

9. Holmview,
Omagh.
Co. Tyrone
Sunday Oct. 12th

My own darling Frank,

I sent off a lengthy epistle to you on Thursday last. Unfortunately it was over the $\frac{1}{2}$ of so I had to move the prayer & snap, which are now enclosed. The snap is a very old one but one I always loved - my father & mother, look so well in it & I like myself too. In all snaps taken during my babyhood I find myself always in Daddies arms. Vaguely now I remember thinking how safe & secure I was in that coveted position. You have taken his place now Frank darling and how safe & secure I feel with your love, you have no idea. It means so much to me to know that you are always with me, loving me and wanting home to me. Time has become valueless now. It is flying & how I want it to fly on & on until the day when my exile will return bronzed with a tropical sun and so happy to be at home again.

Frank, do you think you will find it easy to settle down to a hum-drum life in Ireland after globe trotting such an awful lot? You say that your idea of our home is one in a half country, half seaside town near the city and its amusements etc. What more could I ask for, than this. I am not a lover of the city at all. As a matter of fact I do not like cities, but much prefer life in a provincial town or village. Why am I airing these views? Honestly, Frank, I am indifferent to where we shall live. In these times when practices are few & far between we must just be content with what turns up. When we are together, that is all I ask, no matter what sky shall cover us. When you anxious to become an army doctor and have only decided against it in favour of me? Do not do anything you might regret later. You must be content and happy no matter where we are or what we decide to do.

I was delighted to receive on Friday morning last two more of your wonderful letters (10th Oct.) They were sent to S. Villa & registered. Daddie got them & sent them up with a note of his own. Do you know Frank that Daddie never writes to any of us but last week I got 2 letters from him, each enclosing two of your letters. Since then I have re-read the said letters 3 times & the more I read them the more I love them. One had the enlargement of yourself sealed at the Dublin. Really, Frank it is very good, so clear. Why do you have a wipe for the windscreen when there is no windscreen? The camouflage came out very clearly, even the "Dunlop" etc on the wheels. Now I am going to give you a lecture - you have got thinner than when you had that snap taken on the brink of the Katant River. Please do not overdo it in such a trying climate, dear Frank. You must think of your health as one of the most cherished things you possess. When it goes, everything seems to go. When we have our health we have everything & crowned by our love it just makes our old world a heaven on earth. It seems a shame that you have had no "leave" for such a time. When you get it, take it & go off up to the hills rather than to more unhealthy places like Singapore. Nothing must happen

to you Frank. You must keep strong & well.

It seems now that all your five monthly letters reach me within the one week. For five weeks I had no word and then lo & behold 5 letters come one to the convent & 4 to S. Villa. Oh, it was just grand last week, reading them over & over again & looking at the beautiful places which you see daily. That brings all your letters up to date - the last one was posted on September 16th. What it wonderful that none of our letters have been lost! You must have, by this time, my 2nd Transpacific letter containing the miraculous medal. I am so anxious to have you wear it always. It was disappointing about your little statue. Poor darling Frank, you are so good & holy and I love you for it.

I shall "shoot the boots" of you if you ever mention again about your "boring" "awful" letters. You are annoyed when you have nothing to tell. Well let me tell you that news, is only of 2nd rate importance to me. I only want to hear about yourself, your thoughts your worries, your joys & above all your love. The other happenings so far away Malaya matter not. If you never once mentioned a single item of news I would still love with all my heart your lovely letters. It is grand to think that I shall receive some by ordinary air mail & sea mail. Perhaps then I shall not have to wait 5 whole weeks for word from my beloved. I have sent off a sea mail letter about a fortnight ago. I have another almost ready to go. I shall send a Transpacific letter to reach you for December the 14th. I hate to think that you are disappointed by the non-arrival of my letters. That postman must always have a letter for you. It is such a pleasure to write to you Frank. I find it no trouble in the world. Though I have no news to relate I could just ramble on & on. I am so happy to know that you enjoy my letters. What was so wonderful about the 1st Transpacific letter? I really cannot believe that any of my letters are wonderful. Though there is lots of writing, they are badly written. The family always ask me to write to them when they are away from home. They like my letters too. Daddie wrote to thank me for the "lovely" letter for his birthday. This is very high praise from him.

