

Edith Elizabeth Appleton Diaries - Volume 3 (8 May to 15 November 1916)

May 1916

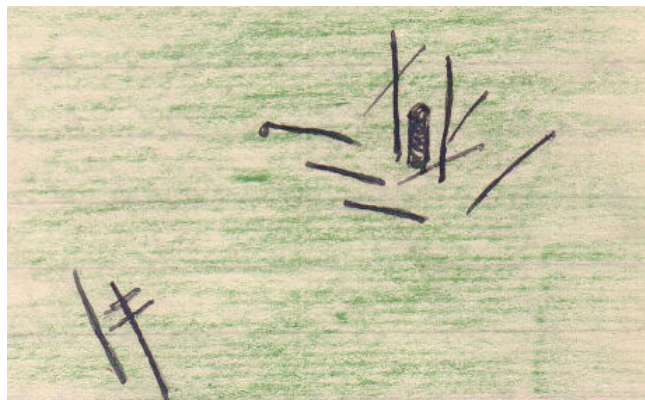
May. 8th [1916]. Back from leave. Miss Wilton Smith R. R. C. our Pop[erhinge]. Matron is now in charge. Poor old Barclay Smith (with us at No. 3) died a week ago, of septic endocarditis. Enjoyed my leave in the bosom of my family very much - am in C & D La Plage again & frantically busy. Short handed of Sisters & Orderlies - operations every day. C is full of operated on patients & part of D. which makes the washings & bed makings alone - a stiff job. However - 3 Sisters have joined the Asturias - & like it. 2 have gone to Calais & do not. Off duty yesterday afternoon - planted plants on the men's graves. lovely day - This morning very rough & stormy. Coming back on the boat - I was standing at the very end of the deck looking forward - there were many officers sitting behind us also looking forward - when a sudden gust of wind blew my dress & coat up over my head - so that I looked like a grey tulip with a couple of flame & black stalks - you know my flames - It was a terrible business getting out of it all. We saw three torpedoed vessels - as we were going in to Havre. Did not get in till 11:30 a.m.

[May] 9th. One month from today & I shall be 39 - oh 'orrors 'ow old I am - Yesterday was the busiest day imagineable - 6 evacuated 6 admitted - 5 operated on - 6 transferred to the upper storey - carried in blankets - to leave the beds on my lower floor for the newly operated on ones. 47 bed patients to do every mortal thing for - & only 2 orderlies - 1 S. N. & me to do it - However we worked hard & fast - & all had off duty time - & got done. It is no use waiting for a less busy time to give off duty. At that rate we should not have it. In the evening I went for a walk with Miss W. Smith over the cliffs & home by the rue du Havre.



I forgot to tell you y'day - that the last part of our journey was by far the least comfortable - they could not spare an ambulance for us - so we came with the mail - like this - when we jerked the bags fell on us. That is me in the corner toes this way.

We saw these the other day when we were coming back - The French actually want us to pay harbour dues for the one with the funnel showing because she is in port. The other 1 one I showed you in your other diary are both outside harbour.



[May] 10th. Yesterday was ditto of the day before, except there were no operations owing to workmen in the theatre – gave Cummings 1/2 day – hope she spent some of it in buying a new cape – she is not remarkable for tidiness, but works well. Little Johnstone – an excellent V.A.D. came to me in place of – let me think – who was the last – Ernest.
6:30 a.m. the others have just been called – cold – sunny lovely. I am being nearly blown out of bed – but think I am well enough tucked up to withstand it. Off duty evening spent most of the time in a bath. Winnie Smith went to a barge for duty.

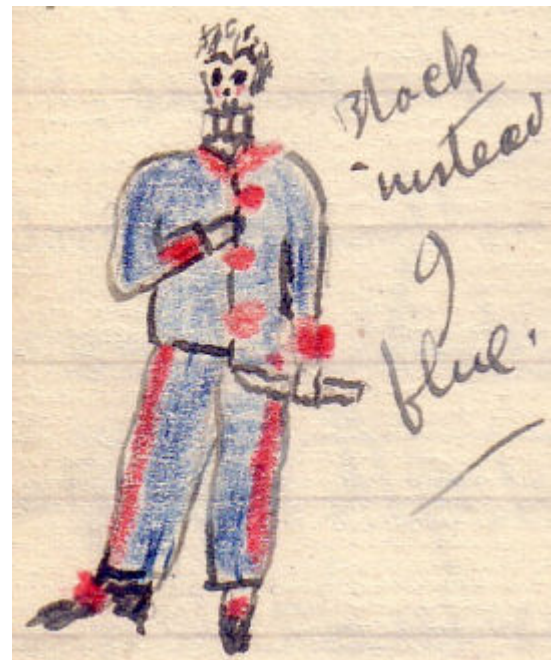
[May] 11th. Calm morning – fishing fleet off, very busy & about 6 mine sweepers – sweeping. They did a funny thing just now, & I must ask somebody who knows – about it.



