

27th Field Ambulance,

c/o Army Base Post Office,

Singapore,

Friday, 21st November.

My own dearest Eileen,

I feel so happy and contented and at peace with the world in general that it does not seem fair while such an awful war is raging all around you. I do want to be near you my darling while you are in danger and when you need me most but here I am in the same place so far away and so helpless to do anything for you. But you do know, Eileen, that I am always with you in spirit, in all your joys and sorrows and dangers, sharing them all with you. The days pass quickly but all the time I find myself loving you more dearly. I have always loved you, but if anyone had told me that I was capable of loving you so much as I do to day, I would have laughed at their incredulity. These long hours of waiting for each other will not be in vain; we are using them in preparation days for our married life and to strengthen our love by unceasing prayer. We should really thank God for these days of separation no matter how hard they may seem; it is His way of letting us know how much we love one another and how very sure we are of each other and our great decision. Never once have you written to me and said "Frank, if you should change your mind..."; never once have I written such words to you - we are so certain that we have chosen rightly, that we shall never change. God has been too good to us, Eileen, in giving us everything in life that really matters - our holy faith and our love, not to mention so many other things. Our parents have played the trail for us as a shining example, and please God we too shall follow in their footsteps; we shall be even happier than even they have been and we

shall love each other even more than even they have loved. I know we can do it, Eileen,
and we shall pray constantly and earnestly that God may give us graces in abundance
during our married life together. It was you and your love taught me to pray really
hard and to realize that we could never be happy without prayer. I only wish I could
pray as you do, Eileen, but I am doing my best under difficult conditions. Will you
ask Him daily for a special favour for me - I want to be sent to a station where I
can home Mass more frequently, and daily if possible. Think of all the graces that I
am missing through not having Mass here; can you imagine it, my darling, only
four times in the year the priest visits this isolated spot. I told you in a recent
letter that the C.O. and the second in command would both be away from camp on
leave during Christmas and that I was detailed to hold the fort - this meant that
I could not go to Kuala Lumpur to Mass on Christmas Day. However things are
brighter now and the C.O. is coming back to camp on the 20th December from leave,
and this means that I should be able to get away. I have been much happier
since I heard this because now I have a chance of having a happy Christmas as you
and I know it. I do not mind the distance; I do not mind ~~the~~ missing the grand
Christmas dinner that has been arranged in the Mess - all I want is to be at Mass
on that day and receive that Infant Child into my heart. It will make my Christmas
as perfect as possible in far off Malaya, but on that day I shall be nearer to you, Eileen,
than ever in my life before.

My trip to Ipoh on business & leave has been cancelled by the
powers above. I was a bit disappointed because I did want to see my friends the Winseys
there and also the Priests, not to mention Fr. Francois and his lovely church. I had
planned daily Mass at Ipoh, but alas that hope has vanished. I would have met
you Mrs. Valda Roberts en route at Kampor and made another link with you in Penang.

We had a great hockey match today with another unit in the local village at 5 P.M. I was in grand form and produced some first class howling strokes with my stick - I can only hit the ball when it is in mid-air! The pitch was ideal, an Irish green and so level; it was fast because the stands were low. A thunderstorm put an end to our game and back home we came. I am always happy playing outdoor games of any kind and I shall always love an outdoor life. Thank God you love all these things too, Eileen, and will be a good companion on all my open air expeditions! I am now off to bath and change for dinner - I shall be back soon again!

I sent your usual 10 paise letter off this morning; another was sent on Sunday last; and a cable yesterday! Oh my Eileen, I feel that I can never do enough for you; I want so much to make you happy. Now I hope and pray that my letters bring you the happiness that yours bring to me - I have been terribly happy since Wednesday when your latest letter (dated Sept. 14. 42) reached me. I read one of your letters each night in bed before going to sleep; then I say my baby prayers as I call them - the ones my mother taught me to say in bed ("As I lie down to sleep, I give my soul to God to keep" and "Infant Jesus weep and wail..."). All my grown-up prayers I say on my knees, of course. My darling, do you still say your baby prayers too? You are in my good company ~~now~~ in my room now - ~~on~~ on one side is my mother, on the other is Nina, below you is pinned the little palm cross which I got in Hyderabad; above you is a little shelf on which stands the Sacred Heart statue, at his feet is a small Holy Water font, Josie and Nina are on either side of the statue, and away below you on my table is my beautiful crucifix. And there you stand looking down at me now, and you are a very proud young woman with your caps and slits! My darling, you look perfect in that snap and much as I would like a photograph of you, it will never be quite the same as that little snap.

