

HOLLYVIEW,

OMAGH,

NORTHERN IRELAND.

Tuesday Nov. 24. '41.

My darling Frank,

I have just returned from my second week-end at home since the beginning of September. This time it was the boarders turn to have a break from lessons so of course the "carefree" teachers just had to take one also. I sent off your birthday letter just before leaving on Friday last but it will be quite stale when this reaches you. Isn't it just grand that all our letters have reached their destination safely!

Now I have good news for you too, dearest, about the Snaps and magazines. On Friday morning last the 3 Asias and the Straits Times Annual arrived intact. They were magnificently packed and had such a permanent wave in them when I reached them that I am still trying to permanently unwave them!! If you don't hear from me for some time, you are to blame, because you sent me such interesting literature!! Honestly Frank, there is grand reading in them. I sat this afternoon in front of a nice lamp fire and read article after article on Japan in my first "Asia." You see I told you that we are studying Japan at the moment in the Senior class (26). You should have been listening to me to-day. I was quite an authority on Japan's position in the Pacific and her chances of success or failure in China!! All my friends who see my interesting magazines are claiming to have a peep at them, but the boisterous children must come first. The Straits Annual is a beautiful book. I fully intend to keep all these books. They will never grow old or out-of-date for me. You shall see everyone of them when you return home. Besides these books there arrived also your letter via Durban enclosing all the Snaps of your journey through Malaya. I followed you every step just as if I were in that little Austin & not that huge Sikh who stood by it and made it look so diminutive. Isn't he a lucky man to have travelled with you through so much beauty? I wonder did he realize it? You have completely changed my poor opinion of Malaya - it must be beautiful country. Those sketches of yours are certainly marvellous looking

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men. I never saw such well-formed bodies, God bless them. What religions are these men? If they are Catholics - which I am led to believe because you spoke about bringing some to Mass with you - from whom did they get the faith? I have always thought that India was rather a new harvest for missionaries. These thoughts may have been due to the many sermons preached in Clonard about the Indian Mission. St. Francis Xavier's work was done chiefly in the South.

You are very good Frank dearest to spend your precious free time in making out those little albums. My problem is how to put them into my album. I wouldn't touch them for the world - your "album" must remain intact in my album - Don't worry, I shall find a way! The sayings accompanying each snap are so appropriate. You are quite a poet in your own way, Frank! How do you think them all out. Believe me you must be a very clever and gifted young man instead of "never very bright" as you declared yourself to be.

I am sitting all alone to night as Eileen has gone off to bed. I intended turning in early too but I did want to write to my beloved. Those "Trans Pacific" letters upset the continuity of the arrival of my letters to you, Frank. You have a few together and then none for some time. Mrs Ray has found us two very nice easy chairs & so we sit each evening like Darby & Joan, one on either side of the turf fire. I am writing this letter on my knee which accounts for the bad writing and the bad slant of the last page too. How you enjoy these letters, Frank is more than I can understand. They certainly do not make such good reading to me.

Now, would you like to hear about my week-end? You wouldn't!! Well, you just shall hear about it. We did not get away until the 4.30 train because some inspectors were on the horizon. The result was I missed Frances in Belfast (her bus left at 6.20 & my train did not get in until 7 p.m.). I got another disappointment that same morning when I heard that Mamie would be unable to get home from Barlow for my week-end. She wanted to have Maureen spend a week-end with her before returning & the only week-end Maureen could manage was Halloween. So, my dearest when I arrived at Spring Villa it was to find no one at home except Mr. Madan who keeps the vegetable garden at the back in Kinn. But was I lonely? I was not & now I shall tell you why. On the table reposed a box from a very dear friend of mine who is in Malaya. Do you know him, because if you do then give

