

No. 1 Malaya M.A.C.,

C/o Army Base Post Office,
Singapore,

21st January.

My darling Cileen,

I have had a wonderful evening and now that it is ended I feel so terribly happy. At 4 o'clock I caught out the Redemptorist Fathers here. I found ~~the~~ that they lived in an ordinary detached house and had a beautiful little Chapel at the side of the house. It was the smallest Chapel I had ever seen, but it was perfect in every detail. After Confession I paid a visit to the house and met a grand priest - Father D'Rooske. He is a New Zealander but his mother comes from Belfast - so he could tell me all about Mrs McSorley's adventure under the table! He knew many of the Clerical priests and painted a vivid picture of Fr. Reynolds. He entertained me royally to lemonade and biscuits and sent me on my way with the knowledge that I have a good friend in Singapore. He will offer up Holy Mass to you this morning at 7 a.m. Specially for you and your intentions, Cileen - this is my birthday present to you, belated though it may be. The other priests there are all Irish - Father Losgrave and Moran. I told Father D'Rooske all about you and your association with Clerical. He wants me to visit the Good Shepherd nuns here who are all Irish and particularly a Sister Augustinian who lived near Clerical in Belfast!

At 5 o'clock I went off to see the Little Sisters of the Poor. My darling let me tell you that of all the nuns or communities that I have ever known, there are none to compare with the Little Sisters. I drove up in my military car and was received by a little American Sister who ran off to the

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Chapel to fetch the Rev. Mother? The latter is a French nun; she is old but her skin is like parchment and oh she was a picture of goodness. I told her my story and why I had come; I told her about you and Mattice. She was very interested to hear about Mattice being at La Toure. I gave her my long-promised Christmas present (£20 = £2-10-0). She said that God had sent me to her this day because the biggish Sisters had a bad day on account of the Air Raids. They have a home for the aged and infirm there and all the buildings are new. I was shown around all the wards but most of the inmates were Chinese but I did meet an American from Wyoming called Constance! Then I met an English nun called Sister Constance (?). She said that she must have met Mattice in France and that several of the nuns were called Bernadette da---(something) when she was they. My darling, these nuns do wonderful work for God; they are so good and sincere and natural - I could not help loving them. They have promised to pray for our intentions. I was sorry leaving them at 6 p.m. but they had to go to prayers. They are a bit afraid of the Air Raids and are worried about their old people. They have a very large Chapel and it is new also; everything about it was lovely.

I went to Mass this morning and offered it up with my Communion for our intentions. Late in the morning the bombers came but they did no damage, but they lost 20 planes. It has been a happy day and I have loved you as never before. My darling, my love for you just grows and grows and will never know when to stop. Oh, if I could only see you for a moment, what a difference it would make to us - I want to tell you how much I love you. Thank God you are not here so so many times are - it would break my heart; but I thank Him that you are temporarily safe. Do not worry about me, darling, I shall be alright. Good night and God bless you my dearest one.

Thursday, January 22nd

My Darling, how have you felt today? A whole Mass and Communion were offered up today for your intentions and for your dear self. Father O'Rourke celebrated Mass at 7 a.m. for you in that tiny chapel. Rarely have I felt so happy as I knelt there at your Mass and prayed so hard to God and asked him to bless you and give you everything that you stand in need of. I was the only European at Mass - the others were Europeans, Indians, and Chinese. You will say that this is surely a strange congregation, but then this place is a strange one with its mixed population. We had a quiet morning here except for an air raid, but that is really nothing. You must not get the idea that a Jap air raid can compare with a German one, because there is no comparison - the Japs do very little damage and the raids are not intense. The bombing is not accurate because the planes are too high up.

I met Lt. Col. Murphy today and of course we have never met before. He has red, wavy hair and is a wonderful chap indeed - great personality. He has met all my medical friends in Belfast and was President of the Irish Students Association in 1936. He was surprised to hear that Frank Reid was in Malaya - they were great friends and both were anti-fascists! It was nice to hear a good brogue again.