They were going along in a line of 3 far apart when suddenly the furthest away one disappeared & all I could see was a thimble shape of what looked like spray. I wonder if it could be a bursting mine.

I watched closely & now can see all three sweepers proceeding as usual. They are going so slowly – I should not have thought they could burst a mine, but don't know what else it could have been. There is nothing "to write to the Times" about the sunrise today – but last night's sunset was a glory – I don't wonder this is called "The Hamlet of the Setting Sun." Yesterday was busy, but not quite so busy. Our new Matron is altering things for the better in the Plage. The theatre is on the ground floor – & hitherto – patients have been carried from there to the 3rd or 4th floors – bad for them – & fearful work for the Orderlies. Y'day she came in & stopped it – & had them put (with the Major's consent) – into beds on the same floor as the theatre, which throws some of the acute nursing on to the Sisters there. I hope in time we shall amalgamate – & the whole staff run the whole place.

In the afternoon was off & went to a concert given by a troupe of A.S.C. & Ordinance men from Havre – calling themselves the "Red Dominoes." They were beautifully dressed in black sateen & red trimmings. The local photographer arrived in the middle & took a photograph of it. It must have been rather quaint to see the smart troupe out on the Casino Parade – with rows & rows of many coloured quilted beds – with patients in – & a group of up patients as audience – with a few French people – & us thrown in.



I was talking to a patient last night, who has been out since the beginning of War. He told me just the same stories of the German cruelties as many others have done. How they would go through villages & see old bearded men pinned to their own doors on lances & swords – babies lying about naked & maimed, dying & dead. Women – with their hands – or arms cut off. All horrible & perhaps best left untold.

[May] 12th. You know I told you the mine sweepers were very busy y'day & the day before - they found what they were looking for. At about 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon we saw 3 mine sweepers - a torpedoe destroyer - & a funny thing like a small terrace of China junks - in tow of a tug - passing. 3 hrs later we heard they had found a submarine between here & Fécamp - & were going to repair it for the French to use.

- this is the best I can remember of it.



Bond left yesterday to get married. She had a very tame send off - but no one knew she was going until nearly 7 o'clock. Orders only came through then. Good luck to her.

Marcey & I were too tired for a long walk last night - So went to the grounds of a house owned by a French doctor who has an English wife - He is on Military duty somewhere. She & the children away somewhere else. She has given permission for her caretaker to give us flowers - & to walk in her grounds. About a 50 acre property - part park - part woodland - & many lovely gardens - up steps & down steps & in all sorts of odd places. Tennis court & pond. I should like to meet her & thank her. We loved it there - Just for 1 hour I tried to illusion myself that there was no war - that that was my place - & I had this poor tired nurse (Marcey) down for a rest. Very misty morning - a foghorn has been blowing. I can see the dead calm sea but the upper half of the cliffs is blotted out quite.

[May] 13th. Quiet day yesterday - no operations. Marcey & I took 1/2 days off - & planned - a business & pleasure tea picnic - so started off at 3 - with tea & Punch - for pleasure - & stockings to darn for business. We decided to go to my favourite wood - far from everywhere. Before we got there a few clouds had rolled up & a spot or two of rain fallen. In spite of it - we spread macks & settled ourselves to tea. Before we had got to the end of the hard boiled egg stage - the fun began. A gust or two of wind - & then an inky sky - & a down pour - we crept into the bushes - but in a few minutes that was worse than outside - so we packed our goods - & walked fast to the nearest shelter - where we found a Frenchwoman & her daughter.



It was under the eve of a thatched roof - our foot hold was the side of a cement gutter - very steep & every time our feet slipped we were in a swift running river.

