

27th Field Ambulance,

c/o Base Postal Depot,

Bombay,

Sunday, August 17th.

My dearest Eileen,

This has been a day of rest in every way for me in my forest home. In this station many days of rest per week are indicated - it is so hot and sticky with never a breath of air to cool one's brow. Upon sea, my darling, we are surrounded by swamps and padi fields (under water), and naturally that puts the humidity up. All this should make me feel depressed; other things in the camp should make me sad, but lo and behold I am happy, so terribly happy, Eileen. It is real happiness in itself to love you as much as I do, and to know that you love me too, just makes my happiness complete. Oh, why haven't we known each other like this long ago? It is my fault and you must try to forgive me for it; I shall spend my life making amends to you for all the years that we should have spent together. May be the joy of our first meeting will atone for the happiness that should have been ours during the past years; everything will be forgotten at that very moment - our sufferings, our separation, all will vanish. Past, present, and future will have no meaning for us, when we find ourselves in each other's arms at Southampton some day very soon. Remember you have promised to meet me at Southampton - nothing less will do, young woman! Wouldn't it be grand if I were to arrive home suddenly without warning and rush off to Dinaghi to greet you by surprise. Supposing I were to walk casually into 15 John Street some fine evening next Spring - what then? Oh, my dearest, I spend my time thinking of our next meeting, trying to imagine how

You will look and how you will be dressed. I shall only look at your eyes when that day comes, because I want to see something there which all the letters in the world cannot express. You will see the same in my eyes, and you will see it always there.

I read through all your letters this afternoon and the more I read them the more I want to love you. I have got six now and soon they will be tied in blue ribbon - one written last December to India; one last April to India (received in Malaya); one last May to India (recd in Malaya); one in May and two in June, all direct to Malaya. And now I am waiting for the next post to arrive - many people have remarked how very interested I am in the post bag nowadays! If they only knew how much I loved you, they would understand why I visit the office twice a day asking for letters! I wrote to Frances this evening and gave her the latest news of Malaya - which is nil! I had a package of Grand prints arrived today from the photo man. They are a complete set of snaps of my journey through Malaya (500 miles) by road. You will like my baby Austin, my small tent, my driver, a tropical river, Chinese coolies, a Malay boy, a Chinese boy etc. There was one taken of me ~~driving~~ during the journey seated at the wheel of my Austin, but it has not come out at all! When is your photograph coming, Eileen? Have you bought the ring yet? If so what is it like? Do you love it very much? May I please have a snap of it. Let me know as soon as possible what it cost, so that I can pay for it. I am glad that you decided to buy it yourself, Eileen, no matter how unorthodox it may be; you will be more satisfied and so shall I, knowing that I shall like your choice of a ring. Your second last telegram was a bit surprising to read by the time it reached me - the word

'photograph' appeared from nowhere. I shall now give it to you as I received it -

"Thrilled wonderful letters photograph Gold diamond ring Size L 1/2 wheatsheaf ceaselessly
engaging safety visited Una Lovingly yours dearest EIREN OKANE." How Miss O'Hane
can you make out this engaging business?? I diagnosed it as praying; the 'ring' must
be ring; 'wheatsheaf' puzzled me a bit, - may be it is some kind of ring? You see
Kileen dearest all these messages are received by the local village postmaster who knows
precious little English and so your poor telegrams are badly mutilated by the time they
reach me.

God bless you and good night my dearest.

MONDAY - AUGUST 18th

My darling, how much do you love me? I only need
so very little of your love to make me happy. Tell me, Kileen, why were you so much
opposed of me when we were at Queens together and why was I so terrified of you?
May be we were both very much in love in those days but you were only a girl and
had not grown up. I loved you then but it was a schoolboy's love and it did not
become "grown-up" till much later. I was quite harmless - I would never have breathed
the word 'love' in your presence; I would not have even held your hand! Do you
remember the day I almost went to the Royal Cinema with you? We had the date all
fixed and you called it off in sheer terror! How many evenings have I spent
with my eyes fixed on the Zoology Hunt waiting for you to emerge; how many times
have I waited, hidden in Shaftesbury Square, for a glimpse of you passing by
- then I would suddenly leap on a tramcar, reach the Hippodrome and then shyly
walk to meet you 'accidentally or purpose' on the opposite side of the road! I was
then a boy and loved you according to my boyish ideas of love. You were my heroine
and I worshipped you. Remember how I put you on a pedestal one day? Well my
dearest, you have always been away up there on my ideal and you always shall remain

remain there. Nothing in this wide world could ever change the opinion I have ever held of you. I did not get your character second-hand, I found everything out for myself.

