo friend and his wife whom I liked so much at my last station; they have given me a standing invitation to their home whenever I care to visit them.

Always remember that I love you dearly, Eileen, and that I am all yours. I shall never change. Give my regards to your parents, Felix, Frances, and all at Bostwellan. Goodbye, my darling, and God bless you.

All my love,
Love yours,

Frank

P.S. Not allowed to put any crosses at the end nowadays!