

21<sup>st</sup> Field Ambulance,  
c/o Base Postal Depot,  
Bombay,

Tuesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1914.

My own dearest Eileen,

I am writing this at 11 P.M. in the midst of manoeuvres, so please do not expect too much. Young woman, if I were really and truly interested in my work I should not write to you at all to night! But you see, my dearest, I am so hopelessly in love with you that no matter what happens I must write to you every night of my life. Recently I have found myself writing to you twice daily and the habit is growing. Apart from my usual 6-day letters by Pan American Clippers I shall send you other letters by ordinary air and sea mail, so that you may not have to wait too long for my trans-Pacific letters. I posted my letter to you this morning - it was only 10 pages but I wanted it to reach Singapore in time for the Clippers leaving. I sent you a snap (awful one) of myself seated at the wheel of my Avonlin and also some snaps of Malaya's shore. Would you let me know occasionally, as you did in your last letter, whether all my letters and snaps reach you safely - I do want them all. I smiled when you told me how you sorted out all my letters and carefully numbered them - thank God you found that none were missing and thank God, too that all your letters have reached me to date. Your three July letters are still somewhere on their way to me and oh, it is grand looking forward to them - there is so little to interest me in these parts.

Eileen, my dearest, I am still very happy and you are still to "blame" for it all! If you are as happy as a Queen, then I am as happy as

a King, but I would not change places with any King ever. You will always be my Queen and I shall always be so proud of you as such. I only live for you and I shall always live for you and you alone. Do you think there has ever been a love as great as ours before? Do you remember the letter you wrote to me from Killaugh after your hectic tour of Dublin with Frances, your mamma and Mairéad - well, I think there was never a letter written before that could compare with that. I tell you over and over again that you write from your heart and I love every word you write to me and it makes life so very happy for me. Life is just a grand pic-nic for me and it should be so very grim here at present. I owe so very much to you my dearest - all my happiness, all my hopes, all my dreams.

I have had a very busy day and the night is full of possibilities. I know the 'comatios' will pass in during the night and though it means a wakeful time, still I think it is grand fun. I am not in my wooden hut to night, neither am I in my small tent - it's all too secret to tell even you my dearest. The "enemy" are attacking with terrific zest! It does not seem right that I should have secrets from that you must not hear; and yet it must be so until the war is over and censors will no longer exist. You cannot imagine how much faith I have in Pius X's prophecy - I know the war will be over before the end of the year. It makes me too happy to think about it at times - may be it is just possible to be too happy on this earth. And so selfish we must go and snatch some sleep for an hour (more cases are due then). Good night and God bless you, my dearest (This was Annie's Birthday).

WEDNESDAY - ~~16~~ 17 SEPTEMBER 3rd. I am back again in my cosy room and oh I love it so very much because you are always here with me. I have had a terrific night and an awful day - no sleep, no rest - and yet I do not feel tired or even

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sleepy to night. It is good for me to work really hard occasionally and have some idea of what one is expected to do in real warfare. Anyhow I should not like many such days and nights like these every week. My dearest, I feel that I need you more to night than I have ever needed you before. Now I wish with all my heart that this war was over and that we were together again - and yet I have seen nothing of the war anywhere. Things have happened to day which should make me feel very sad, but with your love I just refuse to be sad or unhappy. If I could only see you and speak to you and tell you all about it - alas, I cannot <sup>even</sup> write about it. And now horrors of horrors my Captain has forgotten the oil for my lamp and it's going out! My dearest, you know that I love you and that I always shall love you. God bless you, Helen.

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 4th - Last night I was trying again to tell you how much I love you - and there came the light that failed! You mean so much to me my own dear one; all my happiness, my contentment and peace of mind depend upon you. If I lose you, I have lost everything. My whole life is for you and you alone; I would sacrifice anything for you, my dearest, even my own worthless self - and that would be nothing compared to what I should like to give. How can we ever thank God enough for bringing us together again and giving us a glimpse of heaven on earth.

Young woman, let me tell you that you are not and never could be full of moods and tears - you only imagine you are. It is not possible for either of us to have any mood except one of happiness and that will last forever and ever. The war drags on and on, but I only love you more and more. All this waiting can only make our next meeting all the sweeter; it can only make our future all the happier. I shall do anything and everything to make you happy.