The old French woman - soon gave up trying & stood in the water. They had walked out from Étretat to drive home with 'Father' in his tip cart - Marcey & I soon made a move further on - & found good shelter in a waggon shed - 2 waggons at home. We settled ourselves on one - & started tea again - we were absolutely drenched to the skin from top to toe. My big coat weighed about 20 lbs - I think & Marcey's waterproof evidently leaked. Next excitement was a sharp thunder storm & very vivid lightning which drove - the Mother & daughter - Father - wagon & horse in beside us - We shared what was left of the food - & enjoyed a merry time for about 1/4 of an hour.

When the force of rain abated a bit - then we joined the driving party - & rode home in state - much to everyone's amusement. The old French woman - simply was weak with laughter all the way. We enjoyed it too.



Home - hot bath - Madame's kitchen hung thick with every sort of garment - all over. Bed early - still raining this morning.

[May] 13th. As usual. 5 operations - 2 cases to England.

Miss Rentzch joined the Asturias as Ass. Matron. Some of our Sisters went to Havre with her & saw Allen - Mason & Leedam. They appear to be in the lap of luxury - beautiful wards - a large - & well furnished cabin each - plenty of Stewards - stewardesses, & boys in brass buttons to wait on them. Plenty of orderlies, etc. They are all looking well & rested. There is a talk of them taking out of action Australians home! Lucky people - fancy going to Australia ! Very windy day. The little orphans love the wind, when they are walking out in a crocodile they throw up their caps & the wind blows them far & they have to chase them - which annoys their keepers - very much - I was noticing yesterday that she clouted them - whether the cap was blown or thrown off - so no doubt things will improve for her -

I am meaning to get up for 6.30 service so must be quick. Went to watch tennis last night two motor V.A.D.s & 2 M.O.s played a good game - one of the V.A.D.s - they say is almost in Wimbledon form. Must get up.

[May] 15th. Quiet day - yesterday - 6.30 church - sent the other two to church in the morning - did very little myself - rested & walked all alone in afternoon - on duty evening. V.A.D. Mostin [*Martin?*] sent for duty to Abbeville. Very rough - all yesterday - still rough & raining this morning.

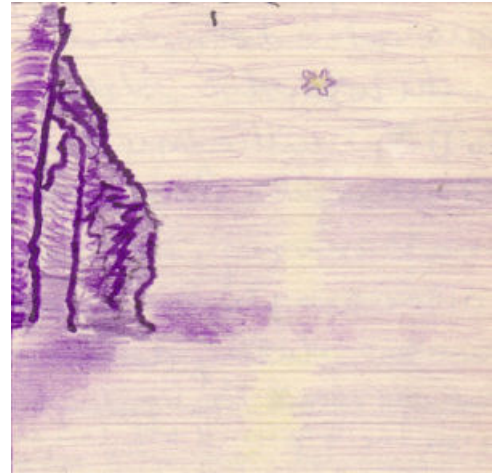
[May] 16th. Had an unexpected 1/2 day off yesterday. Miss W. Smith wanted me to go to Havre with her - to do the talking! She must think my French has improved! We went by the 2 o'clock Ambulance & got in soon after 3 o'clock, did our shopping, then the Ambulance picked us up again & took us to No 2 General. Matron wanted to talk business with our Principal Matron who is there. I met some Sisters I had known up the line - & she met some she had worked in Egypt with, so we had a gay tea party - some M.O.s came in too. No 2 General is - at least that part of it is - the station & station hotel. From the window of their mess room - the train comes in just below - so that if you spat it would hit the train - & just to one side the boats - hospital ships & leave boat - & all sorts of interesting things happen. It must be intensely interesting. It is just where the Seine ends - & you see the opposite bank of it in the dim distance. We came back at 7. The evening was beautiful. The weather had been tearful all day, but in the evening the sun broke through & made the tender green trees & the flowers of all colours sparkle with dew drops - the country is really very pretty round us. This morning is absolutely perfect. I should like a whole day off & to go far into the country. Past 7 o'clock must get up. The lady chauffeurs are a great success. The one who drove us in - has been doing the work since the beginning of War. I remember her in Boulogne in 1914. Her husband is Surgical Specialist at one of the General Hospitals out here. Now I shall be late! & your breakfast will be coming up to you in a minute. Fishing boats are enjoying a good race this morning over the sunny sea.

