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21th Field Ambulance,

c/o Base Postal Depot,

Bombay,

Thursday, 9th October.

Elleen, my own darling,

I am still waiting for a letter or a telegram saying that all is well with you. You see I do not know what has happened to you since August 11th and it is very worrying - and if you are the world's worst when it comes to worrying, then I am a good second! I am still writing to you every day and sending the usual 6 or 7 day airmail off by Clipper. You will be glad to hear that the Clipper Air Mail will leave Singapore at weekly intervals starting on 15th of this month. This means that my letters to you will not be delayed in Malaya - I am sure some letters were delayed about 2 weeks here waiting for the next mail plane. All your letters have reached me, thank God, and I hope and pray that mine are reaching you too. It is the happiest part of my day when I am writing to you and yet I am always happy because I love you and have got your love. My own darling, I could not live without your love now that I have found it - I could not live without you, my Elleen. You mean everything to me and I would rather die than hurt you in the smallest thing. If I have unknowingly hurt you in any way in any letters I am very sorry, my dearest one; I have never meant to hurt you. I have only meant to make you happy - that is my life's ambition and if I succeed in that, then I shall be so very happy too. I have given you all my love and yet I am only beginning to love you.

I sent you a 14 page letter this morning and oh it was a awful letter so depressing and uninteresting. Nothing ever happens nowadays and so

You will find my letters very dull! This afternoon I went to town to examine troops medically and while there I was caught in a terrific thunderstorm. There has been real tropical rain for the past 5 hours; I had the full benefit of it all as I sat in my open, windscreenless truck. I was wet through and through. However when I reached home I had a shower immediately and felt grand after dinner. I have prayed harder today than ever before for you my darling. I have asked them over and over again to send me one of your letters and if not soon, to give me patience to wait until it comes. As the days roll by and I love you more and more, I find the waiting much harder - it is a very hard "act" each day which I offer up for our intentions. Thank heavens I am going out tomorrow on a scheme which will last all day long - it will be interesting and a change from the very boring camp routine. I am sitting here half asleep and trying to keep my eyes open while waiting to my best girl - my only girl! It is only 10 P. M. but I am finished for the night! May God bless you, my darling and keep you safe.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 10th - It is midnight and I have just returned from my first whole day out of camp! I am not too weary to tell you that I love you with all my heart and soul. You have all my love and you will always have it - I want to give you so much more, Helen, I shall never be satisfied that I have given you enough or that I have done enough for you. I have loved and adored you ever since I first met you - my love grew up with me, but never did I dream that I could ever love you as much as I do today. It is the only thing in my life which matters - you are the only person in my life who matters. I do love my dear ones at home and I like to have letters from them, but my darling, it is your letters and your love that I am ever looking out for - awaiting them day by day as if my life depended on the next letter! Is it very wrong to place you before all others, to think only of you, and

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of how you above all others. My life does depend upon you, because without you I would not be living in the true sense of the word - I would have no reason for living. I have so many things to tell you when we meet again; my dreams and hopes and my love - things that letters can never really express. When I think of the happiness that lies ahead of us, Ellen, I can never grow tired of life in Madaya. I haven't had a letter from you for 2 weeks, but surely we must come to day. I have sent you four telegrams in the past 2 months and no reply has come yet, my darling. I know that all this delay is not due to you, but to the stupid address which we are compelled to use. It is no secret that every office in Madaya is moving heaven and earth to have our address changed back again to the simple "Madaya" one. It is awful to think that any letters sent by you via "blipper" must first go to Bombay and then be sent to me by sea-mail; the same thing happens to telegrams. It just makes me furious to think about it! Did I tell you that each officer now sends his own letters nowadays - so that the only person who ever reads my letters to you is myself.