him all my love. Yes, Frank it was your box of 60 Snaps. It came without even a corner torn. Well, I made my Halloween report & while taking it I opened and delved into your box. Did I enjoy myself for the next couple of hours! I looked over every snap & then back over them all again. I am lost for words to express what I think of those Snaps, and they came at such an appropriate time. One would have thought you knew that I should be alone & quite "neglected" that October night. dearest Frank and you sent me those Snaps to cheer me up. It was the pleasantest Halloween I have ever spent. It would have been a tragedy if that box had gone astray. I shall surely keep them all safely for you. You would be quite elated if you heard the praise those Snaps received by everyone who saw them. Daddie & I spent ages going over them together when he came in later. In his pocket reposed your letter to Mamma. He did not forward it. I was dying to have a peep at it but we both had to await Mamma's arrival on Monday (yesterday) at 7 p.m. to read its contents. Mamma read it out to us both then. I cannot tell you how pleased she was with it. I wanted to take it away with me but would she part with it. I know she will always treasure it. Never was such a beautiful letter written by a ~~father~~ future son. Both Daddie & Mamma kept telling me that I was a very very lucky girl. But, since I know that, Frank darling, only too well. They were both very touched when they read that letter together. I think it brought back old times to them both. They were amused at your "cheek" in saying that we should be even happier than they. If we love each other as much as they still love each other then it will be a very wonderful love indeed. You should have seen them after their short parting. Daddie was as excited about her return home as any romantic school boy. Need I tell you that tea was forgotten until your letter was read & reread - and I was rushing for the 8.40 train to Omagh the same night. What a rush, I had, but it was worth it, well worth it. Though it is quite late now & I am a bit tired I haven't told you all my news of the week-end but I shall "see" you to-morrow. Good night darling. I am so happy that you love me and so proud that I love you as I do, with all my heart. God bless you.

Wednesday, Nov 5th

I have just about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour before tea so I am going to spend it with you, Frank. To-night is Murnaghans night and to-morrow night the five of our staff are invited to Birchfield for tea so you see how busy we are kept with these social calls. To tell you the truth I prefer to stay at home and get on with my many jobs for our bottom drawer but alas one cannot be too frank in these matters.

This morning we were all at breakfast when in came the maid with your cable telling me you were well and safe. You are so thoughtful for me Frank darling, and I love you for it. Please for you will always be safe & well. I cannot get to mass every morning now as it is too dark & bitterly cold too so I have got a new habit for getting all my prayers said - the army of Holy Souls must grow whether mass is heard or not. School stops at 3.15. Afternoon tea is not until 4.30 so I just spend the

4, time in the convent chapel. Do you know I really enjoy myself then because I feel we are closer at prayer time than any other. How can I thank you enough for all those masses & Holy Communion you have offered up for me last September. No think that a mass was said for my intentions by a native priest in far off Malaya and attended by you, dear Frank is just too wonderful. I am a very proud girl indeed to get so much thought. I do feel the benefit of all your prayers in so many little ways that I shall tell you all about some day. I have had wonderful answers to my prayers in the past few months and I feel sure that your prayers Frank are in a very big measure responsible.

Now to give you some news of your dear ones in Beechwood. Anne has been troubled since the blitz days with a sore toe. She has had a discharge from it, on & off ~~th~~ since then. Well Dr Wright had a look at it & decided to operate upon it. This operation was carried out in the Mater Hospital last Tuesday. She wrote me from the Hospital so on Saturday I went to visit her there. She was looking splendid & there was no pain in the foot. She was allowed home that night. Maureen was there when I called so we all had a grand chat together. I brought my box of snaps along & we all delved into them. I promised before leaving to go up & spend Sunday afternoon in Beechwood. We decided that Jean (the maid) would be allowed away for the afternoon & I, under Annes instructions should make the tea. Your father seemed very pleased to see me - he shook my hand very soundly & drew up my ~~&~~ chair before the kitchen fire. Pat, your cousin was there so I was introduced to him. He told me about (your father I mean) the two letters he had received from you, one written over a month before the other. He seemed delighted to get them. I never saw a man with his heart so much set on having us married soon & settled in Beechwood. Where would Anne Philip and your father go Frank if we were to live in Beechwood. It seems so heartless taking their home from them. Beechwood is a beautiful home & nothing would please me better than to make it our home but Anne & Philip I wonder how they will feel about it. We must never have our pleasure at anyone else's expense. I love them and I want them to be happy too. I think it is your father's idea to retire from business soon & probably sell the shop. Again, Frank would you be able to find a practice around Beechwood? You know about all these matters best but one thing I do want you to know and that is - I shall never mind how poor we are or how hard we have to struggle to make our living. To me it will be a grand adventure. It will

all be so easy when we have each other and our prayers to help us along. Your father thinks you will have no difficulty and told me I was to write you to this effect. However do not worry your dear head over these matters. Everything will work out as God has planned it for us and in His own good time.