I sent you a telegram today, my dearest, in case you should be worried about me (said he conceitedly!) - as if anyone could possibly worry about me! I shall send you a weekly telegram telling you that all is well and that I am safe. When these telegrams cease, then you will know that things are happening and that sending wires has ^{been} stopped; also too my letters will cease ~~at~~ when that day comes. Life is not very exciting at the moment - I miss my tennis and walks; I see no lovely sunsets here - it's too far away here from the wide open spaces. I have not had a swim for many days now, but there is one place to see to-morrow as I am going out with some men to train on the sea shore. I have loaded my camera to night and now I am ready for my big day to-morrow. My poor little camera is fast decaying in this awful climate and I wish I could send it to you, Eileen; the lenses are becoming mouldy and the shutters stick a bit. To-morrow an R.A.M.C. Captain is paying us a visit here. I have never met him, but he had a practice tent to mine in Birmingham - just around the corner. He was called up very early in the war as he was a Territorial Reserve Officer. When he left all his old patients came to us, but they were only on loan until the war is over. A very important Maharajah is due here to-morrow evening and I hope to be back from Mansarovar to have a look at him.

I still love you, my darling, and time can only make me love you more and more. I am all yours, and I shall always belong to you alone. Goodnight and God bless you.

TUESDAY - AUGUST 19th - So many things can happen in one day - thousands of things happened today! I did not have a dull moment during the past 24 hours. It began last night just as I had settled down for the usual 8 hours sleep. The heavens opened and rain came down as it only can fall in Malaya; terrific lightning began to light up the sky and I thought that those peals of thunder would rend the skies apart. Well, my darling, this seemed to go on all night long and yet many of the Officers (Indian) heard nothing - I should not sleep a wink with such a row in progress! 6.30 am. awoke and with it came morning tea on my tray, with the deep voice of my orderly paying his daily morning 'Salams' - and a very half-hearted reply from under my net! It was a grand cool morning and I drove out of camp at 8 am. at the head of my column. I spent the morning in the forest near the sea but only once did I catch a glimpse of the briny. The roads and tracks were in an awful mess, and on one memorable occasion my 'baby' just failed to reach the summit of a very greasy hill and proceeded to slide backwards all the way down to the bottom again! I spent one hour getting an Ambulance tax back to safety from a swamp and another hour pushing a truck up a steep muddy incline! My usual lunch (Sandwiches) were very welcome at 1 P.m. - then we pushed back to camp.

Everyone was all kept up awaiting the Maharajah of Patiala's arrival at the Camp. He is the head of the premier Sikh State of India and all Sikhs regard him as their 'father'. I was amazed at his stature when he finally appeared - about 6 ft 3 inches tall, black beard, very handsome, well built, and dressed in the uniform of General (Patiala's State forces). He is a famous stickler and athlete - and he looks it. So once more I have been introduced to

a famous man and shaken him by the hand! You should feel highly honoured by a handshake from me when we meet again. What I liked about this man was that he came to see the men - not the officers - and he gave all his attention to the Sikh troops. He sat on a chair and the men all crowded around him in a semicircle and sat at his feet while he talked to them as a father. Even family worries at home in India were painfully noted down for investigation by the A.D.C. to his Highness.

When I returned to the mess I found an R.A.M.C. Captain awaiting me. Before the war he was an ordinary doctor practising just around the corner from me in Birmingham and yet I never did manage to meet him there. Now to night we are like old friends, we have had a long chat about our patients and general practice in general. He is a very fine man and we both speak the same language. I have just battle him goodnight and now my little claims her usual two pages before I pop into bed. Have I given you any idea of how I have spent my day - my powers of description are very poor, I know? How many times in this eventful day have I thought of you? I just cannot count them - but it began first thing this morning and you kept appearing every few minutes for the rest of the day - as I was spinning along in my Austin, as I plodded along in the mud, as I gave such a mighty push to get my truck up the greasy hill! Tell you are so much a part of me that I cannot help thinking of you all the day long. I could not do my work properly without you, my dearest. I shall see you in the morning and we shall talk things over. Good night and God bless you both.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20th - My dearest, how can you ever doubt that you will be able to make me happy - you must never doubt it again. Your letters