Would it make you very happy if I were to arrange with the Government to have my daily letter delivered to you each day? The big days of my life now are those when your letters or telegrams arrive - I just spend my time awaiting them, I live for them. I know that if I did not have them I should go crazy. You do not realise how wonderful your letters are and what each word means to me. You tell me all that I want to hear about yourself - your thoughts, your feelings, the things that happen to you, your holidays, your sport, your people, your friends, all the details of yourself that I love. I would like to see you in your "divorcee" outfit; it must look very smart. Why be I shall see a newspaper cutting of Felia's wedding group and you in your "bonnet and lace" (I don't mean that you are a little-old-lady!). I bet you were very chic in it. My own darling, I can never love you enough and I do want to love you so very much more than I do tonight - but it seems impossible at the moment, and left when tomorrow comes you will find that I love you a little bit more than today.

I have had a present today of a very lovely folding table, our little carpenter gave it to me. I feel so happy about things like these and they do happen to me quite often. I never ask for anything - they just are made and left secretly in my room. I know that the other officers are not given such privileged treatment by the troops, and may be they are jealous! I can honestly say that I treat the men well, without exactly spoiling them. My "show" in the manoeuvres was the best because of my men - they worked day and night without rest or complaint. They were always awake during the night when "patients" rolled in by the score. I am now sitting on the verandah writing to my beloved - I am really showing off my new table! It is quiet and cool out here; the frogs are keeping up an awful row after the rain and the usual hoard of crickets make their

usual awful noise! Still my heart is singing with joy because I know that in far off Ireland there is someone who loves me. Truly need your love, Cileen, to make me the happiest man in the world - you will never have to try to make me happy. And here is the proof of what I have been saying -> this very evening I heard the news that I am no longer an Acting Major but a mere Captain again - and I am as glad now as I was before this news arrived. The only thing that makes me wroth is you, my Cileen, in case you might feel it badly - may be you have told your dear ones about my promotion and now you have to tell them of my de-rotation. It was just luck and I am quite resigned to it all, thank God I was not de-rotated for inefficiency - you can tell anyone that, my pleasant, well truth. I am worried by this military life in case all my medical knowledge will be forgotten - it will save me two years since I last did any doctoring, it has been mostly soldiering since the war began.

To day has been a sort of holiday after the manoeuvres, with lots of "post-mortems" in the night-have-been! I was in town this afternoon with the C.O. on business (more "post-mortems") and called at the local book-shop. I had some great news from the owner, a Catholic, who had a letter saying that a priest would visit the district on 14th September and remain for three days. My dearest Cileen, I have been praying for this to happen and now it has come unexpectedly. Now I have a chance of three masses and Communion for us, and our future together - we need plenty of grace from God for our married life and how I shall pray for it during those three days. The book-shop man has let me down about the Small Statue and cannot get one from Singapore; however I am hoping that the priest will be able to purchase one for me and send it when he has finished his tour of these parts.

Cileen, did you know that my greatest boy friend is here quite

near to Spring Villa. His name is young Mr. Guinness and he lives next door to Dan Mc Sparran's Nursing in the Falls Road (129). May be you know him and may be you do not like him and may be you do? We have been close friends for 15 years and never once had a row. He is a first cousin to Eddie Gilleland and works in that firm; he is also (or was) engaged to a very sweet girl from Thomastown who teaches in Dublin. I only hinted to him in my last letter that soon I would become engaged to a very wonderful person who lived not far away from him; and now I must write and tell him the good news. I brought him specially to the Red Seal one night to let him see you! I thought there was no one in the world to compare with you (and I still do) but young thought you looked a very ordinary individual!! Please try and meet him soon and then you will have completed the chain of links between us. I want you to meet and to love all the people who are dear to me. Some day soon I shall meet your dear ones and love them as much as you do, Lileen. I run love them already from all that you have told me about them. Did you know that Hugh Marshall (your cousin) was a classmate of mine when I was very young (12 years old) and that we played hurling together on the same school team at that tender age? I wonder what has become of him - what has become of all those who were our classmates, Lileen? It would be interesting to seek them all out, find out how life had treated them, and then compare notes! Do you think we could ever hope to find two people happier than ourselves? No, my darling, two such people do not exist and they never shall.

Listen, my Lileen, it is well nigh midnight and I must go off to my slumbers and dreams. May God bless you this night wherever you may be and may He keep you safe.