And now I must tell you what has happened today and why I have been out so late. I have been out on the beach from early morning until 7 P.M. (darkness) - it is not work for me but grand fun. It was hot and sticky and there was not a ripple on the sea - and though the sun did not come out once I found my arms very burnt (red!). I did manage to snatch 5 minutes rest away from the cares of state and have a quick dip in the sea, but even that was not very refreshing and I continued to 'drip'. Later I did not have time to sit down and have lunch under a palm tree, but hastily ate my sandwiches while standing along the shore in my lorry load of "Cornwallis"! And all this time I visualised you sleeping peacefully in bed at home in Ireland, where everything is so green, and fresh.

and look. My darling, no one can compare with my Stark Rosaleen; may be you found that out in your travels, as I have. I should not live outside Ireland for all the money in the world. The longer I live the more I love you, Eileen, and my religion and my country. Many people at home will find it hard to understand why I am in this war at all - I may even have made enemies over this matter, but I only did what I thought the right thing. However it is not good to write about this - we shall talk of it instead.

Before setting out this morning, Major Dene (my successor) invited the C.O. and myself to dinner at his house in town this evening when our "scheme" would have finished. We accepted and brought a change of clothing in the car. There are two families at his town house - his own children (he got a divorce recently) and another lady and her children (he hopes to marry this lady). Anything it is all too complicated for me and should not be written about. Remind me to tell you something about it when I reach home - it's not worth the trouble! My darling, all I can say about my evening is that I thank God that I love you; Eileen, I never want a home like the one I saw this evening and I know we will not have such a one. I do not want to be critical or unfair or uncharitable; perhaps everyone has different ideas about home and happiness. I did my best however to keep a very uninteresting conversation going; we had Martin McCall as our subject for a long time as the lady came out to Malaya on the same boat as he! I have told you that he is now District Prosecutor in Kuala Lumpur and is a very important man. Our evening broke up at 11 P.M. and soon we were under way in Major Dene's car. We had the usual "mass air attacks" by mosquitoes at the Ferry! Good night my own darling and God bless you.

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 11th - Another late night! It is 11.30 P.m. and the Saturday night show is over at last and I can write to you, my darling, and pour out my heart and my troubles (1) to you. I have been on duty all day, otherwise I would have been playing in the hockey match in town against the local Chinese - we lost by 2-0 (not because I was not playing!). It is now a sort of duty with me to attend the men's "show" on Saturday nights - they would be very hurt if I did not put in an appearance. The first half of the show was washed out by a typical Malaya thunderstorm but immediately the stars appeared in the heavens again at 9 P.m. the cry went up "on with the show!" So I allowed them to perform from 9 till 11 P.m. You would laugh at the open air theatre - a few planks for a stage, a few lamps for lighting, and a few sheets and blankets as screens! They had the usual Maharajah and his Maharani in the drama - tonight the former lost his wife to a very skilled Archer who shot a fish out of the sky! They were all armed with bows and arrows and had a paper fish perched on top of a long pole!

I made a wonderful discovery today as medical officer. I found out that I can stitch a wound better than ever, even though I have not done any surgery or medicine since joining this Field Ambulance 10 months ago! One of the men had a deep wound off over his eyebrow and I did the job with my elper shut (almost) - said he gallantly! The men had not seen me 'perform' as yet and were quite surprised when I elected to do the job instead of giving it to an Assistant doctor. I had feared that I might have lost my touch but thank God I haven't. My darling, you will have to assist me one day when I have small surgery jobs to do - will you be kindly afraid, or will you be a very capable assistant. Oh Helen I know you so well and know that you will be a grand help to me, but you know that I shall never ask you to work at all - I love you so

very much. You will be a very wonderful wife to me and I know in my heart that you will not live to regret marrying me or loving me. Our love is mutual it is sincere and good and true, and God and His Blessed Mother will always keep it so if we pray hard to them. Our home will be a sacred place and the Sacred Heart will watch over it always and He shall reign therein always. We shall lead a simple life together; we shall ever try to imitate our parents who are good, honest people - there was nothing artificial in their lives. My own darling, no matter what trials we may have to face in our future married life, you will always find me by your side doing everything in my power to help. You know so well, Elsie, that we could face anything that God may send us - we have got prayer, a true love, and we have got each other.

I was expecting a letter from my best girl today, but alas I was disappointed. It is much better to go on hoping and being disappointed than to lose hope and never have disappointments. Malayan papers are grand - they can tell me the exact date of departure and arrival in London of my "Clippers" letters to you. Today I read that the mail plane leaving Singapore on September 9th delivered letters in London on October 2nd; then I calculate that you received my letters a few days later. You should have two letters by the next plane which leaves on Thursday next.