Just address my letters as you wish. When sending them to the convent be sure to add Eileen & the B.A. part of it because oftentimes letters reach the children who bear the same name as myself. However the lynx eye of our Reverend Mother Vincent, Mother Teresa has been "demolished" (is this a Murray coinage?) to mistresses of schools - knows your letters & I'll bet they shall never wander into a child's hands. Speaking of "demolition" I want to congratulate you on the wonderful way in which you took your change from Major to Captain. Do you know I believe I now love Captain Murray much more than Major? Honestly Frank I was not in the least upset about your "demolition". Those who knew you were a major know it from other sources & not from me. Why then should I set out to tell them you

3, are now a Captain. The majority of my friends have no idea what is your rank so there is no telling to be done. Poor darling Frank, to think that you hated putting Captain on the back of my letters! Best I should feel disappointed in you. I am so proud of you, not for what worldly honours have been heaped upon you (& they are many), but for your sterling self. I was really delighted at the way you stood up to the emotion (if this is the proper word). Now you must not be disappointed. You are doing your job well & that is all that matters. Some day soon, you will want not only your crown but another few pips too!! You are worthy of these & soon the powers above shall agree with me. Then I shall have another opportunity of calling you my congratulations.

Now I have very good news for you, my dear one. Last night (Saturday) it was such a glorious one I called for Rosa Murnaghan to come for a & mill tramp with me. She had been in Belfast for some law lectures (she hopes to become a solicitor like her father & brothers) and met Frank Martin, Teli's solicitor. You know him, Frank. He claims acquaintance with you on the Rugby field in Queen's days. I know him very well & like him too. Well he sent me word with Rosa that Teli has got the Ballynahinch practice & he & Mona are leaving Derry to settle down as an old married couple in Ballynahinch. I am so happy for them both. Derry was alright but I felt for poor Mona having no home of her own because they lived with the Thompsons. Next week end I hope Daddie will take me down to see his sons new home & then I shall have all the details for you. I shall put them in my transpacific birthday letter to you so the news will be quite stale when this ordinary air-mail letter reaches you. We saw the Northern Lights last night - it was a glorious sky. There is a queer little star which always holds my attention. I wonder do you see it. It is more yellow in colour than the normal star, very big and very bright. It always reminds me of the Bethlehem star which must have guided the wise men to the first crib. I have asked many people about "my" star but no one can name it. So tell me if you can see it too. I should love it all the more than "Chance", the dog came with us on our hike but it was so dark before we returned that the poor fellow had to be tethered. I love a dog. They are such grand company. While I was "sick" at home we had a grand little terrier called "Toker" (the card sense of our family!!). Toker & I climbed all the mountains around home. He walked for miles with me, but alas he is dead now. Somehow we can never keep a dog at home - they either die or are stolen. Last Christmas if I was given a present of a Persian kitten. I called her Nodlag. She was very playful & the boys loved her. When you least expected it, she would spring onto your shoulder & walk across your back to the other shoulder. After I had come back to school she was stolen too. We were all heartbroken.

