

Holmview,
Omagh,
Monday, Jan. 19th 5 p.m.

My own darling Frank,

I am playing truant this afternoon. It is Monday & I should have been at my sewing class but the weather was so vile that having been drenched twice already to-day and not having a 3rd raincoat to fall back upon I decided to make this afternoon an "at home" one. I washed my hair, waved it and curled it so now I am comfortably seated before a very cheery hearth. At first I was undecided how to spend this 1 1/2 hours before leaving to put in some work of our Sings, to read some of my Asias, to do some mending, some embroidery (which really had prior claim) or to write some long overdue letters. Then I decided I shall write to Frank. I have nothing very much to say to him since I sent off an 8 page letter on Saturday morning except to tell him how much I am loving him during these terrible days of parting. Don't you think they will come to an end soon? I shall never be really happy until you are back home darling. I am simply wishing away the time that separated this day from that of our great reunion. As each morning dawns I look at my Maynooth Missions Calendar which hangs on my bedroom wall & say "another day nearer to seeing Frank." It is so like school days at Millket when my greatest delight was in "rotting off" each day so it passed to make holidays & home come all the nearer. Your half dozen photos have arrived so I must send them off to Jerry, Una and your father soon. How I wish I had good news to send with them but when I come to think of it I really have no wonderful news - because no news is the best news in these terrible times. Yesterday was "our" day, darling. I had a quiet one. Aileen went away on Sunday home and did not return until this morning. Being up each morning at 7.15 A.M. I thought I should take a sleep on Sunday & at the same time hear our two masses. It is not that I wanted to miss Holy Communion. I think Mary was glad to see me take the sleep. She brought me a beautiful breakfast at 8.15. After this I got up & heard both 10 o'clock & 11 o'clock mass. So darling, you did not miss

2 your miss after all and my selfish body got the extra rest it wanted. The afternoon proved to be very mild so off I blew to the links. There were a few "foul weather" golfers out so I had a very enjoyable 3 ball with Violet Cusack & Walter Muiraghan. I played their best ball & held them until the 8th hole at which both got bogeys. I had not been out for some time so my poor clubs were very "mouldy". Bob (green keeper) is going to clean my irons & varnish my $\&$ woods. He says it preserves them. With rubber becoming increasingly scarce we golfers must be very careful of balls. One must be careful with everything these times. Our sitting room window needs a new valve (whatever that means) which means that we cannot use it at all. We miss it very much but this does not prevent me from invading the Ray drawing room at the appointed times when the news is on. They know me now & actually call me, wherever I am to come & listen. From golf yesterday I went to devotion. While the Blessed Sacrament was exposed I prayed fervently for you, dearest Frank, and for all. Afterwards I made the Stations & then home to tea. I was simply ravenous. This was 6:30 & I had lunch at 1 p.m. I lowered plates on all sides & had felt like Lucifer for some fresh honey (in wooden square) which Mrs Ray had got for me as a present. After tea I wrote out my petitions (they were principally for you, Frank and all your dear ones living & dead) and sent them off to the Salesian College, Pullaskery Co. Limerick where a 9 day novena of masses will be offered in honour of St. Don Bosco from January 22nd to 31st. Our petitions will remain on that altar throughout the novena. I shall make this novena too.

I believe that I forgot to tell you about my visit to your mother's grave during my holidays. Anne came over thirty one afternoon & the two of us walked to Milltown. Have you seen the new stone which your father has erected? It is one of the nicest in the whole cemetery. It is in black marble with gold lettering on it. Anne told me how faithful you were to Charles' grave when only a small white cross marked the spot. How I wish that the grave had remained unchanged

3) So that I could have seen it as you, in your grief saw it. I rarely go to graveyards and ashamed I am to say that it was only after much searching that we found Suddies family grave (near yours) and Mammies mothers & fathers too.

Anne had often told me about an old maid who used to be at Beechwood and who was very fond of you, Frank. Since she lived so convenient to me - in Linden St. - Anne & I called upon her that day. She was a very cheery old soul and made very special inquiries about you darling. I felt attached to this old Annie right away simply because she knew & loved you, Frank. You have no idea of how much I long to see you. As the days pass, my love seems to grow stronger & better. I know that prayer is helping us both.

