

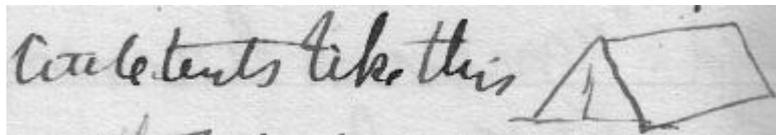
Edith Elizabeth Appleton Diaries - Volume 2 (25 July 1915 to 25 April 1916)

August 1915

Aug 1st: Miss McC [Miss McCarthy?] came to lunch M. Denton thinks I am the next for a move – don't want it – 17 patients in – most v. bad – 4 for op. not off. Miss McC. Showed us a wonderful trick – “Ravens [?] passport – will show it you one day.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **Aug 1st.** - Miss McCarthy came to lunch - took in 17 pts. 4 for theatre.]

[Aug] 2nd St Omer. They evidently got our range all right. A Jack Johnson was fired into our night Orderlies tent this morning. It has killed 4 of our best Orderlies & wounded two. The thing was so close to the hospital the orders came at once to evacuate all patients, we got them out by about 3 p.m. then they sent us off. All but Miss Denton & I went at 3 p.m. but as mine was the heavy ward – I couldn't get away to pack until nearly 3 o'clock so we went at 6 p.m. Hartigan is in charge – & made us all most comfortable & welcome. We are living under canvas in little tents like this.



The J. J. made a huge hole about 30 ft. deep & the Orderlies were blown many feet away – Tonight I am lying with the cool night air blowing over me. There are about 70 little tents & a big mess tent – sitting room tent & cookhouse. We had a beautiful drive here in a motor ambulance.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **2nd.** Shell fell into night orderlies tent - we were all sent to No 1 Gen - St O.]

[Aug] 3: Rain & wind all day. Went over hosp. [ital] fine place well run. Chilly under canvas. Hear our hosp is in flames. If so – let's hope the M. Os and lunatics got away first. Tea with Hartigan. This is an old monastery. The monks are in part of it still. Have been in my tent most of the day. Some old friends from 10 Stationary called.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **3rd.** Cold rainy day - not pleasant under canvas - we were shown all over the hospital - It is part under canvas - part in an old monastery -]

[Aug] 4th: No orders. Walked to St.O [St Omer]. They have had 4 bombs dropped there. After dinner 4 of us walked to a charming old home in the country which with its huge garden belongs to a convent & is used as a place of Retreat. It is a large old fashioned beautifully kept old place - floors all scrubbed & sanded. Caretaker and his wife and daughter live there. Splendid people typical French, merry light hearted. They jabbered away to us – showed us over the garden – beautiful – so unspoilt & natural. After we had tea in the kitchen first butter & bread & jam – then coffee -- & then liqueur, then another sort of liqueur. Tonight we went to a concert given by the Orderlies and 1 M.O. Quite good. Tonight I am going to sleep with my head outside the sky is so beautiful. Planets & stars & moonlight all so glorious.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **4th.** 4 aeroplane bombs were dropped on St O, a little while ago - did not much damage.

We went to a concert given by the M.O.s & Orderlies - no post yet for us - refugees -]

[From loose sheets of notes for: **5th.** Walked to Arques with Miss Denton after lunch - tea there - back by car - The Q.M. & S.S. Riley came from Bailleul - brought our letters & the news that all is calm there - Bombs dropped on Hazebrouck - The other two C.C.S. at Bailleul are not keeping patients - just dress them & send them on -]

[From loose sheets of notes for: **6.** We refugees picniced on a Common at the back of Sir J F's house]

[From loose sheets of notes for: 7th. We all went to St O - saw the damage done in the Rue St Bertin]

[August] 8. Have done nothing exciting, picnicked one day behind Sir John Fench's house in some woods – saw him coming back from his ride. Looking fat & well – but very white haired – walked to town & saw the damage done by the bombs went to tea with the old caretaker once more – went to English church on Sunday heard a good sermon by the Bishop of Kartoum. He thinks the war is like a festering sore on the equals [?] – no more shells at Bailleul – our place was not burnt. The other two hosp[itals] are not allowed to keep patients – dress & send them on. No clear weather since we left. If there are no more shells after the weather clears we shall go back.