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 5th - Another day in camp and nothing happened. That's about all there is to tell of today - so, I should really say good night now because it is 11 P.M. and I have a long march to morrow morning. But I love you my dearest and you are much more important to me than sleep or rest or searching for a bed! You are the important person in my life and I could not live unless I were loving you with my all. Only one thing can stop me from loving you and that is death, but even then I think God would allow me to love you just the same if that were to happen. I know that He will allow us to meet again, to be married, and have a very happy life together; it must be so because He made our marriage in Heaven. Just think of the thousands of things we have to talk about when I reach home again, all the little things that mean so much to us, all the past and the future. Eileen, my dearest, when I think of that wonderful day, and the happiness we shall know, then the present and its difficulties all fade away into nothingness. Our separation is awful but yet we have so much to be thankful for - we have found each other and love each other truly. I can be happy anywhere so long as I know that I have your love - it means everything to me, Eileen. And you, my darling, shall always be on your pedestal and you shall always have one true worshipper at your shrine - he will never leave that shrine for a moment day or night. I shall not change and I could not change - I shall love you always; I am yours for ever and ever, my dear one. Poor Eileen, I have so little to offer you in return for your love; I can only give you my love and myself. It is not enough and I want to give you so much more; I want to go on giving all to you as long as I live.

If you could see what I can see from my verandah as I sit here writing to you - a very wonderful moon shining among the trees that makes the whole scene like fairyland, in fact I am expecting to see Goblins pop up around

me at any moment now. There is thunder in the distance and the moonlight becomes even brighter with the flashes of lightning on the horizon. It is hot and very sticky even out here, so heaven alone knows what hell will be like to night under the mosquito net! So it's not really in your honour that I am sitting up so late tonight, it's just because it is so hot!! My darling, you know the real reason is because I love you.

I am still juggling with Mess accounts and at last I have sent the bills out. We had a present to the Mess to say of six American National Geographical Magazines and I have skinned them this evening - they are very ancient (1932 - 1935!), but they make grand reading. There were beautiful coloured pictures of Northern Ireland scenes - I saw my old Belfast again, Dunluce Castle, Giants Causeway, Lough Erne and its 365 islands etc. I became quite homesick and had to turn the pages quickly to Malta and the Suez Canal which I know so well (now that I have seen them once)! The Italians could never capture Valetta or the island itself. I did my Mediterranean trip all over again to Port Said and then down to Suez. It is strange that you should have explored the western hemisphere so much and I the eastern one. The fascination of the East does not last very long and now one yearns for home again - I suppose I would long for home no matter where I might be. And now I want to be at home more than anything else.

Did I mention that we have a radio in the Mess now testing it out for the troops? Well, I am the best customer - especially at news time, but I am not above listening to piano solo and sentimental tunes ('The Badge from your coat' appeals to me when it says - 'one day means you'). However the radio will not last very long as it must be sent to the men soon. By the way my dearest, when I really put up my three pipes again instead of a Crown, I

shall send the latter home to you as a souvenir. I did hear today that the powers above made an honest effort to allow me to remain a major when they sent me a wire saying that I was appointed as second-in-command of another Field Ambulance. They had to cancel this because they discovered that another chap in that Ambulance was senior to me and if I had gone there I would not have been a major. Sorry to talk more shop, my dearest, but I have to close up for tonight! God bless you and keep you safe my own Helen.

SATURDAY - SEPTEMBER 6th - It is now 11.20 P.M. on Saturday night and I have just returned from our "Saturday Night Revue" which I have named it! It is my show and it is a huge success - but not due to my efforts. The men are simply grand; they have built a special stage with an auditorium in the camp lines; they have made some scenery and bought costumes and make-up (with money which I got from Regimental funds!). To night's show was the best so far - the drama was an old Punjab legend and the crowd roared its approval; the songs were good and one of our cooks produced a marvellous dance which brought the house down - he was dressed as an Indian Princess! I allowed the play to go on until 11 P.M. as the C.O. had gone out to dinner somewhere - and oh, how grateful the men were about this. Nobody can properly realize how these lads (village boys most of them) feel in a strange land far away from their native songs and entertainments. It is a joy to me to help them and give them some fun. Tomorrow a bathing picnic has been arranged by the C.O. for the officers - I hate this because I think the men should have too and join in the fun. However I cannot do anything about this because I have no say in it at all.

This evening at 6 P.M. we had a very interesting lecture by the General who captured Heron and Marrawa in the African Campaign. It lasted over two hours and was very absorbing indeed. He did say that although the Italians

were poor fighters and never had their hearts in the fight, he found them all a very decent lot of men when captured - always kept their sword and always saluted him, and never sullen as Germans can be.