My darling, did I tell you that I love you with all my heart today and that I am yours forever and ever. My Céilean, I could never love anyone but you. Now that I have left the Field Ambulance I have now got a base job and that means being far removed from the front line, but it also means more bombing. You know that I will always do my best no matter where I am. And now I must be off to bed as I have to get up before 6 a.m. Good night and may God bless you my dearest one.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23rd : My darling, I am sitting in our bress and listening to John Mc Connack on the Gramophone - "Ireland Mother Ireland". I bought a few records today for our home, Cileen, and I know you will love them all. Some day we'll both sit together and hear these lovely records - "Little Boy Blue" is now playing. Oh my, Cileen, won't it be wonderful when we have our own home; it makes me so happy to even think about it. Yes, my darling, I am very happy even though we have an air raid every day. You know that I have found happiness beyond my fondest dreams and it was you and your prayers that brought this joy to me. How can I ever thank you enough or love you enough for all that you have given to me and oh how little you have received in return. I can only offer you my love and my devotion; I pray hard each day for you at Mass and Communion. I am not as good a prayer as you, Cileen, but I do try my best - I shall never cease praying for you and loving you until I die. You can well imagine what wonderful grace God has given to me by allowing me to have daily Mass and Communion - Your prayers have been answered, my darling. A week ago I would of have given anything for this blessing and yet it seemed impossible and very remote, but there is nothing impossible to prayer. I found out today that Fr. O'Rourke's name is Fr. Bourke! He said Mass this morning at 6.30, so I was up at 5.30 a.m. Shaving in the dark!

I had a busy day, but I like being busy. I saw the sea today and all the ships in the harbour, but I had no desire to leave this place where my duty lies. It is natural to always want to be at home, but there are other things in life and one must not be selfish in times like these. I shall send you another telegram to morrow if I can find time. I met a Major McGarry R.F.C. today and what a boor he has - may be he is related to your friends Dr & Mrs. McGarry. Good night and God bless you, Cileen.

SATURDAY - JANUARY 24th

Oh what a day this has been - I have been on the move all the day long since 5.30 a.m. and I am still going strong! I did not have time to send you a telegram today; I scribbled a few lines to mother late in the evening while waiting for a phone call. As to tomorrow is Sunday and first mass is at 6 a.m. I shall have to rise at 5 a.m. - it gets earlier and earlier! However I get to bed at 10 p.m. and so early rising is no effort at all.

My darling, I shall send that letter, telegram to morrow if possible and if not, then on Monday. I made the discovery that I could have phoned you up from Singapore when I first came to this country and now it is too late as phone calls have ceased. I would gladly have travelled specially to Singapore and phoned you up no matter what it cost. Still I did not know your phone number, so you had better send it to me quickly because I want to ring you up immediately the war ends in Malaya. Up the war will end soon here and the Japs shall not win. "Hurricanes" are shooting the bombers out of the sky, the American Fortresses are near at hand, we are holding them on land, and our ships are getting through in spite of the Japs at sea. To cheer up my darling, I am coming home to you soon, and we shall never be parted again.

You know that I have always loved you, Celine, and that I shall always love you. Nothing can ever change our love or change us - we have a perfect love. All we can do now is to pray and leave everything in His hands, because He will not let us down. My darling, I wish I could tell you all about this place, then you would not worry about me. I have so many, many things to tell you that our meeting can never come quickly enough. Good night and God bless you, Celine.

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Sunday - January 25th - my dear Darling, I have spent most of my day in the front line visiting the various medical units there and now it is late. It has been another happy day and as usual it has been you who has made it so. My dearest, you can never know what you mean to me; my whole life and all my happiness are centred in you - I could not live without you. No man has ever loved so much as I love you, my dearest one.

I had a sleep in this morning till 6.30 am. as my alarm failed to wake me at 5 am. So I went off to 1.30 am. Mass in my Austin 8. Did I tell you about my poor new (really new) Austin car; it can do 50 mph. - and what a change this is from my windscreenless car which I had in the past. I could have a much bigger car as I am now an O.C., but I like the smaller cars. I visited my old Field Ambulance and saw all the lads there - they seemed glad to see me. Away in the forward areas I met a Catholic Chaplain (army) called Fr. Kennedy - of course he is Irish and refuses to leave the front line. He says it is amazing the amount of good a few bombs have done to many souls in this war! I promised to visit his chief in Singapore and give him details of his whereabouts. I forgot to tell you that I met a very charming young Dutch Schoolmaster yesterday and we talked for hours together about Holland, Java, and Ireland. You know that the Dutch are doing wonderful work in the Far East against the Japs.