[From loose sheets of notes for: 8th. We all went to the English Church at St O. Bishop of K. preached - fearfully windy night - like tents best in weather that is not windy. Guns sound very far distant from here.]

Aug. 9th We are to go back to Bailleul tomorrow. Today has been the last word – hot. We have been stifled in our tents & roasted outside them. Went to town alone. Made straight for the Cathedral and sat there to cool down. body and soul. The drone of the women praying in the soldiers chapel always does that for me. After that went to Public Gardens – a blaze of bright colours -- & grass. Saw some very rare kind of plant called “cactus échéria.” Wandered round the wild wooded part & enjoyed all – swans swimming about & all. Hope we are not going back to the same building in Bailleul. Must pack.

[From loose sheets of notes for: 9th. Orders have come for us to go back to Bailleul tomorrow. Fearfully hot day - too hot to do anything - we all sewed & tidied our trunks –]

[August] 10th Many Happies to Fred. We came back by ambulance -- via Cassel -- & saw the damage done there. Found a letter from Mother awaiting me. very nice. We are in the same building. & are supposed to take in tomorrow after unpacking & fixing my room – walked to town to tea with Miss Congleton then back & took flowers to our Orderlies' graves. Scratch supper in the tuck]?) after which Middleton & I walked along the Ypres Road & watched the firing. The gun flashes were very effective tonight – with the black storm clouds.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **Aug 10th**. We came back to B by ambulance - through Cassel & saw the damage done by the one shell that was sent there. A taube over the town - two of our machines chased it off but did not damage it.]

[August] 11th Did not take in today as things were slack & it was No. 2's turn. Went to no. 8 & took a lesson in lace making – a Taube flew right over the town & 2 of our machines went after it – We could hear them firing their guns at each other -- & watched the fight till they were both out of sight. Wonder very much how it ended. Am very tired for no reason so goodnight.

[August] 12th We are taking in – not many so far. Guns going all day. Generals Plummer [Plumer] and Porter and a few others called.

[From loose sheets of notes for: 12th. We took in - not many - Generals Plumer - Porter & 2 or 3 other people came round today & seemed to like the place.]

[August] 13th last night was remarkable for 2 terrific explosions – frightened us out of our wits to be wakened at 2 a.m. by them. People have various theories of what they were – Zepp bombs – mines being exploded – our own guns – a field or two away, etc., etc.

See note paper next [refers to next 6 pages being on loose pages].

Whatever it was the whole building trembled and rattled with vibration. Not off. Have been feeling thoroughly nervy all day – silly fool that I am too.

[From loose sheets of notes for: 13th. Two big explosions in the night. ? what.

Miss Charlesworth went on leave.

Flames were burning for an aeroplane, out late - they are out now, so I suppose it is home again.]

[August] 14th Evacuated nearly all patients. Had 1/2 day off duty. Spent it at Mt. des Cats with Miss C. delightful sunny day – splendid view all over Pop [*Poperinge*], Ypres, Vlamertinge – Fourth R.C. padre – Mr. Wain & Mr. Baxter there. They left their glasses with us – a wonderful clear view in every direction – we could see beyond Lillens – La Bassée etc. & the colours of the sky at sunset were glorious. We drove in a little chaise & kept it to come back in then went to no. 8 for a time then back. They were sending up coloured rockets from the aerodrome & had their four flares burning to guide a late comer aeroplane home. I suppose it did come as the fires were all put out quite soon.

[August] 15th I don't think I mentioned yesterday that I saw the shells bursting over our trenches S. of Ypres. The picture was vivid – there we saw the shells bursting & the huge volume of smoke & muck shot up into the air – the suggestion of what was happening to our Tommies. The khaki coloured ambulances were all the time creeping to & fro – bringing the wounded in. We saw one of the Trappist Monks walking about looking quite happy dressed in white serge robes with a brown girdle. They may speak to people in war time but I don't think they do to women.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **15th**. We had 4 Belgians in amongst our wounded - Their families were in Liege with the Germans & they had not heard from or of them for 10 months.]