I have heaps of work to-morrow morning examining troops near the beach. I shall set out at 8.30 P.M. in my small Austin, with a stethoscope and bathing things behind! I am to join the usual pic nic party on the beach later in the morning - at least I shall have earned my dip. It is past midnight, young woman, and I have to get some sleep! You are a terrible girl to keep me out of bed. Good night & God bless you, Elsie.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 12TH - My very dear darling, I am going off to bed tonight happier and more contented than I have been for weeks - and so much only you could bring me such happiness. Your express telegram arrived today; it must have taken at least 3 weeks to reach me! I have no idea of when you actually sent it but it was headed "Bombay, 24/9/11"! My darling, I think it is an awful scandal that express telegrams should take so very long to reach their destination; my C.O. is going to lodge a complaint if that will help. However that is poor compensation for the weeks of suspense and worry I have had over that telegram. Now that I know you are well and still love me I am not angry about the delay - in fact I think the postal people (coming) are simply grand!! You told me that rings were expensive and the selection poor, that you wanted me to buy a nice ring in the East and that you would wear a Regent ring until I came home. I am so sorry, Helen, that you have not yet got our ring but I promise you that before very long you will be wearing it; I would never allow you to wait until the war is over. My plans about it all must remain a secret until I actually know that a ring is being sent to you from somewhere. The ring will be your choice and mine, Helen, and we shall always treasure it. Tell me all about the Regent ring, how you wear it, and whence it came. It is a ring which is a symbol of our love and I love it too. However I shall not rest until a gold diamond ring is upon your finger and please God you will not have long to wait. You can never know how happy it will make me when I hear from you that the engagement ring has arrived and that you are wearing it.

I read in the papers today that the new "Aerograph" postal service will be operating in Malaya within two months time. A 200 word letter is written on a special card, this is photographed, the negative is made very minute; the latter is sent by plane all the way to England, the negative is developed and printed, put in

On envelope and sent to Spring Villa. This service is one-way only and you will not be able to send any airographs to me. It does not appeal to me very much; it is all so mechanical and by the time it reaches you, Cilem, will have lost its personal touch which the original letter had. What I mean is that a photograph of a letter is not quite the same as the letter itself. I shall send you an occasional airograph, Cilem, but my daily Clippes letters will continue as usual. To remind you that you must never send a telegram or letter to my Bombay address! If you send them to Malaya the postal people cannot refuse to deliver them to me, even though they know that the address is wrong (technically!).

I was up with the lark this morning and soon I was heading for the beach in my small Austin. I reached the camp at 10 a.m., swam about 50 men and my ship work was over at 11 a.m. ! It was my usual happy Sunday and as I sped along the sands I was thinking how good God had been to me. Arrived at our usual bathing spot about 2 hours before the others were due, I could not wait so long and watch that lovely sea. I swam out of my Treasure Island lagoon and away around by the rocks parallel to the shore for about 3 miles; the sea gulls could not quite make out who I was and they circled around and shrieked with excitement. The native Malays collected on the shore to watch the strange sight of a man swimming in the water. The swim was grand but alas in the tropics when one gets out of the water one immediately starts to drip with perspiration! The rest of the crew (6) came in due course, had their dip, and we sat down to lunch. After lunch I prayed with you as you were at Mass at home and that makes me so happy. I was happy too on my way home when a very old Malay man held a very lovely baby up in his arms and helped it to give me a very smart salute as I passed by; I

Smiled and returned the honour with a salutation. The small boys always recognise me and hail me from their Dumpongs; their shouts of joy are real music to me. To night the others have gone out to the village to see a film at the local show house - it is a native Filipino film and when I read the advertising circular, I decided not to go, in spite of the C.O.'s entreaties. I would rather sit here and write to you than see all the films in the world - and to night show is not good. The C.O. still thinks that I must go on leave soon; his contention is that no matter how fit I am, I need to get away from work and all thoughts of it. Little does he know that I am very happy at my work and that my thoughts are usually as far off Ireland with you, my dearest one. Good night and God bless you Ellen.