My darling, I shall always love you and only you. Good night and God bless you.

Monday - January 26th - Now, Miss O'Hare, this is Major Murray writing to you and you should be very honoured to have such a high personage corresponding with you!! Yes, my dearest one, I have become a Major again and the powers above did not forget about me. You know that this promotion means nothing to me; I

did not ask for it, but somehow it has pleased me because I thought I owed it to you to get my majority back again. You know that it will not change your Frank & Sam still the same and always shall be please God, loving you more and more the longer I am alive. Please tell father about my promotion, he too will be pleased. You see my darling there are so very many young medical men awaiting promotion on this island that I have been very lucky indeed to have been chosen.

My darling, you may have noticed a big change in my letters, but you can blame the war for this. It is not easy to write nowadays and may be you can understand why. I want to write so much more but I have not got the peaceful surroundings that I used to have up Country; I haven't got a room of my own, and so I am writing this amidst the clamour of four other Officers in our little mess. I sleep in the front verandah of this Chinese school, but it is not the same as my ~~stretcher~~ bed in the jungle. These were grand days. They will come again when we push the Japs back up through Malaya again. I always forget to tell you things in my daily letters. On Saturday night I dreamed of you and Frances - we three were in a house in a Malayan village when the Japs attacked. I was very gallant and kept the enemy at bay with my little automatic. Eventually we all got away to safety in an ambulance and had my brother Charlie safely in the back on a stretcher. Last night the Rovers went but nothing happened - the Japs are very poor pilots by night and by day. To-day has been peaceful even though I was at H.Q. during an air alarm. I had an interview with my big chief and it was a big success indeed.

It is quite a big night in the mess to-night - a new Major, a new Captain, and a 2/Lt. getting married to-morrow! I was plied to-day by the Senior Catholic Chaplain to the Forces in Malaya - Father (Major) Rowles. He is

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very anxious to meet me and says he has heard all about me many months ago when I was in the North. I haven't time to visit very much, in fact I haven't been out for a single evening since coming here. I work till 8 p.m., have dinner, write a line to you, my dearest one, and then go to bed - always with the knowledge that I shall be called to the phone at least once during the night! But I don't mind all of this, because it is my job and I am happy at it.

Good night my own darling and may God bless and keep you.

Tuesday - January 27th - "I feel you near me" John MacCormack is saying and you have never been so near to me as you now are my dearest one. I am alone with you to night for the first time for ages and I love you so very much more. I have been with you all the way to the front line area - did you enjoy your trip with me. There was a vacant seat beside me in my little Austin but you were there all the time and I told you over and over again that I loved you. I met my friend Father Kennedy at his post away up forward and gave him a message from his chief - Father MacHowles. Since I became a Commanding Officer I make it my business to visit my men in the forward posts and see that all is well. I met thousands of Australians away up there in the muds, they are grand soldiers and a very happy crowd.

I am alone here to night with you because the others have gone out to the wedding dinner at a large hotel. I could not go because I arrived back too late from my forward visits. I was glad to have an evenings rest with soft lights (brown-out) and sweet music (MacCormack)! My day has gone, I know not where, but I was happy. I wrote to father this morning while I stood by waiting for important calls on my office phone. If you had seen your Frank this morning kissing a tiny miraculous medal, and a

precious lock of hair you would have thought him a very sentimental young man; if you had heard all the things he said to you this afternoon, if you had seen the tears of love in his eyes when he read some of your letters last night - you would know how much he loves you. Oh my darling, how I wish your letters would come but it is most unlikely now. Your last letter (Clipper) was dated 29th October, and your last ordinary air mail was sent on September 29th - nothing has come since then. I would give anything to have a letter, but I must be patient. It is now about 2 months since your last letter came. I shall always be glad that I have you so much, no matter how it hurts in times like these.

We had several raids this morning, but nothing much happened. There are more important things in life than air raids. I am off to bed with a phone call from the powers above hanging over me - at least they said they would ring me. They always ask for Major Murray and today I was puzzled and wondered who that could be!