[August] 16 We had 4 Belg [*Belgians*] amongst our wounded y'day. Their wives & children were in Liège with the Germans & they had not heard a word of them or been able to write to them for 10 mos. They seem very confident that the war will end this winter. May they be right if not before

[August] 16 & 17 Quiet days – bought fruit & veg in town. Walked to Mt. Noir – No. 8 Sisters went to a whist drive at No. 2. 7 of our own men were injured & 1 killed in a bomb experiment. Guns sound very near tonight.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **16th**. Whist drive at No 2. 7 of our own men were injured & 1 killed by experimenting with a bomb.]

[August] 18th This place is a marvel at rumours. The latest is that one of our big caterpillar guns is being fixed a field off us—and that we shall have to move – as the firing will break our windows etc. Next told me by an Officer in the officers ward – that we sisters (of no 3) were nearer the firing line than any others – & it wasn't right etc. etc. etc. & that we were “in the field”! There is a huge gun firing now – it simply rattles this place & we hear the whiz – whirr of the shells. Much busier day – took in 1/2 a ward full – dressed and evacuated them – Then took in lots more – badly wounded.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **18th**. Busy day. Took in about 20 - dressed & sent them away - then admitted 20 more - some badly wounded!]

[August] 19th Very busy day – no evacuation off in afternoon went for walk with Miss Denton after dinner. Guns and rifle fire sounding very near – flashes – very bright. A big gun has just been taken past in a dark cart, being shifted to a fresh position under cover of darkness

[From loose sheets of notes for: **19th**. No evacuation - still fairly busy.

Went for a walk with Miss Denton after dinner - gun flashes very bright - rifle fire distinctly heard. glorious night.]

[August] 20th Evacuated most of my patients. Went to tea at No. 8. Met Captain Ormrod & Capt. Phillips. They suggest a whist drive -- & say they will take us to see the shells burst after.

[August] 21 Busy day – took in about 114 – not many after the 2804 we have done – but most in my ward bad – 7 very bad -- & some I am afraid will die. All leave stopped: Submarine making itself a nuisance. Off in afternoon.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **21st**. We took in about 114 pts. 7 very bad - Heavy firing & great display of star shells -]

[From loose sheets of notes for: **22nd**. Early service - quiet day. All leave stopped - reported submarine in ships way.]

[August] 23rd. Yesterday was the clearest day on record through the War. The men in our observation balloon discovered 3 G[erman] batteries. An Officer in the ward says they have got the range of 15 batteries which they will shell when we make an attack. T & C 1/2 days – picniced on Mt. Rouge - & Mt. Noir. I joined them for tea & was on duty again at 5. Early to bed – dosed with Asp[irin] & hot whiskey for a cold. We hear that a good many German men of war have been sunk. Good luck. I suppose I had better go to sleep after that whiskey.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **23nd**. Y'day was the clearest day on record - men in observatory balloon discovered 3 fresh G batteries.]

[August] 24th: Quite a busy day – admitted 28 cases to my ward. Evacuated 23. Still have my family of 7 really very ill ones. Not off – No letters. Miss Charlesworth not back so she can't talk about my two days any more.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **24th**. Quite busy - admitted fair number of cases to Ward 2. Miss Charlesworth due back -

6 of us went to a concert given in town by the 12th Division - quite good - Earl of Cassilis spoke thanking the artists - & Col. Somebody returned thanks. Glorious moonlight night. so bright no star shells are being used -]

[August] 25th: Good news in the paper about the Dardanelles. Also our fleet have done good work. Off a short time this afternoon. 6 of us went to a concert in the town this evening – given by the 12th Division. Enjoyed it very much. One Officer & a man came in from the trenches to sing - & then went back. Some of the men were music hall professionals – in peace time. The Earl of Cassilis made a little speech at the end thanking the Artists – Colonel Somebody returned it. Glorious night. The hall was packed with Officers & men & there were 12 Sisters. Luckily only one song was at all risky. Letters from you & Hilda. Tonight is beautiful the Moon & Jupiter close together – shining oh so brightly – So brightly that there are no star shells being used along our bit of the line. There were no lights belonging to the concert Hall – so they borrowed motor & bicycle lamps. 2 Tommies behind screens shone lights on the performers & the motley array of bicycle lamps did for footlights.