I have just listened to the 6 o'clock news. The Japs are now within 100 miles of their object - where & how are you faring my darling? You asked me in your cable not to worry. I am trying very very hard but I do not always succeed. It is something that gnaws at your heart until the pain becomes so acute that you could shout. I shall write you again to-morrow darling. Will you forgive me if I stop here my heart really feels too full to write further. God bless & protect you my own darling in every inch of your fight.

Tuesday, January 20th 10 p.m.

I am writing these few lines from bed, my darling. No, I am not sick but as usual trying to get to bed early. I cannot get up if I dont turn in early the previous night & I must get up (7:30 AM) so there is no option. However to-night you must have a few lines because all day to-day I felt you were thinking about me & wondering how I was enjoying my birthday. I was thinking about you too Frank. I felt you were wishing me a jolly birthday. This was another of our "days". I was more lucky than you in that I was able to get a birthday letter to you (thank God you were born on December 4th & not any later. There is no use my trying to deny how much I would have welcomed a letter from you. Letters cards & presents did come but somehow I could not attach so much importance to them as to a single note from you. I woke at 6:30 (strange enough) & had a talk with you. Mary called Mary at the usual hour & off I went to mass. At breakfast Aileen was the first to greet me. Instead of feeling very jubilant I had a very big lump in my throat. The post had not arrived so it was not disappointment. I felt I wanted to run away & have a good cry. Well, I did nothing of the kind. I made an act to pretend I was very happy throughout the day (for you) & at times I nearly deluded myself. After class I made my usual visit to the oratory & put my birthday forward to ask the Lord God to send you home to me. Spinning down home I nearly knocked down Jerry Cavanagh. Do you remember him, Frank? He is an old C.B.S. man & was a year ahead

of you in those days. He remembered you quite well. It seems he has
an office (possibly visit) here for accountancy. He talked until
I was almost late for tea. Then came a very pleasant surprise.
Mrs Ray had a beautiful cake baked for me & was actually looking
for some candles to decorate it. There was a regular party at
which Major & Mrs Ray, Aileen Coleste & I did justice to.
Afterwards Videt called & we had an hour walk, then tea
& after that off to see a grand cast in The Zeigfeld Girl.
I have not told you about presents or letters. This will keep for the
next instalment. Good night my own darling. God bless you
every minute of the day & night. Please God, we will be together
on both our next birthdays, never to be parted again.

Thursday, January 22nd.

I have not re-read any of your letters darling for a long time but
to-night ^{I felt} I might venture to read one without breaking down. The last
one dated November 21st shall always be my favourite because it was
your last before this frightful silence. It arrived in Belfast on
December 14th & now it is January 22nd - 5 long weeks of waiting
watching & praying. To-night I am alone and feeling lonely for you
dear Frank. It was madness to read one of your letters while I was
feeling low because I just wept until I thought my heart would
break. Perhaps it was good to get it all off but now I am
wondering how I shall get up to bed without anyone seeing my
red eyes. I listened to both the B.B.C news & Radio Dream. The
Malayan news was very worrying. Singapore is in a very
dangerous position & is suffering daily from air raids. Where are you,
darling? My God, the suspense is terrible. If it were only possible
to have a cable from you to save one word "ALIVE" that is all
I want to know. I am trying & praying to be brave but it is so
hard. I sent off a cable to you this morning telling you about
the non-arrival of the ring. I felt you should know but what I
really wanted to say was "Am worried for news of you. Am praying
incessantly for your safety. God protect you Frank darling you have
all my love and all of me." I wonder will you ever receive it?
Aileen has gone with the others to the pictures to night. She wanted me
to join them but that would mean a late night. Mass must not
be missed. I wish that your safety darling rested on my individual
shoulders. If ^{my} prayers can protect you, darling then have no fear
that I shall let you down. To stop praying for you would be
like ceasing to breathe. I just couldn't live without my prayers

for your safety. To night's note has probably worried you and how I hate myself for causing you any pain. Please do not worry about me, because I am fit & well and still have not missed an hour class in the school year commenced last September. I have not missed mass on single morning since December 14th. I have small items of news for you but I feel a little spent to night. Good night, my own dear Frank and may God, His blessed Mother & St. Joseph watch over you and protect you from all harm.