Good night and God bless you my darling.

Wednesday - January 20th - Eileen, my dearest child, you have made me so very, very happy to-day - two letters from you, two precious, priceless letters to me. One was sea-mail and sent on Sept. 22nd and the other your Christmas letter to me dated November 20th and contained letters from Mammie and Daddie. How I was praying for a letter from you and God has heard my prayer - He always seems to listen to me. I think He has spoiled both of us. Your letter of November 20th was a trans-Atlantic one and also contained another postcard of you my darling - it has now joined the other keeps in the little case which is ever close to my heart [AIR-RAID! BLACK OUT!] The trouble about this place is that during the night raids, all lights must be turned out. My darling, I am in love with you all over again in your little snap - You

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look so very happy in it and I do love that funny look in your eyes! You know darling, your Christmas greetings came too late, but I knew that you had sent them to me when Christmas Day came - in spite of the war I was happy. I could not be sad ever again in my life because you have given me yours love; I have never wanted any other love but yours, Eileen, and I never shall want any but yours. And yet you ask me what I would like from you! It is your love I need, my darling, especially in these days - there is nothing else I need. I know how good and thoughtful you are wanting to buy something for me - that is love, my darling; I feel the same about you - I want to keep on buying things, sending you things, and giving you my all. You send me your wonderful letters - and they are you, your thoughts and your dreams, your love and your heart.

I had two letters from the jewellers in Bombay saying that the ring would cost £120 and would I please confirm. I could not confirm as I had sent the money to you, my dearest, and I consider it would be madness to spend £120 on a ring that I could not see. Do you mind terribly, Eileen, having to wait so long for our engagement ring - you must be weary of all these disappointments and all this confusion. Should you find a suitable ring in the meantime I want you to buy it with the money of our account. You must not buy any more things for our little home with your money - please use the money of our joint account in future. I was so very pleased to hear of all the things you have made and bought for our home - you have done wonders in such a short time. How I long to see them all; especially that wonderful mahogany table with all its cutlery; your screen, your blind, your tea set, the supper cloth, cornettes etc etc. No wonder I love you! Do not forget to thank Frances for her present to us - she is a grand nice girl. Now, young woman, don't you

To denouncing furniture from your poor father - you are a shameless person, but I alone you just the same in spite of your angel feelings!!!

Good night, Cileen, and may God bless you.

Thursday - January 29th : I have been thinking to day how lucky I was to get your letters yesterday, you know. Atlantic one must have just got through on the last clipper before the war started here. Your sea mail has been tossed over many ocean waves before reaching me. How dare you accuse me of being Scotch - the Irish always come from Derry, you just ask my father and he will tell you all about his mother and grandmother who all spoke Gaelic! Incidentally the O'Carrolls also hail from Derry! No Irish Weebles have reached me as yet. The missing letters to date are October 9th, 17th, November 8th & 18th. What an awful shame it is to have missed all those snaps of your dear ones which you sent on November 8th. When oh when is your photograph coming - I am dying to see it; you are a terrible girl to keep me waiting so long for it! My darling, you know that I don't really mind because I now have so many snaps of you which are much more portable than a photograph - you see I now belong to the class "of no fixed abode"!

I am so glad that Mammie received my letter safely - I was worried in case it went astray. Already she is proving a good mother to me in writing to me and treating me just the same as her own children. You can never know the comfort it brings me to know that both your mother and father love me and are praying for me. Now that the battle for Singapore is beginning, I have no fears, no terrors; my darling, why should I have any. So many good people are praying for me; your prayers and mine, our love and our faith - I have got all of these so why should I be afraid. The bombers come and go by day and by night, but they cannot stop me from coming home to you soon and oh my dearest Cileen how happy we shall be. You have been happy as I have been planning the past year, but that is nothing

- just wait till I come home to you and then we shall know real happiness. Everything that I shall do will be for you, Celine. You have all of me, all my love, and everything that I can give you.