My last letter might have annoyed you, Eileen, but God knows I did not want to worry you with my past romances; still it was better that I should tell you about it as you told me about your Omaha romances. All these things belong to the past and they have helped to bring us more closely together and to make us realize that there is only one love for us. Thank God we have weathered the storm and reached the shore, as you so nicely put it in your last letter. And here I must say Good night to you my own darling; may God bless you.

SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 22nd

My own darling, Here I am again with your usual daily dose from me! It is Saturday evening, 5.30 P.M., and also it's the same as any other evening to folk who live in camp the whole week through. If I were not writing to you daily I would soon not know the day, apart from Sunday! What a contrast to a Saturday evening at home in peacetime - especially when I was a lad. I would be pleasantly tired after a hard game of football or hurling at Cherryvale; it was my greatest delight to chase a ball of some sort around a field. For many years my father could not understand why I should be so fond of sport and for a long time poor mother and I fought a losing battle against him. We pointed out that it was good for my health and my soul. Mother always encouraged me and many times she thanked God that I loved games so much; games were my first love and you were my second love, Eileen! And now these two loves are combined in perfect harmony - you will never be jealous of my first love, will you my dearest one? You will never have cause to be jealous of anyone or anything as long as ever you live, Eileen; whether we are one together or apart will make no difference - I shall always belong to you and you alone. Let us always keep our love as it is today; let us grow old together but our love will never grow old with us. I become too happy sometimes when I think of the happiness that lies ahead of us. Two people have never been more suited to become

man and wife as we are, Lillian; we were meant for each other - we could never have come together again unless God had planned it all for us. Do you know that I can feel that you have been praying hard for me during all these months? My awful temper seldom shows its head nowadays; I refuse to quarrel with people I do not care about. When a row is imminent I bite my tongue and walk away - it avoids unpleasantness and hard words, not to mention the misery afterwards. One of the things I abhorred most in people all my life has been insincerity - I just cannot stand honeyed words from folk who do not like me even a little bit! I could never say nice things to people about themselves unless I was convinced that they really were true. I have been blunt to the point of rudeness to many people, but nowadays I am more tactful!

I am sitting here in the twilight in the veranda of the house; my chair is facing towards the west and I can see a golden red sunset. That same sun out there is shining on you at home (I am) and how I wish I could see what he can see as he looks down upon Omaha and you. My darling, arent you tired reading my ravings of this evening? You never bore me with your letters, they are so natural and fresh. You began your last letter by frankly admitting that you were not in a letter writing mood that day - you are so honest and true, and Oh I love you so much for your honesty and truth.

I was rather touched this morning when one of my nephews stood before me and wept. He had come to say good bye to me as he was transferred to another station; I shook hands with him and wished him luck. He was so overcome that he could say nothing and then tears welled up in his eyes - I patted his shoulder and then he suddenly ran off to the waiting lorry that was to take him away forever from this field of tribulation. One of the Indian officers went off on two months leave to India this morning and it made me think of home too - and you, my darling. I shall

Don have spent two years in the East without a holiday and thank God I have never felt the need of holidays. However I was interested to read in yesterday's paper that it was recommended in the House of Commons that men should be changed to Home Station from the Far East after they had been out here about 2 years. I expect it will not apply to officers, but I shall make enquiries no matter how hopeless things may seem.

I had a letter yesterday from the F.M.S. Museums' Director saying that some journals were being sent to me - Zoological, Ethnographical, and Archaeological! I have no idea what all these big words mean, but they are all for you, Cileen, and your pupils to elucidate. I hope these journals will be of some interest to you, my dearest one; anyhow, you will surely know your Malaya 'ere I leave this pleasant land. And now I have nothing more for you today my good lady except to tell you that you have all the love that my poor heart can give you. Good night and may God bless you and keep you safe.

Sunday NOVEMBER 23rd - My ever darling, do you know that the happiest man in the whole world is writing to you tonight, and it is you have made him so happy. If anyone had asked me what I would like for a birthday present, I would have said "a letter from Cileen". It is no use trying to thank you, my darling, for your greetings, your long blubber letters, that precious little card, and that lovely snap of you (polyfoto); and besides all this you have given me a very special present of a whole brass - the most priceless gift you could give me. How you have spoiled me with all these gifts and how unworthy I am of them all.