Sunday, January 25th
You have spoiled me, Frank dearest with those beautiful books you are sending me. On Friday when I came down for lunch at 12.30 there reposed on the hall-table a copy of the Straits Times Annual, posted from Singapore last October and informing me that it was ordered for me by Major F. J. Murray R.A.M.C. Kroke, Perak. So now your secret is out! I have not a very clear idea of just where you were when you arrived in Malaya. Stamps on letters were sometimes Perak & sometimes Kedah until later they were all Penang. Since my book arrived I have little time for anyone or anything including your own dear self. I have poured over its pages & read its articles, many of which are sadly out of date. Already the Major has read it too & many others want to have a peep at it. The first Straits Annual which arrived last term has been doing the rounds too - it now reports in Mornaghans. I intend to keep safely all these books for me they shall never be out of date.

Now to tell you what I have been doing with myself for the past few days. On Friday we made our new year re-appearance at the cookery class. The dishes were Sausage rolls & Shah biscuits. Being Friday the Friday fast has ceased in the diocese of Down & Connor but our "entire abstinence" (St. Ignace's) we could not sample our rolls but we were more than satisfied to hear that the major asked for a second one about dinner the same night. Any of the recipes which turn out particularly well mark with a cross - it will only be the "crossed" recipes which I shall keep on my husband's poor stomach. Was suffering a touch of cold in my head, Helen persuaded me to lie in early on Friday night so at 9 p.m. I was me safely between the blankets and sipping a piping hot cup of cocoa which Helen kindly prepared for me. Thank God I was not bad enough to miss mass and being commended for following through the night.

To-day, Sunday has been a very blustering one. Between
wind hail and rain the only place for a sensible person is indoors.
I heard our two masses this morning, the first was 10 o'clock mass
and the second 11 o'clock. Did you ever hear of the "Novena of
Rosaries" Frank? If you did not, then here is the novena. The rosary
with certain prayers accompanying each decade is said in
petition for 27 days and then whether the petition is granted, 27
days in thanksgiving. In all the rosary is said each day for 54 days.
Well last week I read in Fergus' letter home that he had commenced
the "Novena of Rosaries" for you Frank so I commenced too on
January 20th. I have made this novena many times before and
never once was I disappointed. Last time I made it 3 times in
succession i.e. 162 rosaries on 162 consecutive days. This was
last summer & it was to restore peace, to prevent the Far East
being involved in the war, but above all to spare you, my
own darling. Well I feel confident my prayer for your safety
will be heard.

After lunch to-day I completed putting our snaps into
our album. I spent yesterday afternoon & to-day from 2 p.m. until
6 p.m. Never have I enjoyed myself so much. Honestly darling
I was no longer in Omagh but away in Rawalpindi, Barium,
Kedah, Perak and Pahang. I grouped them according to the
places. Would you like a rough idea of the order. Well - now don't
be annoyed - I placed "you, yourself and you" on the first page.
You know the enlargement of the one taken at the wheel of your
baby Austin? On the next 3 pages, there are the beautiful enlargements
of "Whispering Palms" - 2 on each page. Next I grouped all the
snaps of the men of your unit into the next page e.g. The
"Grand old man", "Your prize picture (Lieut. Sridharan)", "Tough Guy
(Naith Pakat Singh)", "Is this right?", I labelled this page the
"24th Field Ambulance". Next came the page devoted to your mountain
stream, then Rawalpindi (camels, home on the plains, B.A.M.C. mess),
after this the hill station (Barium) and finally Kuantan. Under each
snap I printed what you said of it. You are a match up the way!
You so aptly describe each photo. These sayings just make the
album complete.
All the post-card size snaps are in a special album. I

I have not them labelled as yet but I am looking forward to doing them
my next free after noon. Now here I am owing France a letter for the past
week - she sent me two beautiful pairs of stockings for my birthday
About our present she writes "I am not exaggerating when I say I know
in advance that to try for the nicest presents I'll get, I think it is
beautiful colour & all & the only fault I have to find is that it is just
too good & expensive" Though I am sworn to secrecy I know you can be
allowed into her secret (I shall tell her so). If all goes well they are to
be married in the summer. The moment the date is arranged I shall write
you.