The weather has turned very cold now & light frocks have been replaced by lined shirts & warm pullovers. Soon silk stockings will be scrapped for lisle & golf socks into the bargain. One cannot parade

4 in bare legs in the town where one teaches you know. However on the hills it is different. Lecture me as much as you like dear doctor about taking care of myself. I don't mind it in the slightest. I shall take your advice & stay out in the air as much as possible. "Our four ball" is Mrs Sheffield (pal of Nat Kelly, who when I meet him asks for his friend, Mrs Glasgow) Miss Cusack & Mollie Hughes play golf all winter through. We are the only ladies in our club who do this. Of course the men are all foul & fair weather golfers. Sunday afternoon is the day set apart for our game. You should see me in the bitterly cold days of January & February (much colder than Belfast). A warm Donegal tweed shirt covered by a rainproof shirt - On top about 3 warm pullovers covered by my brown golf jacket. On my head a very woolly looking pixie covered by the same in waterproof. For stockings I have a pair of hand knit ones in a very nice shade. These were a present to me last Christmas. They are the latest rage in the fashion world. Over these I wear golf socks & Dunlop rubber golf shoes. Now I ask you could I possibly feel cold. Are you wondering how I manage to hit the ball at all? Well, to be quite candid, winter golf is not so hot, but we are in the fresh air & that is the main thing. The golf shirt (waterproof) is not so comfortable as the now popular waterproof slacks. Some of the ladies have them here but I think our nuns would not like me to parade in them & so I don't. Are you very averse, Frank to ladies wearing slacks? For ordinary wear through the town they are vulgar as well as being ugly but for golf cycling, gardening etc I think them very useful indeed. While on the T.S.S. California in April 1939 I wore a divided skirt in grey flannel. I have lots of snaps taken during my trip to the western hemisphere but I don't think you would like any of them - there are so many young men in them & some even with their arms around my shoulders. I shall tell you all about the said men sometime when I have less to talk about. I received a postcard last week from one of America's famous seaside resorts posted during the month of August. It was from a gentleman called John Millar. He was an actor & had acted in New York with Ann Harding the film star. He writes "Hello, Eileen - often wonder how this chaotic world situation is affecting your life" He spent the summer before war broke out in the British Isles. We came over on the boat with him. He writes for Christmas & occasional letter or card throughout the year. I have not written to him for a long time so I must sit down sometime & send him a note telling him just how this chaotic world situation has affected my life. He was not at all handsome but very clever. His friend Robert Lamont Hill was the poet, of whom I have told you. "Bob" was the gay dashing handsome type who reminded

5, me very much of the film star Robert Donat. Like you, dear Frank he was ever with his camera & he gave me many of his snaps. One, we shall look at together when I tell you about the other men in my "part". It is one of the two of us taken on the wind blown decks of the Transylvania. John Miller took it. Bob was inclined to be a bit serious so I never wrote to him at all. Though a professed atheist he came to Ireland (his ancestors were Scottish) to climb Croagh Patrick. Do not think, darling one, that I had any interest in this man. He meant less than nothing to me and I believe I hurt him by telling him so. During that trip - when you were still so near me and yet in reality so far away I loved only you - that was why I was so flippant with everyone else. Does this type of news make you wonder what kind of a girl you have given the honour of asking to become your wife. Somehow I feel loathe to talk about these things & yet I want you to know everything that happened to me during the years we were parted. I do think it is a great honour you have conferred upon me and I believe every girl should look on a proposal as such.

In your sea mail letter I shall enclose one I recently got from Hugh. In it you are mentioned. You will know Hugh a little better after you have read it. He is a very good boy. One time we got talking about what he would like to be when he grows up. Quite suddenly, he said "Eileen, I don't think I shall ever be a priest, because I am not good enough". Recently too I had a letter from an Aunt & Uncle in Barlow (Mr & Mrs O'Regan). They told me that each night a full decade of the family rosary is for "Frank & Eileen". They are looking forward to meeting you & have issued an invitation for us to come and visit them in their home at Baginbown. Felix & Mona spent a week of their honeymoon there & loved it.