[August] 26. Our Sister in Charge does not approve of us taking part in the Sisters Egg & Spoon race at the inter clearing Station Sports on Saturday. Had a 1/2 day – went to Mt. Noir with J. H. C. [??] also watched the Sisters at No. 8 practising egg & spoon race. Very busy morning. 2 men dying – many, many dressings. Day intensely hot & hazy.

[August] 27. A very busy day – only admitted 15 or 16 but 3 were dying & one was screaming with pain, & all had bad wounds which took a long time to dress & some had to be dressed twice because they bled so. One of the dying ones was shot clean through in the middle of the forehead & his brains were pouring out & he had fits at intervals of not more than 10 mins all day. Another, a Canadian, was doing some Cavalry drill & two horses charged each other killing one man & concussing & breaking the back of my patient. I think he will die tonight. The third dying one was shot through the stomach & is sick & in agony all the time. Not off duty. Am going to strufe [*strife? Staff?*] about the hos[pital] Sports & then to bed.

[From loose sheets of notes for: **27th**. Busy day - only admitted 27 to Ward 2, but 3 were dying & some very badly wounded -]

[August] 28th. We had a lad of 18 in with a fractured skull this morning. 2 hrs later his brother came to see him. I was certain it would be an elder brother, but to my utter amazement a small unbroken voiced blue eyed creature of about 15 was sent in – I asked him how old he was – he said – standing at salute – “18 regimentally.” A poor little creature not much older was brought in dying from a stomach wound – he only lived 1 1/2 hours. He asked me to write to his Father & say it was all right he didn't mind going – then he said “I have done my bit, but I didn't think I should die so young.” The Sports were held in the fields

at No. 8 this afternoon. No. 2 won – score 32. No. 8 second score 21. No. 3 badly last score 4 & serves it right. Miss D. objected (old fool) to us doing any – thought it ‘unladylike’. As a matter of fact she was terrified of displeasing Miss McCarthy – terrified of her own skin. The Officers of No. 8 did the entertaining & did it well. Miss Congleton – Thompson – Capt. Toms – Capt. Stirling Capt. O.T. & I had a gay tea party in our corner of the tent. All went well. Congleton gave the prizes.

[August] 29th Church at 7 a.m. only 2 patients in my ward. Padre’s voice hoarse with shouting at the Sports. Major Ray took service – wishes in future to be call – “The Rather Rev” – thinks he had better not have “Very Rev” yet. The war is making a big noise tonight. Much rifle fire & our own guns sound so near we can hear the shells travelling through the air. [From loose sheets of notes for: **29th**. Major Ray took the Service this morning - & in future wishes to be styled “The Rather Rev.” Much gun & rifle fire going on -]

[August] 30th. This *[journal]* has just arrived with Mother’s love so I had better start it - & trust to luck to copying in stray notes I have made before – We are taking in today - & so far have taken exactly 0.

[August] 31st. We only took 6 into my ward - & have evacuated 5 of them – only a bad abdominal left. Major Ray was telling me about when he was with a regiment. One night there was nothing much doing – only snipers - sniping – both sides – at last a voice from the German trenches said – “For God’s sake stop it. & let’s go to sleep.” If you won’t fire – we won’t” – so they stopped & did go to sleep. All the trenches - communication trenches – all sorts are named – The have Harley Street - Brompton Road - Piccadilly - & all sorts like that. They are ordered to name them. I am hoping to take my first lesson in lace making today. At present am v. busy finishing off a couple of bread boards. Guns were quiet last night – but very noisy the night before. There is a bare [base] ball match at No. 8. today which I hope to dodge. I would rather learn lace tha watch rounders. Later. I hear they have been shelling in St Jans-Capelle today – so I am glad we did not take our off duty walk there. Had my lace lesson & found it most interesting & a little bewildering.