I think your father already treats me as one of the family. On Sunday night he brought down to the kitchen a large black tin box in which reposed many interesting documents. We went through them together & as we did, we came across a small white box. It contained your mother's wedding ring. I took it out & put it on my finger. It fitted me perfectly so her fingers must have been the exact same size as my own. I told him he should wear it but try as we might it would not go on to any of his fingers. Sunday night was "All Souls Night" - how wasn't it strange that we should have spoken so much about your dear mother that night? I felt she was very near us in that kitchen on that night. May her Soul rest in peace and may she watch over us both all the days of our lives.

I was glad to read in your recent letter about your modified view about the domestic trouble as you put it. Anne is a grand little girl but after all we must make allowances for youth. She is only 21. I can also understand your father's point of view in wanting her to be at home more often - Surely there is the happy medium. If I were at home I would go up and keep your father company and Anne could go out, but here I am tied hand & foot. This would be a real pleasure for me because I do enjoy chatting to your father. I find him very interesting indeed.

Philip was in on Sunday night so I met him for the first time. He is not at all like you, Frank - in fact I do not think he resembles any of the family. I think he is a very clever boy and this I discovered from my own conversation with him. He was very friendly towards me & I think we shall be good friends. It was about 9.30 when I rose to go. Your father got on his hat & coat & when we came out, it was such a gorgeous moonlight night that he said he felt like a walk. So we both set off & walked from Beechwood through Clifton Park Ave Agnes St. on to the Falls Road. It was a lovely stroll. He was most interesting about all the places through which we passed. He waited until I got my bus & before I hopped on it he presented me with a little parcel. These little gifts are becoming quite a habit with him. I told him, if he gave me any more I should not come so often to Beechwood. He always asks when I shall be back again. I made him promise to write to you soon - I know how much you look forward to his letters. It is time I got ready for my visit to Llanmallard - Still more news for you but it must wait until to-morrow. Don't worry Frank dear about Anne's foot. She showed it to me & it is wonderfully healed.

God bless you to night where ever you are. There is still no sign of the enlarged Polyfoto. It should be here next week. When it comes I shall send it with Felix's wedding group. You simply must see that Undersmaid in her lavender with no lace. She is trying to tell you that you and you alone are ever in her thoughts.

Thursday Nov 6th

I have another weekly to send off to day. I am being most economical. I buy it every Thursday, then read it and post it. Strange to relate the only paper my landlord will read is the Irish Press so it is little ~~known~~ home to see it lying around the drawing room. We had quite a gathering here yesterday. They were all friends of Hubert's - the son. I wish you would pop in some day along with these ~~off~~ uniformed young gentleman. Instead of keeping out of their way I should get very much into the way. I was amused in one of your letters when you said maybe some fine morning you would knock upon the door of No 15 John St. Believe me Frank you would get a warm reception there. Having lost their 3 boarders I don't think even friends of the said 3 ladies would receive too kindly a reception.

Winter has now descended upon dear old Ireland. The convent paths are thick with autumn leaves. There is a nasty east wind blowing which makes cycling quite a push, though it may help the complexion. We could never have pale faces in this bracing land of ours.

You want me to tell you more about Josephine & Mairead. Well I think the best thing I can do is to enclose in this letter a snap of each. Josephine is small in height and I think she is 23 years old. She is a very confident little lady and well able to do the prowling around England which she does. Everything she does, she does well. She is a grand little Catholic & is quite a Catholic actionist in Yorkshire where she instructs the Yorkshire lasses in the arts of cooking & sewing. We write every other week to each other. She is dark with hazel-coloured eyes & is very "nifty" about her appearance. In Kilkeel days she was an ardent gaelic enthusiast & every year turned up at Ruanast for her Summer course. She holds the gold fairs & I want her to take her Ceapd Cearas exam which will enable her to get a good job in Eire. We are all anxious to have her home so she may give up her job, to please Daddie & Mammy & come home. She may be home permanently at Xmas. This will be a sacrifice for her as she loves the independence that only a job can give. She has made many very good friends in Slamcross where she teaches (it is 10 miles from Burnley). She is particularly friendly with the games mistress & at all free times the pair of them go off hiking through the Pennines. She has a second home in Slamcross with Mr & Mrs Drake. They have not been long married and have

1) one darling little baby, Philip. Mrs Dralle is one of a large family of Irish extraction (O'Hara) & she & Jo get on particularly well together. Jo asks about you, dear Frank in every letter. She is praying lights out for you and your safety. She is just dying to meet you.