I have so many things to tell you and so little time to do it that much of it will have to wait until tomorrow. It is 11.15 P.M. and the end of my happiest day in Malaya. It began with your letter being handed to me at breakfast

this morning; I must have first stuffed my scrambled egg down my throat, had a hearty cup of tea, and fled to my room with my treasure. I must always be alone when I read your letters - I cannot bear anyone else to be in the room; and then how slowly it is read so that I can enjoy every word. If I could only express my feelings properly and tell you of the new torment of love that pained out of my heart this day to you, my dearest one, but alas I am hopeless to describe it all. Now I have gazed at your picture and loved it dearly and how I have kissed your tiny curl of brown hair and placed it safely away under lock and key. Your snuff now rests on my table at the foot of my crucifix.

We went off on our usual picnic at 11 am. - fine of us. Sunday is my big day of the week and it is our day, Culu. The sea was very calm and scarcely a ripple upon it, and so I decided to explore new inlets on the coast which are normally dangerous because of the rocks. Away I swam in and out of little lagoons, through narrow channels, and round by the point - and all the time I could touch the rocks a few yards away. Several times I had to turn back and seek other routes owing to huge rocks just below the surface of the water. I swam for miles but it was safe, because I was near those rocks at my side. When I joined the others later the C.O. asked me if I had been to Sumatra!! After a grand lunch one man went asleep, two others played draughts (and later went asleep), and the C.O. wrote letters home - your Frank went down to the shore to pray. I sat on the rocks and just gazed at the beauty of the sea and no prayers were said. Four men appeared in bathing costumes on the sand below me - they were uneasy and thirsty and asked for water. They were four Australian Airman who had walked for miles along the beach in search of adventure in this quiet land. I led them off to our lorry and fixed them up with 2 large bottles of beer! They were very grateful and drunk to my good health in style! Off they went down the beach as happy as four kings - my good deed for the day had been done, I had quenched the thirst of four thirsty men! My

colleagues could not understand why I should give beer to four strangers - especially ordinary
Bis Force chaps! I went down to the shore again to pray and this time I succeeded. I
explored among those huge rocks that jut into the sea and found hundreds of large crabs
- a speckled green below with dark yellow legs and white pincers. I reached a nice
ledge of rock between two large boulders and down I knelt and said my Rosary in
thanksgiving for everything that God had done for us and the happiness He has sent us. It
reminded me of Semp Song at the end of a station, kneeling by the waterside and looking
out across that lovely stretch of water. I was tenderly happy as I knelt there, Kileen, and
that Rosary came from a heart full of joy and gratitude. I found some lovely shells
on the shore and I have kept them for you. Then came 4 p.m. and time to go back
reluctantly to camp and another six sleep under the rubies! But I was so happy that
I cared not where I was. We met a Major Fenell on our way; he is an old friend of
the C.O.'s and mine from India days. As he is staying at the local Rest House for a few
days we decided to have dinner there to night with him and get all the Indian news from
him. I did not forget your words in today's letter about not accepting invitations
to town with the C.O. [I did not explain to you, my dearest one, that all other
invitations in the past have been to pictures, but I have decided to cut out pictures which
I am in Madaya as an "act" (? like pictures too much!). I don't like drinking and
so my teetotalism is not an act.] We had a good dinner with the major and had
a long talk about mutual friends in India. There is a nice chap coming to this station
soon with whom I was friendly at Banian; we had lots of tennis last summer together.
His wife and he were ideally happy in that little hill station (the most picturesque in
all India); they had an adorable child and they used to consult me on the baby's
feeding, teething etc. It seems that poor Dick (his name) became a major in India
for a few months and a few days before leaving for Madaya, another officer arrived on

The same who proved to be senior to him and so Dick was demoted to Captain like myself. He had worked so hard and then promotion came as a reward! It is much more sense on him than on me, because he is a regular soldier with years of service, and the difference in pay means a lot to him and his family. Would you liked to have seen me brought at the Post House drinking my orange squash between two men armed with submachine guns! I am not ashamed, thank God, and it makes no difference socially to me or my company. Do not interest you to know that there are five others in our mess who do not drink - so I am not alone!

I shall write heaps more to you, my darling, but now I must be off to get 6 hours sleep! Good night and God bless you.