Will you forgive me darling going off to bed. It is not late but my
nurse insists - you see I am still sniffing a bit. Please God next week
will bring me some news of you. How I long for a letter. I know & feel
that in all your trouble and anxiety you are praying for me. God
bless you Frank. I shall write to the Red Cross tomorrow asking how I
shall get in touch with Fr Ashmore of Kuala Lumpur. I must write and
thank him for sending me your beautiful gifts. Good night Frank. I am
loving you more & more as each day passes. So hurry home to me. Only
then will I be perfectly happy. May our dear Lord protect you now and
always.

Monday, January 26th

Today has been a very happy one for me dear Frank and you, you alone are
safety the one to "plane". By this morning's post I received an Asia magazine from
you. It was simply grand to see your dear handwriting again. The book was
beautifully papered - you do take such care in preparing the books for postage
This Asia - June 1941 - was posted by you on October 31st. Do you remember?
You addressed it home but Josephine forwarded it to me. I am still reading
my Straits Times Annual - after this I have now another treat. Now my
next pleasant surprise was a letter from Messrs Mappin & Webb of
Sheffield telling me that I was about to receive 2 silver candlesticks
& "long and long card enclosed". At the head of the note the word
"Bombay" was written. So thank God, darling, your Christmas box to
me has arrived safely even though it is (32 days late to carry out
your Hindu custom of burning two candles in them, one for you
and one for me. How excited I am to see our candlesticks. I am
writing to Josephine tonight to give them to our art teacher (Miss Teddy
Kelly) who travels to Oran on every Thursday. Aileen wants to bring
them back for me after her week end but a whole week is too long

8 for poor me to wait. I am very childish in this way. Now my 3rd surprise came by way of a little reasoning on my part. You told me, by letter, about (I think before) the candlesticks about 3 weeks before you told me about our ring. This should mean that in 3 weeks time I should have it, if God is good. Now can you imagine how excited I am! How sorry I am that I cabled you to worry you about the non-appearance of the ring. I suppose I should have waited but then I really wanted to send you my love & to ask God's protection upon you and your ambulance. I shall wait for a reply for a while & if none is forthcoming then I shall cable again to tell you that your precious present and those sent by Lt Ashness have arrived. How I hope and pray that a letter or cable will arrive soon. No news of my best boy has reached me since January 5th — for 3 whole weeks I do not know where he is or how he is! And yet I am loving him, so much more. I know the mails are upset and I know you cannot let me know, otherwise you would.

Now would you like to hear my last pleasant piece of news? Well, at 1 p.m. I rushed up to the drawing room wireless after my lunch to hear the news. The Malayan news was still depressing. The Japs had taken Batu Pahat, 70 miles from Singapore. But for me there was some brightness. The announcer gave high praise to an Indian Regiment (Sikhs) which counter attacked the enemy in the region of Kuala Lumpur yesterday. They inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. Somehow or other I thought this must be where you and your men are? Am I right? How interested I shall be to hear all your experiences when you come home Frank. You shall grow tired of telling them because I shall want to hear them over & over again.

Here are the dates of the letters written to you since my last Trans Atlantic letter for Christmas Nov 8th (family snaps), Nov 18th Nov 20th (Christmas letter) Nov 28th (snap of Daddie Nannie & Mattie) Dec. 5, Dec 18th, Dec 29th January 9th (your mother's memorial card) January 17th. I wonder how many have reached you. With this letter I send you all of my love — to my dear one I can only spare a little — You have my heart for what it is worth. You have all my prayers too, dear Frank. God keep you safe,
your own loving, Eileen.