The evening is wearing on & my friends on the hills will think I have deserted them so I must be off. Imagine you making me go out & play golf when I want to stay in and continue writing to you. It must be night time now with you and perhaps you are writing to me this moment. You look very well seated here beside me in your doorman's car. How I wish I could hop into that empty seat. All my love dearest one until such time as I can return to you. I have heaps of letters to write to-night. To Daddie, telling him to expect me home, Friday next; to Mairead telling her I am not going to Dublin; to a former pupil Marie Bradley who is training to become a Domestic Economy Teacher in Edinburgh. Marie's uncle is your curate in Sacred Heart Church (it was he who gave your father such praise of me!). The father & family live about 6 miles from here in a place called Fintona. He is a doctor & a very clever one too. They are relatives of the Hughes & Mollie & I cycle out there often. Only last week we spent a lovely evening there & the tea table is one which I shall never forget: - home made bread, butter, jam, salad, honey, cream. Dr Bradley is very interested in farming. They have their own cows, vegetable & fruit gardens. Doctoring is only a side line.

Before I finish for to-day, I must tell you, lest I forget, that Sean Murphy, who was in his 3rd medical has given up his medical career & takes a job as lecturer in Mathematics at Queens. He has his M.Sc. I wonder will Philip come across him. Hugh Marshall, your classmate is now a fully fledged chemist with a place of his own (with another qualified assistant) so near Shaftesbury Square. He is doing well, I hear. I must refresh his memory about you. He knows of our engagement but I don't think he realizes that Major Murray of the Army Medical Corps & the 12 year old school boy with whom he played foot ball are one & the same. Everyone is claiming friendship with you, Frank. I never believed you were so well known. One of the bank clerks in the Munster & Leinster Bank ^{here} remembers playing foot ball with you, in O'Connell's team, I think. He says you were a powerful foot baller!! and that was not, in order to please me. His name is Henry McFarlane. His father was the Bishop's Secretary. They lived in St. James Park. Surely I shall make it my business to meet your friend, Gerry McGuinness. I do not know him but I know I will like him. Imagine he thinking "I was a very ordinary looking person. But why should he not, because I am a very ordinary person."

Did I say, about a page back that I must be off. This love does strange things. About one year ago, nothing on this earth would have made me be, even a few minutes late, for my golf. Now I am really, very very late & you are to blame.

God bless you darling and keep you safe now and always.

Wednesday Oct 15th

You are a lucky boy to-day dearest one. Winter cold has certainly settled down on poor Omagh. Fires are kindled, lights are on and "black outs" are drawn yet it not even 6 o'clock. How I envy you the natural heat of the Sun. To-day has been exceptionally cold with a nasty east wind blowing. In class to-day I had to send one little mite out to put on her coat. How don't you realize your luck?

Our famous week end is drawing very near & the nearer it comes the more excited I become. This letter must go off to-morrow but before it goes let me tell you once again how much you have been in my thoughts and how much I am loving you every day. Whether letters reach you constantly or not do not feel worried about me. Should I have to get into the blankets you shall hear from me by cable. Nothing will happen me that you shall not hear about. So you are not to worry ever about me. I am well and strong, thank God and very ready for a good winter's work. I shall not work too hard either because now I have learned the happy medium between overwork & overdone leisure. Classes are going along famously and we, students & teachers share the work.

7/ If I find time I must send you a sea mail letter to-morrow. Your Irish weekly too must be posted to-morrow too. It is published on Thursday. I had another lovely letter from Anne. She is in Dungannon visiting Margaret. The Rev. mother there has invited her to stay at her home (in Dungannon) I wrote Anne about my week-end & she is ringing 'Loreto' to-morrow at 2 p.m. to hear ^{on} which train I am travelling, so that we shall be up to Belfast together. I shall give you the latest details then, before I post this.