Mairéad is 21 years old and is as tall, if not taller than I am. I can never think of her as grown up - she is such a child. To play with Terence Joe & Hugh is her greatest delight. She sings beautifully & can sing anything under the sun. She is not so industrious or hard working as Josephine but is a great favourite wherever she goes. She is the greatest little saint at all. You think I am holy, Frank. Well just wait until you meet Mairéad & Jo. They leave me streets behind. Both are praying hard for our intentions. Hugh got home from Armagh for the holiday Nov 1st. He sent a letter preparing us for what he wanted - a good fire, a good feed and a Halloween parcel. He landed in punctually at 12 o'clock & it was good to see him tuck in to that plate of rasher & egg. The meal over he set off for the pictures. I was going over to visit Anne in the Mater so we went into the town together. Very proudly he looked over his shoulder at me & declared "I am taller than you now, Eileen." He is just 16, so if goes on growing he will leave Felix too behind. I may find a snap of my 3 big brothers to send with this. When I told him about you Frank, he gave me the most comic of smiles. I have a letter which I received from him some time ago. In it he asks about you, Frank so I shall send it with an ordinary sea mail letter. He wants to go to Queens, like Felix he says. What did he purchase when down town on Saturday last? - an aeroplane book. The money was supposed to be spent on goodies but Hugh's thoughts were on something else. It gave me quite a start to see along what lines his thoughts were running.

Joe's letters home from Limerick are very amusing. One week he signs himself "your loving niece", in the next "your loving son". He has "Spring Villa" more often at the head of his letter than Mt. St. Alphonsus Limerick. Terence must be acting the "big brother" this term although Joe needs anything but a big brother to initiate him. I am already looking forward to seeing them both home at Christmas. There will be some tales to hear. There is great rivalry between Armagh & Limerick - our boys have made that possible.

Saturday, Nov. 8th

Were you only dreaming when you spoke of me going out to Malaya on my next summer vacation? Could you really get permission for me to go to Malaya? It all sounds very exciting indeed. When, in the course of my conversation with your father I mentioned this he shook his head. He thinks if I went out to you neither of us would ever return. I think, you would find it very hard

8/ to send your wife home again once she got there. She is a very ~~delicate~~ determined young lady so what if she would not go back!!! Of course I dream about going out to you. If the war should go on indefinitely, which is quite probable, and if you should be left permanently in Malaya could I not find a suitable job somewhere near you where I could be doing my work and yet seeing you on these "leaves" which you should be taking. How about getting a job in that Fraser Hill convent you spoke about? Perhaps they would not take a married woman as one of their staff. In this country they do not, so once we were married Frank, then I must stop teaching. Do not think that I love my teaching so much that I do not want to give it up. I should give in my notice to-morrow, if you wanted it, but until we can be together always, I want to be doing something. If this idea of mine about getting a job out east does not appeal to you, then just consider it one of my day dreams. The "blipper" is such a wonderful means of bringing us so close together - would it not be possible for you to come home for some leave soon. Then you could return to your post. Sometimes I think if such personalities as Mr Duff Cooper realizes how anxious I was to see you, then he would willingly give up his seat in the Blipper to you. Day after day I listen to the arrival of this Australian politician or that. Why oh why couldn't they slip you into their pockets!

Yesterday morning I had a pleasant surprise when I found on arrival at the Convent an unstamped letter from my beloved, Frank. It was written at the end of August and contained 4 enlarged snaps - the same four as I had received in my box of Snaps. They are beautiful. I love the "Mutual Friends" especially. What a marvellous collection of snaps we shall have. I am looking forward to my holidays when I can fix them into an album.

Yesterday too I had a letter from Frances. She has received your letter and intends to answer it shortly. She is a very busy girl now and her bottom drawer is growing apace. Every letter is full of things she has got. Many household things, Frank are almost impossible to get. Would you like me to tell you about all the things I have got? I have quite a lot, you know - especially of those commodities, like cutlery which are not being made now. Are you pleased? I had my "Clonard" framed last week end. The lady in Hurst's called over her assistant to admire my work so needless to say I was very proud. I have taken years to do the fine work on this picture. When I commenced it, it was intended for Mamma. I am so selfish enough now to keep it myself. I can see it going down the generations as an heirloom. What do you think of my cheek?

As I write this there is glorious opera being broadcast over the Radio. Music has a wonderful effect upon me, Frank - it just transplants me into the realms of lovely dreams. In order to

9 fit my 3 snaps into this letter I should be writing no more but I just must go on. If there are some of the 3 missing, then the reason is that the letter is over the $\frac{1}{2}$ of allowed. I am posting the Irish Weekly to-day also. There is an article in it by our friend "Louis F." Are you receiving these papers, Frank?