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can bring me happiness that I have never known before in my life. That is how I feel tonight since your letter came this evening, but then I am very happy every day. Today's letter was your "Coming Out" letter, dated 23rd June and sent from Storbane after your grand week-end in Dargal. You will be pleased to hear that all your letters have reached me safely, thank God; it would have been a tragedy if any had been lost en route. What a wonderful week-end you must have had in my Dargal, doing all the things that I long to do once more, breathing that Atlantic air that I long to breathe, and seeing all the beauty that I want so much to see again. My dearest I was with you all the way and enjoyed it as much as you did. I want to read about all the grand times you have at home; you share them all with me when you write to me about them and you make me very happy. I am so glad that you at least can enjoy life to the full in spite of the war - I should hate to think that you were having a dull time. So you, too, have experienced the peace of mind and contentedness and happiness that our love has brought to me. I wanted you to feel like that, more than anything in the world; I have wanted your love ever since I first met you, so you may guess how I feel at this moment.

I got a pleasant surprise when I saw your "Coming Out" (I cannot spell "Coming" without an "i"!) notepaper and envelope. Somehow you are completely surprising me, Ellen, because this letter arrived a week after the last. Is it futile trying to thank you - you understand my feelings one when a letter from you arrives. I read for the first time in your own dear writing that your answer is yes. We love each other so much that I should not have asked you formally if you would marry me and you should not have had to answer! Again I say that there never has been a love quite like ours before in this world. I was thinking of writing to your parents, Ellen, but when I come to consider it all, how can I write to

them if I have never even met them once. What would I say to them? It would all be too, too much like a maiden speech in Parliament - all well prepared and thought out. When I meet them and know them and love them - then I shall be able to write to them without any forced labours! Do you understand my point, Lillian? It was quite a coincidence that my letter to my father should arrive at the same time as your Auntie's visit to him. My dearest, I could not tell him about us until you had given me your answer and that is what caused the delay. I do hope he received my other letter which told him all about you. I want so much to hear all about your visit to him and to Lina, and what you thought of all my people. Do you think them a queer lot and do you think you will love them as much as I do? I love them very much, but Lillian, you must always come first, and you always shall, my dearest. Nothing shall ever come between us; nothing can separate us ever again. I love you so very much, little woman, that I cannot possibly give you any more love than this poor heart can contain - you have it all.

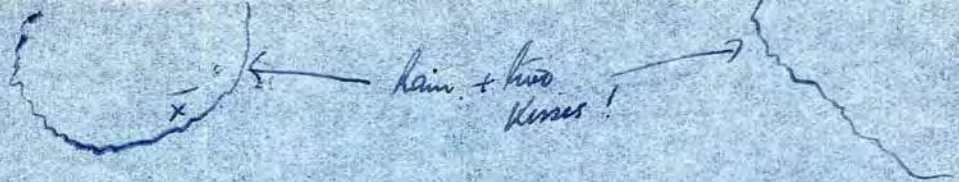
Today has been hard and sticky - never once outside the gloomy precincts of this camp. Thank God I feel fit to cope with it all and ask for more; as usual I have had a hap, hap, happy day! To-morrow I am bound for the "Ba, Ba, Balmey Shore" and that means a chance of a swim no matter how busy we may be. The men like these trips and so do I. Alas the China Sea is nothing compared to our Atlantic; it is not so wild and clean and blue.

Early start to-morrow morning, Lillian. So I must bid thee Good Night and God bless you.

THURSDAY AUGUST 21st. Oh you not wondering to yourself - will he ever stop writing these letters (awful letters) every day? Surely he must grow weary of

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Some time and cease writing? My own dear Eileen, I love you so much and you
are so much a part of me that I shall write to you every day of my life and then
I would not be satisfied. You have heard of Hitler's 'total war' idea but there is
something more precious to us than that - total love. You have all of me, all my
love, all my thoughts; I love you with everything that I have got to give. Just think
of the happiness we shall have when we are re-united. We shall have each other
always - in health or in sickness, till death..... Our love is true and deep and
strong; it will stand all tests; it will always remain as young and fresh as it is
to day, it will always be carefree; we shall not spend all ^{of our} day moaning
around when we get married - that's where the practical side of our love comes in.
I shall have to leave you each morning to go out and earn some bread and
butter, and I shall work for you as I have never worked before in my life; you will
have to stay behind and have a very dull time at home - or may be you would
like to drive my car around each day?? I shall probably have to walk, am I wrong!!
I want to know, young woman, what you have done about our bottom drawer as
yet? I bet you haven't done a thing about it!! I would have been furious if you
had dared to become a nurse - you would have nursed some rich attractive young
man back to health, he would have married you, and I would have been forgotten!
Poor Eileen, you will be sorry that you didn't do lots of Domestic Economy, because
when we get married you will have lots of looking to do, we should never afford
a look!! My dearest, I love you so much that I could never allow you to do
any work at all. So you pray as hard as I do that God may bless our marriage?
I know so well that we shall always be happy together, that it is not necessary to
ask for happiness.