MONDAY - OCTOBER 13th My darling, as this letter must reach Singapore on Thursday I have to send it off to morning at the latest - so you will not have the usual 16 pages! But some kind of letter is better than none at all, therefore you shall not be kept waiting. The new weekly 'bleeper' service from Singapore is a God-send to us and I shall never miss it as long as I am in Malaya, and as long as I love you - and that means forever and ever. My only regret now is that I can never love you enough, even though I have given you my all.

I must tell you all about a very wonderful letter I had from my little Malay friend this evening. I had written to him thanking him for the crucifixes and told him that my Irish Mother would pray for him. His first thought is a Christmas present for you, Ellen, and he has arranged it all for me already! He had bought some silver Malayan ornaments or keep-sakes for his own people, but he wants to send some of them to you instead and replace them later before Christmas comes. He will send the present to you from me with my note inside. Poor man thinks it will reach home in time, but I know otherwise - it will be in 1942 at least! The parcel will contain

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- "1 Kelantan Paper Knife, 1 three-fork for ladies, 1 beautiful Rosary". I should not have told you the contents but I cannot help it now; so you can start looking forward to January 1942 and this parcel from Malaya. I only hope that you will not have to pay any duty on the articles and that it will arrive safely.

I sat down and wrote a letter of thanks to this grand little priest (Fr. Ashness); promised him lots of prayers from us both. He wants to pay for your present but of course I won't hear of it at all and told him so. I shall meet him in Kuala Lumpur on Christmas Day as I shall be at Mass in his Church of St. Anthony there. I know that you will write to him, Eileen, and thank him when that precious parcel arrives; his address is "REV. L. D. ASHNESS, Church of St. Anthony, KUALA LUMPUR, FEDERATED MALAY STATES". My Darling, have you ever known anyone so thoughtful and good as this little man; he knew that it would bring us both happiness. I have always wanted to send you something from Malaya itself, but I could never find anything decent in the small towns and villages to which I have gone. And now Fr. Ashness will put me in the 'know' and I shall buy lots of things for you - native Malay wood carvings are marvellous & I have seen them in some houses. It would be awful if I were to leave Malaya without bringing you something from this country of beauty.

I have written to Singapore for Maurice Walsh's latest book "Thomasheen James" and when I have read it, shall send it on to you. I have also written for a copy of "Life" (dated 21st July), which is entirely devoted to articles on Singapore - there are some very good pictures in it. I must not leave Malaya without visiting Singapore - remind me to visit it sometime! We may even see it together one of these days! I was a bit homesick this evening when a record of "My Dark Rosaleen" was played by special request from London in response to

An Irish lady's request (India). It is my favourite song and I know that you love it too, Eileen. By the way a radio in Malaya can be very fascinating as there are so many countries all around - I know the difference already between Chinese, Malay, Hindustani, Thai etc. Have you ever sat in your verandah having tea and watched the "flying lizards" gliding from tree to tree ?? Well, I did this evening! Have you ever sat writing to your best boy at 11.40 p.m. in the tropics, while it rained a tropical rain outside and thousands of mosquitoes kept up a continuous barrage ?? Well, that's how I am writing to you now, my darling! It has been a quiet day and I was glad when 4 o'clock came and work was done. It is so much better to be out of camp but alas that cannot be done every day. It is you and your love and prayers that keep me alive, Eileen, and without them I would be lost. I am expecting a letter from you in the near future but I know it will take time before your "Bombay letters" begin to arrive. I am sorry about this short letter, but you will have a long one next time to compensate.

My own darling, I must tell you again that I love you with my whole heart and soul. I belong to you, Eileen; I always have been yours and I always shall. Nothing can ever change me - the longer I have to wait for you, the more I shall love you. Sometimes I think it is unfair and selfish of me to ask you to wait for me, and yet I know that you love me and that you have promised to wait. My own darling, how can I ever hope to love you enough or give you enough in return for such loyalty and devotion.

May God bless you, Eileen, and may Our Blessed Lady protect you now and always. All my love, darling.

Ever yours loving
Frank.

P.S. Do not be disappointed with this blank page, Lillian, it is only a 5-day letter and already you have a page extra!

Give my love to all at home - Spring Vella, Kellange, & Beekunood.
Tell me about them all when you write again.

Love and ever yours,
Frank.