The post has just come in bringing me a letter from home. Poor Mamma is up to the eyes helping Mona & Felix to furnish. She tells me that our cutlery has now been sent to Bullynahinch for safety. I got it wholesale, Frank, and it is really beautiful. There are, I think 113 pieces of the very best quality, 1 doz of each article, even down to carvers, salt & mustard spoons. They are compactly laid out in a solid mahogany table. It will be a lovely article of furniture for our home - it can remain in the dining room and be a serving table at the same time. Mona was very envious when she heard about it. With this I also bought a tea service in good quality, electro plate - tea pot, cream jug, hot water jug & sugar bowl. They are much nicer & more serviceable than the solid silver & I know that the tea pot makes much nicer tea than the silver. Frances intends to get the same, if she can. Are you pleased with my purchases Frank darling? It is my greatest delight in spending my money on such things. I have always dreamed of making such purchases & now it is actually happening & I feel so happy - much more so than if I were spending money enjoying myself. When you come home we shall look at them all together. How curious you made me when you spoke of the things you collected & have packed in your trunks. Do tell me what that trunk holds? I don't think I can wait to hear, until you come home. I hope you still have the 6 white elephants. The Far East is the land from which most beautiful things hail. Your statue & crucifix must be beautiful. Where shall we put them, in our home? You asked me did I like gardening. I love a garden but alas, I know nothing about it. I am a dangerous person to send out weeding - because I know not the difference between weeds & shrubs. Will you teach me, dearest one? At home, our garden produces all our vegetables potatoes etc. Mr. McCann spends most of his time pottering around it. He feels so proud landing into the scullery with the spuds & greens for the bairny dinner. He will help us, if we should need him.

So you were in "Spring Villa" once upon a time, Frank!! I never knew that you had crossed our threshold. Where was I when you came. Who did you meet? Thank goodness it was before I got my degree because if it had not been you probably have seen a very ugly photograph of me standing on the piano. A boy once told me that his photograph reminded him of a "hangman with neuralgia". That's exactly how I feel about mine. That boy was Barney Cosgrove. Do you remember him? He has

10 Not qualified yet. Una McAlister is married since to a solicitor in Newry called Luke Curran. Do you remember Una?

Did you know, Frank that Hugh Marshall's father was also a very good friend of your father's. I only heard this lately. He thinks he stood godfather for one of the Murray family.

Have you bought the ring yet, Frank? If you have, do describe it for me in your next letter. Could you take a snap of it? I am just dying to see it but I know I must wait until you bring it. Did you go to Singapore after all? Do tell me how I could be responsible for your deciding not to go there. For the life of me I cannot understand this.

I didn't tell you that we got an unpleasant shock on ^{Tuesday} ~~Monday~~ morning last when a girl arrived down to Holmview while we were breakfasting to warn us that Dr. Heron (Inspector of English & Geography) was in the town. We had just reached Omagh at 11.45 p.m. the previous night, half frozen with the cold. Dr. Heron did not put in an appearance but the central heating went wrong & since then we have had absolutely no heat in the school. Instead of teaching Geography I have become a kind of drill instructor in order to keep the girls warm enough to do any work. Belfast weather is so much more mild than Omagh. The flu has commenced to claim some victims for the blankets but thank God I have had no colds so far nor have I missed an hour's class. I do feel very fit & well, thank God.

Yesterday was the 1st Friday. The moon was shining brightly as we set off to walk to the church at 7.45. It was a beautiful morning & it was edifying to see the crowds at mass. This is my 14th Friday, Frank. You know what my intentions are - nothing must ever happen to either of us. We must meet soon again and may our home be one of the happiest on earth.

At the technical yesterday evening we made "Potato Apple Cake" and "Mock Goose". We are having the latter to tea to-night. Do not forget to send me your pet dishes. I must become proficient at your favourite dishes.

Another letter has come to a close. Have you enjoyed reading it as much as I have enjoyed writing it? I am unable to write any other letters save yours Frank dearest and an occasional one home. People must understand that I cannot write often to them now, but do they?

Do you still love me? I am so sure that I love you and only you dearest one. With this letter I send all my love and all myself. I am your Eileen & I shall always be,
Your loving Eileen.