Monday - November 24th - Well I only managed 5½ hours sleep after all - I get up at 6.30 a.m. nowadays! Thank God I have never felt better in my life and this early rising is good for me. Since coming to this station I have avoided all strenuous exercises in the heat of the day and believe me this is very wise because I have seen some cases of heat exhaustion among the locals.

In all the excitement of yesterday I forgot to tell you that I had a letter from Father Girard in the evening. He could not say the three masses ^{23rd,} on 24th, 25th or 26th November for mother, Josie, and Charlie; instead he will remember them in the moments of his masses on those days and will say Masses for them on December 4th, 7th, & 8th. My birthday gift to mother will be a Mass - I shall surely have a happy birthday this year. And then Charlie's Mass will be on the 8th and that is so very appropriate because that child's soul was so pure and white. I have always known that he was praying for us two in Heaven. Many a quiet moment I spent in the garden at Beechwood under a stormy sky and I often wondered was he looking down on you and on me, and interceding for us at the Throne of God. Those were my student days and it was my routine to

stroll in the garden to try and freshen up a very dull brain - and to dream of you and
 what the future might hold for us both. And now all those dreams have come true
 - and I thought then that my dreaming would be in vain. Father Girard is
 coming here on Sunday 21st December to say Mass at 7.30 P.M. - this is marvellous
 news for me; it will be my first Sunday Mass since I got down last April & May.
 I have been giving the pleasant task of informing all the Catholic troops in the station
 and already the good news has been spread everywhere. My saintly friend also sent me
 the addresses of the Redemptorists and the Little Sisters in Singapore. The Rector of
 the Monastery is Very Rev. F. H. Cosgrave; may be some of the blond men would
 know him. Anyway I shall write to both places and threaten them with a visit from
 me when I visit Singapore. I shall tell the Little Sisters all about Mattie and you
 my dearest one; I shall offer to communicate with any of their friends who may be
 in German-occupied territory - this I can do through the Red Cross. However the message
 would have to be signed by me as this scheme is for officers only. I shall not forget
 these good news at Christmas and shall send them a present from us both. That
 reminds me of your present to Frances and her Roland for their wedding - and you included
 me in the gift too. You are so thoughtful, my darling, you never forget others. Give them
 both my very best wishes for the future and I hope they will be as happy as we shall be
 together - and that is wishing them all happiness. Her Roland has been a faithful lover and
 he is a lucky man to have a girl like Frances - and I suppose it is mutual (the luck).
 It is surely the grandest thing in life to see a young Catholic boy and girl so much in love
 and so happy.

Your last ordinary air mail letter was dated September 15th
 - the others are not due yet, but it is pleasant to know that so many are already on their
 way to the far East. I am so sorry, Helen, that my letters only reach you in papers,

but perhaps things may improve with the weekly Blipper Service which now operates from Singapore. It is dreadful to think that you have to wait 5 whole weeks for my letters; you must have the patience of Job, my darling; even I do not have to wait longer than 3 weeks for your letters and sometimes. I am so glad that my letters make you so happy; that is why I write so often - and oh how happy I am when writing to you; every word is from my heart no matter how dull it may be. They are not duty letters, it is my pleasure and my privilege to write to you; they never interfere with my games. That is why I insisted that you should always have your golf and games as much as ever you can; if you have free time in the afternoons or evenings never hesitate between golf and writing to me - always have your golf because it will make me happy. You must not sit indoors for hours - these are modern, young women!! You are grand to have sent me the Irish Weekly so regularly each week and I am looking forward to their arrival in January - I hope Louis still contributes articles, because I love them. I hope that by this time you have received some of the many magazines I have sent to you - however the letters are more important to us both and we must thank him for speeding them safely on their perilous journey.

Cileen, I cannot help loving you more and more every day and I can see your love growing too with each letter you send me. I am so glad that my de-motion has not hurt you - that was the only thing that worried me a lot; and now you are writing to plain Capt. Murray more loving letters than you ever wrote to Major Murray. Thank God our sense of values is good and that the things in life we treasure most are the things that really matter. You can never know the joy it gave me to know that you liked my new lot of Malayan Snaps - the palm beach ones etc. They were all taken especially for you, Cileen, so that you could see the beauty of this country without visiting it. I was thrilled to hear about the Malaya Album which you want to start during Christmas vacation; it will be grand fun in later life to pore over it and recall happy days here. I laughed

at your description of your visit to Prof. Johnson and how you both spent hours over a large map of Malaya! It must have been exciting for you to have traced my long journey through this land - even more so than it was for me who actually did the trip. Prof. Johnson is a grand person and everyone adores him; I could scarcely believe that he remembered me at all. I have not heard from Humphrey recently but he has gone away northwards to a spot 50 miles from my recent home in the mountains of Upper Perak. He is now attached to a C.C.S. (Casualty Clearing Station); the spot is very dull and not nearly so pleasant as Tanjung Malim. However it has the advantage of being near to Penang and its easy to get weeks with there.