I hope you had a wonderful time at the Hospital Ball in Derry and that you thoroughly enjoyed yourself. You were really dancing with me all the time; did you hear everything I whispered in your ear as we glided along. My darling you looked so lovely in your black frock - please wear it always when we go to dances, I like it best of all your frocks. You are a good dancer and I cannot dance at all. I am glad your day dream has not come true; I mean the one where you flew out to Malaya and married that worthless Frank Murray - then you got a job with the nuns at Cannon Highlands! my dearest child, the Japs are now in the Highlands and probably occupying. I think the nuns were evacuated in good time. Many of the French priests remained behind with their flocks - Father Grand is still at his post. I have never dared to thank God that you were not allowed to come to Malaya - anyhow I would never have asked you to come until the war was over. I heard with much concern that American troops are now in Northern Ireland; now don't you go off with any of those Yankees - I am terribly jealous of them being so near to you. I would give anything to be with you now, Celine, but my duty calls here and so here I stay. I love you with all my heart and soul, but I could not leave my post even if I had a chance of leaving it.

I know Alice's Cousin Raymond Magill very well; he qualified the year after me at Queen's. He was a nice lad but oh what a bookworm - how I do hate being 'tally'! I do not envy him his degrees a bit because your Frank was meant to be a very ordinary General practitioner, and may be that is a very wonderful calling. You will have to tick me off when I start criticising

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my neighbours! I saw the sun setting on the sea, for the first time in years, yesterday and what a pretty sight that sea horizon looked. Of course there is not a hope of ever having a swim; I may swim home to you if that would bring me any quicker back to you.

Imagine you having ups and downs in the past! However I can quite well believe it because I was the same. I often became very depressed though I did not show it a bit; I was like this during all those years at Queen's and especially when I qualified. I was unsettled and always thinking too much. My half holiday in Birmingham was often spent wandering from one cinema to the next - Oh what an existence! And all the time I was loving you but that seemed so futile. My great consolation was pray and work - I loved general practice and I loved the patients. But my darling what a change you have made to my life, now I am like you and have nothing but ups. I am happy the whole day long and my heart is ever singing - AIR RAID!

FRIDAY - January 30th. - I always mean to write so much to you each day my darling, but the Japs are rude enough to interrupt my letter writing. Still they cannot stop me from loving you - nobody in earth could do that. I was in town this morning reporting to my big chief - I am becoming quite well known in Army HQs! Then I rushed off to the Post Office, but there were no letters from my best girl. You should see me when I invade "that Army Post Office and take them by storm - I go behind the counters and ransack all the mails of 27 P.A. Ambulance and my own unit. I asked today if there were any cables for me and the reply was "No". However I was not satisfied and proceeded to tackle a bundle of 1000 telegrams we by are looking for mine and oh my darling there was one for me from my best girl! It was your Christmas and New Year greetings to me and you sent it on December 14th, but how happy I felt. You said that you were worried and asked if I were all right.

Of course I am all right, darling; I never felt better in my life and please do please Eileen
do not worry about my safety. I sent off another cable to you, my dearest child,
and may be that will convince you. I was caught in an air raid and the bombs
did drop around me, but what very bad shots those little yellow ones up there can be.
Then I went with our newly-made Officer to see his wife, she was not at home, but we
found a Cork lady there called Mrs. O'Callaghan. The latter has promised to send you a
wire parcelled out from me should she reach Cork Isle - I scribbled it in an
angry hurry, but somehow it is a precious note. She has met my friend Father
Bencanage when she was in North Bimaya; you may meet her same day, Eileen. Her
husband is here too and they have been in this country for about 15 years - do not
be jealous because she is old enough to be my mother!

Oh my dear Darling, if I could only fly home with this letter to
you - but I would not be contented to leave this place. My heart, all my love,
and all of me are in this letter; I give them all to you and still want to give you
more. You will bring us together again in his own good time, but no matter what happens in
the meantime I shall be loving you more and more every day, every moment. And now
another long boring epistle has ended and I have told you so very little about myself -
but you may blame the censorship for that - thank heavens they do not censor love!
Give my love to all your dear ones at Spring Villa, at Ballynacra, and everywhere;
my love also to Frances.

May God bless you and may He watch over you now and always.
May many Our Mother protect you and keep you holy and good - but you will always
be that.

Ever yours loving
Frank

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