[May] 17th. Nothing exciting happened yesterday. There was just a mild flutter abroad - amongst us & the Orderlies over the "Inspection by the D. G. & Matron-in-Chief - one day this

week. I suppose we shall have to be our cleanest which does not appeal to me much. I'm not naturally good at having the place smart. Off 2-5 yesterday – it was too hot to do much. Marcey & I went on to the beach & watched the fishing boats come in - & the fish auction. Then 1/2 a dozen Orderlies entertained us, by diving from a boat & swimming etc. Then we repaired to my room for tea - & did mending for the rest of the time.

Last night was a joy! The moon well up in the E & Venus the same distance in the W. Sea like a mill pond - & everything flooded in moonshine – Venus made a little path of shine across the sea. I should like to have stayed out instead of stuffing off to bed – after all – the rabbits have some advantage. Now wouldn't it be nice if I could take my pencil & show you what it all looked like *comme ça*

View from my window



[May] 18th. 5:30 a.m. Glorious morning tide far out. The brown rocks look well in the sunshine – covered in patches with vivid green seaweed. Off duty yesterday evening. Called with Matron on the Chauffeur V.A.D.s. They have a glorious house and garden. Their unit consists of 17 persons. 14 Chauffeurs, a cook – housekeeper & housemaid. I was talking to the housemaid - & admire her very much – Such a nice well educated girl – I think she sometimes wishes she were doing more than housework for the War – but, I argued with her, that it was a necessary job - & personally I rather admired the people who took the out of sight jobs – or quietly carried on with necessary peacetime work - & so I do. They have asked us to tea on Monday. After that I took Matron to the garden of the house where the Mother is English & we roamed all over the place, but found no one. Later Marcey & I went – found the gardener, & he gave us each – a double arm full of flowers for the wards – I don't expect Miss McC. & the D.G. will come before tomorrow, but still – it's all right – I must get up early this morning – as a convoy is coming.

4 more people going on leave tonight & going to Greece [?] or leave?] 2 weeks – lucky devils.

[May] 19th. Last night I heard Major Segundo [?] – yelling under our windows at 9 p.m. for some one to go round to the lady Chauffeurs – with him – to see the sick one – I lay low – as I was in bed – He only seemed to know two of our names – but as my light was out – I didn't answer.



Just passing in a sunny mist looks rather pretty

[May] 19th. I have got a day out in dates somewhere. We had a convoy of 300 odd in yesterday chiefly wounded from the Albert region. Some of them are very badly wounded. In one ward – there is a poor youngster – with both legs broken – both arms wounded – one eye shot out & the other badly damaged. He is on the D. I. list. Then there are 3 others in the same ward – on the S. I. list – one with his whole buttock muscle blown off - & many are really very bad indeed. Scott, Palmer - & Sheard – returned from leave last night. Marcey & 3 V.A.D.s – Sutherland – Craig, Williams went. They should have had a glorious crossing – judging by the sea this morning.

It was No. 1 train that brought our convoy. My old chum Paterson came up to see me. She is not looking at all well - & dislikes train life – I always feel I should like it for a bit. Last night I helped Marcey to get off – then after first supper – went for a stroll in the gloaming with Miss Atkinson – poor thing she is being sent to England – after having had an outbreak of nasty boils. She is terribly sorry to go – She is the N.Z. V.A.D. aged 56 I told you about.

[May] 20th. Quiet - & beautiful weather day yesterday. We were all on duty in the afternoon in accordance with Matron's wishes that we should be at our posts if the great ones came to inspect. We sent the V.A.D.s off on conditions they kept their weather eyes lifting & came back at the first sign of Miss McC. I was off in the evening. Had my dress fitted – that is becoming quite a pastime with me – they have fitted it four times already. Afterwards I took Matron for one of my favourite walks – along the Rouen Rd. up through the woods – & home by the Fecamp Rd. The wild flowers are such a joy – I wish you could come & enjoy them too. We found Solomon's Seal - & all sorts of lovely things. I brought some back for the church. The next two Sundays are mine – one for myself & one for Marcey – on leave. Matron & I had a good talk over the old days at Pop[erhinge] & Bailleul & of the present. She is a very good enterprising Matron & tries to make life pleasant for her staff – at the same time is most particular that rules should be kept. It must bore you terribly to hear morning after morning – that the sea is this or that, but really – Mother – today – is. The sea is dead calm, low tide - & the sunshine is making an edge round the rocks – of sparkling diamonds. Fishing boats under full sail – far out - & the sky – a pinky – ripe melon colour. If I am to take night duty again this year – I should like to in June - & be up to watch the sunset & sunrise everyday. Some of the Sisters have started batheing - I must buy a gown. Ritchie Thomson back from leave y'day.