On Monday morning I had a nice letter from Felix giving me some details about Ballynabrinch. He commenced work there on Tuesday (that was yesterday) I am invited down for my week-end so if petrol permits Daddie & I will probably pop down to see the happy pair established in their new home. Now I am looking forward to seeing them. He (Felix) hadn't written to any of the family (save Daddie & Mamie) & telling me I had more time than he, he asked me to do the part of informer. Now just imagine thinking I had more time than himself! - I scarcely had time to read his letter. By the same post I had a letter from Frances thanking me for her birthday gift. She loved the two brooches, Hank. We are both invited up to de Muelmeesters for tea on Saturday next. Frances is going to spend her week-end with me in Spring Villa. (unfortunately that is only Saturday to Sunday night). I have not seen her since Long's Derg & I have still to hear all about Annie's wedding. The last night I was in de Muelmeesters was the famous Easter Tuesday blitz. I do hope history will not repeat itself. On Friday there is another friend of mine coming up to have tea with me. (There will be no one in Spring Villa save Daddie & yours truly) She is Loreta McNamee, French teacher at Loreto until a nun was found to take her place. Now she has got a grand job in the Censorship department. She has been in France for many years & is very "frenchie" in her ways. Now I have lots of news to give my darling when next I write??

I mentioned to you about the Workers Education Association which is about to open up a branch in Brough. We had our first meeting about 2 weeks ago when the Secretary, Treasurer & committee were elected. The subject selected was "Elements of Social Justice" and the lecturer is a Mr King from Queens. I voted for the "Historical Background to the modern conflict" but the majority won. I think the former subject was a rather risky one to take considering the religious & political bigotry in Northern Ireland. However we had our first meeting with the lecturer on Friday last. There was quite a turn out, about 30 people including Fr McKiffe, military chaplain. The lecture lasted almost an hour and the 1/2 hour debate which followed was given almost entirely over to Mr King v. Fr McKiffe. It was grand listening. I feel so very proud of the beautiful & learned way Fr McKiffe spoke & debated. His point was for with the utmost confidence. They concluded by agreeing to differ. The tower has been talking of it ever since.

Thursday Oct. 16 Feast of St. Gerard Magella

I was forced to abruptly conclude last evening's diary and I am sorry for my rudeness in leaving you without even an apology. To finish the "Social Justice" topic, Fr. Mc Niffe has been transferred & a Fr. Jacobs is taking his place. It will be a big loss to our side in the debating section of our lecture. I hear Fr. Jacobs has been told to call upon me by some of our mutual friends from the city. Frank, please forgive me if I repeat any of the news items. I have an awful head & goodness knows how many times you have to read some facts.

Anne did not ring up to day - at least not before I left at 3.30. She may not have gone to Dungannon. I am enclosing a cutting from one of her letters. Is it rather conceited of me to send you it but I want you to know what your sister thinks about me. For myself, I was really delighted at such praise and I know I reciprocate every word that was written here. Are you pleased dear Frank? So you must like me all the more even though your family like me too.

So we are off to-morrow. I have everything ready to fly home to Holmview at 12.30, shall have a bite of lunch & rush back for the 1.30 train. Last night - a wild one - I was round in Murnaghans for supper. They are a very happy family. They have made me promise to come one night every week. They are rather an unusual family, as they rarely have any local visitors. The present my cloth which was held aloft for the admiration of all. On next Wednesday I am to come back with all the ingredients for a Paradise cake & Rosa, Mrs. Murnaghan & I are going to bake it. This is to be a surprise for Mamma at Christmas. She will never think of my being able to manage such a present living in digs, but my good friends in Omagh have made that possible. Murnaghans have a grand Esse cooker so surely the cake will be a success!! How I would love to bake one for you my own darling. If only you were in Birmingham now.

I was counting my treasures to-day and I have 26 of your marvellous letters. My greatest delight is to pass away the hours in reading them over & over again but somehow your "last letter" is always the favourite one. It was posted on September 16th & it is now over a week since I received it.

If the prayer & Snap are not inserted in this letter then it is again because of overweight but I have only written 8 pages, so that I might enclose them.

The hair must be washed to-night. When I do so I hope to carve you a piece which you will already have received when this reaches you. It is only lately I have taken note of the colour of my hair & I actually find an auburn or ginger tinge in it - this account for my bad temper!! With all my love I sent this letter off to you. St. Gerard was asked many petitions this morning at mass for us both. Beanníoc Dé agus