My darling, I have sent you three telegrams recently and have had no reply as yet. Still it was only the latest one which needed a reply. It seems to me in case something has happened to you, it would kill me if you were ill or hurt in any way. You are the most precious person in the whole world and nothing must ever happen to you. I have been thinking that you are probably back in Omaha again starting a new term and a new year with <sup>a</sup> new set of young ladies to teach. I was delighted that they did not let you down in Geography in Senior and I shall pray that your new lot will be even more successful than before. The nuns of Loreto must be pained about your success. How I envy those girls being taught by you. Could I should love to be one of your pupils and just sit in class and look at you! How many of them realize that Miss O'Hare, who stands before them daily and imparts her knowledge to them, is a very sentimental lady who is very much in love and who writes very long letters to her beloved!! A very nice major who lives next door to me here saw me writing yesterday evening and asked me what on earth I could find to write about in this place. He sees me writing every day and it puzzles him! Poor man has made several attempts to write a letter this week but had to abandon the attempt. Also he does not know how much I am in love and that writing daily is a very easy matter when one loves so much. And yet I tell you nothing interesting or exciting, because nothing ever happens here! I can only write down my thoughts and my dreams each day and send them to you with all my love. When you become bored by these letters of mine, I hope you will tell me how to amend them and make them more readable. Young woman, you

You are a terrible person to keep me out of bed till after midnight burning the midnight oil; but I love writing to you and I love you with all my heart. Good night, my dearest, and may God bless you until tomorrow.

SUNDAY - SEPTEMBER 7th

Celeen, can you ever fully appreciate what you have done for me; you and you alone have made my life in the tropics a pleasure instead of being quite the opposite. Will you please tell me what I can do to give you the happiness that you have given to me. I have hurt you so much in the past by not writing to you but that has all passed and you shall have more letters than any other young lady in the world. Soon you may find me writing to you twice daily instead of once! It is grand to know that our letters are reaching each other safely and may they continue to do so, because it would be awful if they were to stop because of the war. You have so many interesting things to tell me and I have so little to tell you.

I am almost ashamed to tell you that I have spent my whole day by the sea with the C.A. and two other chaps. We set out at noon with a well stocked lunch basket and swimming togs. A grand swim at 1 P.M. was followed by a grander lunch - we even had tables and chairs with us, not to mention servants! It is a peculiar thing that the beauty of the tropical shore soon wears off - today I did not even look at the palms waving in the breeze, and yet I knew they were there and were very graceful. The sea I love at all times but it too was not wild or vast enough for me today. We had a stamper along the beach for about 6 miles and then came across a beautiful little creek in which we saw many white sailed fishing boats just returning home from sea with their catch. Now I wished I had taken my camera along and shown this beauty to me. We bought some fish from the fishermen for a ridiculously cheap price and set off again down the beach. Another swim at 5.30 P.M. and oh it was wonderful - I just swam and swam for sheer joy.

And all the time, Eileen, you were in my thoughts. I encountered many fishing  
 boats out at sea - they got a shock when they encountered me so far out. They  
 wanted to help me ashore and were very friendly; however I waved them farewell and  
 headed for the shore again. When we reached camp at 7 P.M. I found the enclosed  
 enlargement waiting for me on my table. I have had to cut it up a bit to make it  
 fit into this envelope. Oh, my dearest, this is really me and how I look today. How  
 can you love such a person as this? Do you think he even looks like an officer? My  
 Eileen, he loves you with all his heart and soul and self; he would do anything  
 or give anything in the world for you. And yet I know that you have met others who  
 were willing to give you as much as I am, but my darling it's not possible for any  
 man to love as much as I love you. I would rather die than hurt you even in the  
 smallest way - you have become so much a part of me that everything I do or think  
 is for you.

I can only send you a message 12 pages this time because of the  
 enlarged snap. I shall send you an exact copy of this snap by ordinary air mail  
 and that should reach you in about 6 weeks time. I have heaps of things to tell you  
 but they must wait for the next letter, which should leave Malaya along with this one  
 by the next blipper sent of Singapore. Tell me truly, Eileen, don't you ever get tired  
 reading about my love for you - I write it ten times in each letter and I have  
 sent you many letters from Malaya. Still, I shall go on telling you about it and the  
 bad state of my poor heart.

May God bless you, Eileen, and may many our mother always watch  
 over us and our love.

Ever yours lovingly  
 Frank.