[May] 21st. We were inspected yesterday by the D.G. He seemed to like the place all right. Miss McC & Princess Victoria are supposed to be coming today. Off y'dy afternoon did flowers in both churches - & thought about a batheing gown. Truslove & Collings [played] a horrible trick on me last night. I tried Woods batheing gown on - with a view to letting Madame - make me one like it. I had to search high & low for the old thing & was flying upstairs four at a time & suddenly found myself under a water spout of hot & cold water - Most generous - they gave me their all! 4 gay sparks are out batheing now. I don't mean to start before ~~May~~ June. Lovely morning, must get up - as it is Sunday. Somebody - has found a treasure, this huge hulk is just passing my window.



[May] 22. Sunday yesterday - went to early & evening services. Glorious day - we were duly inspected by Princess Victoria - Princess Christian's daughter. I hope she is not a a spy - having a brother with the Germans - does put one off her a bit. She seemed to like everything. The V.A.D. Chauffeurs - lined their convoy of cars up - & stood by them - in the square - & were the first visited. P.V. shook hands with them all - & they made their curtsies to her. Lady

Guernsey & two other ladies were with her. Poor little L. Guernsey - is a charming young thing. She lost her husband at the beginning of the War - & has been running a French hospital at Fécamp ever since. After the inspection they all came to tea with us. Princess V. & the 3 ladies with her - Miss McCarthy, Col. Jenkins - a Staff Officer, the A.D.M.S., our C.O., & about 6 M.O.s. The V.A.D. drivers - & a bunch of us.



The Princess is very smiling etc, but it gives one a feeling of nausea - to think she has a brother doing his best for our enemies. You don't want to know how she was dressed do you? Only in a blue dress - & blue hat with a red silk crown - & something white at her neck - You see? elderly - grey haired.

The great excitement of yesterday - was on the sea. Two torpedoe destroyers - 3 pairs of trawlers - & that huge submarine elevator. [See page May 12th.] were up & down all the afternoon. I do hope they caught something, but have not heard. An airship & hydroplane were busy overhead all the morning. I think they did find something, because at one time two of the trawlers stopped - & one blew her whistle in great agitation - & the 2 torpedoe catchers came to them. I didn't see any great explosion or anything like that.



[May] 23rd. Quiet & calm day. 1/2 day off. Went to tea at the Chauffeurs & afterwards for a walk with her. Found I had many acquaintances in common with Mrs. Graham Jones - chief chauffeur. Her husband is at one of the Gen. Hosps. Tea on the terrace was cool & delightful - Wiggelia looking beautiful. News of heavy fighting at Verdun & Suhez in last night's paper. Someone is roasting coffee & it smells uncommonly good.

I have just had a letter from an old patient of mine, telling me - he is enjoying a month's convalescence at a castle belonging to Lord Buccleuch in Dumfriesshire. They have the use - of trout streams, tennis, bowls, croquet, golf - & says it is a glorious place. How kind of L. B. to lend it.

[May] 24th. The Awe-strylians went back to their own Unit yesterday. They liked being here - & were sorry to go - we shall miss them too! Our staff is very fluctuating. It means we are minus 7 trained people. I am to take over the Annexe today - & am pleased to. It is the one part of the hospital I do not know - but Major Martyn is in charge - a nice man to work for - A new job always makes one feel terrified! The C.O. gave a tennis tea yesterday - I don't know who went - was off in the evening myself - & went for a glorious long country walk with Hindle - along the Rouen Rd - up to the right, across the Havre Rd - & home by the cliffs. The banks that were tufted heavily with primroses a little while ago - are heliotrope now - not tufted but just prettily covered with a little plant "Thrift" - you know it probably - I don't remember seeing it before - rather like a small scabia - Won't bore you with the lights & shades of the setting sun - through the tall young green trees or the fields upon fields of deep crimson trefoil mixed with Star of Bethlehem - & others [-] clover, daisies & poppies - you are probably enjoying the same yourself - hope you are.