I hope we have a better home than my present one because



the heavy rain is pouring in through numerous holes in the roof!! It is only the usual evening shower but how it does rain in Malaya! I have had a grand day with the men near the shore. We worked hard, we ate well out of our haversacks, we had due rest, and a good swim. What more could one ask of life? I could not ask for anything more because I have your love - that is all I have ever wanted. I looked in vain for your blue Atlantic but all I could see was a muddy green hue; the waves were tame, the sky was blue, the sun was hot, the sands burned my feet, there was not a puff of air anywhere - even the palms seemed half-dead. Oh my Gilem you have spoiled my China Sea since you reminded me of the Atlantic! Please tell me all about your holidays and all the grand things that happened to you - your happy moments can make me so very happy too. I shall always share my happiness with you, my dearest, no matter how far away I may be. I shall never ask you to share my unpleasant moments in Malaya, no matter how much you may want me to do so. I can promise you one thing my dearest and that is that I shall never ask you to live in an Eastern country. We shall live at home, even though we shall probably starve as a result!! A large drop of rain (now two!) have splashed across the top of this page, so I have kissed them away for you.

Next time you write, Gilem, and always, please put "Malaya" in the address. I have discovered that this 'Bromley Stunt' is a force, though I must always put it in the back of my letter. God bless you my dearest - Good night.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 22nd : I have just completed another small album of snaps for you, entitled "A Journey through Malaya". There are 23 snaps in all and they are all for you to see what it is like to travel 500 miles by road in Malaya. My

Dear one, you might as well be living in this country, you are seeing so much of it through my camera. You could not see more of it were you sitting beside me in my study Austin! Oh, if only you were beside me sharing that eventful journey and seen all the grand things that I saw and met all the grand people that I met. Now I wish you were with me now - and yet I could never ask you to share this life with me; but if you were here I wonder would you like the snap of my girl friend (she is my lady love!). There she stands alone my table holding two huge silver cups, her golf clubs slung over her left shoulder, and she is looking mighty proud! Eileen, my dearest, if you could know how much I love that young lady you would say that it is not possible to love anyone so much, that there could never be so much love in all the world. Have you made our engagement public yet, my dearest? And just how public has it become? I want everyone to know about it. My sister Una, will be very pleased about it all - especially as she has now met you, Eileen. Have you been invited yet to visit my other sisters - Maureen and Margaret - at Cromelin Road? I am ashamed to say that Cromelin Road never held the same charm for me as Lion Hill did. You see, my dearest, I worked at the Hotel for 3 long, weary, unforgettable months when I qualified and "the more I heard, the less I spoke"! I learned nothing, because I spent my student days there; I was paid 22/6^d per week and worked very hard as Housekeeper. I was very unhappy there and some day I shall tell you all about it. You will have to listen to so many tales of woe when we meet again that I fear you will not be able to withstand the strain!

My dear Miss O'Hare, very many thanks for your kind offer to knit me some socks; it is with great pleasure that I accept! You see dear lady we soldiers in Malaya do appreciate the generosity of the ladies if you'll

knitting circle in Belfast!! You and your good friends are surely knitting for victory - if you would send me a couple of pairs of woolen socks!!! Eileen, my dearest, I have many pairs of thick socks and can always get more at any time, so please do not bother your sweet head about any knitting for me. Thick socks are worn continuously by day and in the evening because of mosquitos.

Today has been quiet and uneventful. I spent the day working in camp - and perspiring. I had a stroll just after dinner in the lines and had a chat with the men. I watched their games of cards, draughts etc; it is grand to see them all squatting on the floor playing cards by lamp-light. I approach very quietly and stand for ages just beside their circle before they realise that I am there! They are grand lads. To-morrow we have a big day out of doors near the sea - that means that a swim may venturate if there is time!

And now, my darling, I must leave you again. I want so much to travel home to you with this letter but you will find all of me contained inside this envelope - all my love, my devotion, my hopes, and my prayers. I send them all to you, Eileen, they are yours to keep until I come back to you again. God bless you my dearest and may He keep you safe always.

Your loving
Frank.