It is wonderful to hear of Felix and Luma settling down in Ballynashinch. I have often heard at home that it is an excellent practice; and I consider that Felix could not have picked a better one - it is a very sound investment. Do not be sad, my Cilem, as they will surely come soon and we shall be doing just as Felix and Luma have done. Please send them my very best wishes for every success at Ballynashinch and every happiness in their new home. By the way Frank Martin and I went Schoonlander many years ago; and he is a great friend of Jerry's. They always have an annual bet among themselves at the all-Ireland Wrestling Final - it is grand fun listening to their repartee as they are both expert talkers! It has made me happy to know that you have already tried to meet my friend Jerry - I do want to hear your opinion about him. He impresses a lot with knowing. My darling, I want to hear heaps of detail, so when you write do not think that you are boring me with details - it's all the little things in your letter that mean so much to me.

You did have a glorious week-end at your mid-term holiday and how happy you make me when you visit Beechwood. I would give anything to see you walking up the path to the house I love so much - you are an awful

God not to have come to Beechwood years ago when I was there waiting for you so patiently. But it was all my fault for being so blind. And now you have kissed my own father, well, never a kiss for me as yet!! My own darling, how I do love you because you like my father so much; he is a good man and he loves you, Eileen, for your own dear self. You would very soon know if he did not approve of you! Everything you do is so natural and so loving; and I know that you will not change ever. Poor little Anne has a lot to contend with at Beechwood and it is marvellous how she has managed things single handed. She must miss mother so very much - they were very devoted to each other

My dearest one, you are simply wonderful in doing so much for our father's home - you make me ashamed of myself; I seem to be doing nothing at all. You must not go on buying so many things; please let me have a share in them - I must do my bit. When we get our joint account started in Belfast things will be more simple to manage. It is grand of you to have started cooking classes, but you know that I would not have minded what sort of things you looked up! I am longing to hear details about the classes and how they all began - you have written about them in other letters. Tell Miss Boland that she will always have a special corner in our hearts; I should like to meet her, my dearest one. I want to meet all your friends and to love them as much as you do. You are becoming a very grand young lady - especially over that purple cloth you have embroidered. You love me too much Eileen, much more than I really deserve.

How damn you ask if I know what a "skatin" is!! I have known this since I was a very small boy and to me they were fascinating in those days. It is the custom in all the farming districts of Ireland and yet you only heard of it recently! I can see plainly that we shall have to spend our lives seeing that little patch of green in the ocean called Ireland and learning more about its people and their customs. My darling,

There is no land in the whole world to compare with ours, Eileen.

I have been on duty today and how happy I have been. I discovered that I am still a doctor when I attended a case this evening - it was an injured eye that was bleeding inside. I did everything correctly and worked out the treatment like a song. Now I wish I could have brought my medical books with me from India, but alas it was not allowed; I could have studied a lot in Malaya. I parted with a very good friend of mine this evening - a bandolier (sergeant) who has been sent to another unit. He has 20 years service but is very tough; we marched many miles together in upper Perak and in the jungle. I could not tire him. To night he was sweeping as he held my hand and bowing over it pressed it to his forehead - this is a very great honour. I loved this man and he loved me; we had many laughs together. He is the taller of the two men I snatched under the parasol; he is also in the group of three men snatched beside a lorry. I have told him that he will always be my friend.

And now this rumble-tumble letter has ended and I have given you no news. Oh my Eileen I shall always love you no matter what happens; I am yours forever and ever. I want to give you more love, but there is no more to give because you have it all. If there is anything in the wide world that I can do to make you happier, then I shall do it for you. I cannot be happy unless you too are happy. The love you have given to me is in safe hands and you shall never know a moment's unhappiness; I shall treasure your love above all else. Myself and my life are nothing without you. May God bless you, my darling, and may His Holy Mother protect you from all harm.

Ever your loving
Frank.

P.S. Love to all your dear ones.

Frank.