Three people have just gone out to bathe - the sea looks tempting but I don't mean to bathe before June.



[May] 25th. Many happy returns of the Day to The Empire.

Cold, rough choppy sea day - the fishing boats are having a fine pitch & toss. Wonder if the bathers will bathe this morning. A convoy was expected at 2 a.m. - but don't think it has come yet. We shall all be called for first breakfast, which means in quarter of an hour. The Port of Havre is closed again. We had no mail last night! There are rumours of a six weeks blockade of letters in the near future - don't know what for & hope it will not be necessary. I took over the 4 Annexes yesterday - which means 118 beds. At present have a V.A.D. only. We are a bit short of staff again. Major Martyn is M.O.

An old Sergeant was telling me about the different sorts of shells - the German send over. He says one kind, called the "oil can" - whose duty it is to upset the nerves of the troops is most feared of all. It looks like an oil drum & explodes with a terrific noise - & vibration that is most unnerving. It is not nearly such a dangerous one as the others. But what the brutes do is to send over one of them then the Infantry all run away from it to a dug out then they send over a big one to destroy the dug out. Infernal inventive demons - May they suffer a martyrdom of contience [*sic*] & die a slow death. Some men say our shells are so splendid & some say they are no good.

[May] 26th. The convoy came in at 5:30 a.m. y'day- & we were all called for first breakfast. About 300 - chiefly medical cases came - Mine were - many of them - poor old worn out things who had been out all through the war - & were going home for a rest. In one room I had a Q.M.S. aged 59 -, a C.Q.M.S. & a S. M. & another old thing all about the same age. Going round last night Major Martyn said, he thought the best thing to order for them was a stiff brandy & soda each & a good sleep - So they had the first & I hope by now have had the other. One, such nice man was feeling terribly bad with an appendix abscess - Later in the day he was moved to the Casino for operation. Last night I heard he was terribly ill with general peritonitis. We sent 10 men to C.C. & some to Rouen for Permanent Base - yesterday - among them that Old Sight [?] who sings in "The Follies". Port evidently open again. I had a letter from you last night & one from Min yesterday morning. We never get letters in the morning, so I suppose a post came in odd just when it opened. McFarland, V.A.D. left for some other hospital yesterday. They keep nibbling at our staff, but are not so good at replenishing it! Sea choppy - weather cold - not off yesterday. Better luck today.

[May] 27th. Very busy day yesterday - I had to send one of my V.A.D.s to help in Casino 5, which I did gladly - as it was to enable them to give "Barber" the Appendix man from us, a nurse to himself - He is doing badly - may even be dead now. The English patients did not go -

so with one thing and another the day was quite full - Off in afternoon, picked marguerites along the Havre Rd fields - to do the churches with today. No letters. Three new V.A.D.s arrived from England. They look terribly young - & untrained - we should be grateful for a few trained people. I have felt uncommonly in sympathy, with an old brown spaniel here - who hobbles about on three legs & looks miserable! The cold gave me rheumatism but today looks beautifully sunny & warm - & the sea is as calm as a millpond.

[May] 28th. Very busy day. The Col. (who apparently thinks the best way to get more titles is to say "yes" to every question asked him by those in authority) said "yes" he could take another convoy. There was no push - other hosp. were longing for it - but "yes"! He might have added - that understaffed as we are - the ones ahead here - only just get all the attention they need, but as the care of the 3 or 400 extra. I had to be prepared to take 190 instead of 140 for instance - enough of the C.O. I loathe him. The sky last night was a joy! Dark crimson with black clouds - sea white calm silver - with the red reflected on it. Now having had a thorough good grumble - I will get up.

[May] 29th. Slack day - gave Garrett 1/2 day - & Johnstone 10-4. Off in evening went to church with Miss Atkinson & a lovely walk after - home for second supper. Being ahead [?] I sat beside my illest man for a great part of the afternoon [-] he can neither read nor write but has a good memory. Has been out from the beginning, was through Mons - the battle of the Aisne - Marne etc. & was at Ypres - while we were at Poperinghe. Slow funny creature said he used not to like fighting - "but when your blood's up, it's all right." His injury is a kick in the stomach by a horse - since shot for cruelty. I asked him what he meant by a horse being cruel, "He was terribly cruel, used to run about - biting people & knocking down the pickets, but it was a shame to kill him - he was a prize animal & a lovely worker. He didn't mean to hurt me. There were two of us on picket & he owed the other fellow a grudge because he had teased him with a stick & he came straight for me & dug his foreleg at my stomach. I just said 'Nancy' & he knew me & was quiet as a lamb & nosed me & stayed beside me until they came to pick me up. He was terribly sorry for what he had done. Once a man was told to harness him & he went gingerly up to throw the harness across him [-] the horse waited until he was near enough & then picked him up by the back of his shirt & flung him away. They oughtn't to have killed him tho' - there is a chap in the Warwicks who can manage him - why couldn't they get him transferred to look after him while I am away." Wish I could remember some of the many stories he told me. Do you remember I told you about Meteren - a place near Bailleul - where there was a lot of fighting in 1914? He was in all that & apparently loved it. Our men were charging straight through the village - driving the Germans before them - as they passed one house - my man's mate saw a bayonet being shoved out to kill my man - so he turned his own bayonet backwards - & dug it in the way the other was coming from - killed his man. Then they all went into the house & found a woman fastened to the table to make a screen for them - behind her was a little child with both arms cut off. When they saw that their blood was up - & they killed the whole six Germans.

Once at Ypres - they had a lovely post of observation not being shelled. The Germans were bombarding from six different batteries, our men took careful observation & let them bombard. Next morning our artillery let fly at all the battery positions - gave them a thorough peppering - Next night all was quiet! & the Lieutenant with them said - "Boys you can get a good sleep tonight. I think the Germans have gone to get fresh guns. Col. Brainsfather [*Bairnsfather*], the artist was with them. He used to make true pictures of the men - & wrote down the actual things the men said - & sent them to some paper. He told me how one Sapper was made Sgt. There was a Co. of R.E.s working with them. The Germans were making a fine big sap - but had not finished it. The sapper - dashed down amongst the Germans - put a fuse and dashed back. It took a certain number of seconds to go off. He was well away when it exploded. It went off well - & blew up - the Germans in their own sap. Meanwhile the R.E. Capt. was sitting at a post of vantage - sniping any odd Germans that tried to escape! When our Artillery were shelling the batteries - our Infantry cheered as the shells burst. The German Infantry heard the cheering & thought something was coming & flew to their dug out - so we put a shell in the dug out & took their trenches. He has suffered the usual hardships of nothing but biscuits & bully for so long - no chance of a wash for a month. Only water to drink - from a stream where dead bodies were. He says an officer who is hated is killed by his own men when they go into

action. Their Capt. he swears was a German spy when he got angry he spoke so furiously they could not understand him. The men will kill him if they get a chance. Another of my men is in the Secret service - He says ours is a splendid service, & told me all sorts of stories of spies being tracted [*tracked or traced?*] - most interesting. Sometimes English Officers & French women - & often Germans speaking English perfectly.

One of my dear old Tommies who is only 1/2 sharp wandered into church last night & sat amongst the officers-! & sang away quite unconcernedly [-] nice of him. 7 a.m. time to get up.

[May] 30. One gruesome thing Sam Maddox told me - was that when they were marching into Ypres - they saw another Company of the Warwicks resting by the roadside, some sitting on the kerbstones some lying about - They took not the least notice of the passing officer - no salute - no nothing. Then the officer went up to them & touched one man's cheek - white powder fell off, & he was stone dead. They had all been killed by gas as they sat or lay. Maddox said - it was a horrible sight, some of them were smiling, & some looked as if they were asleep. Very peaceful day yesterday. Off in afternoon, watched the batheing, & did not much else. Major Martyn is sick of life out here & has written to the C.O. requesting to be transferred to the home service so that he can have his wife & children with him.

It seems so comical, he & the C.O. mess together & see quite a lot of each other & yet he has to write such a very formal application & "begs to have the honour." The C.O. will know nothing about it before letter time today so you & I are before him with the old man's secret.

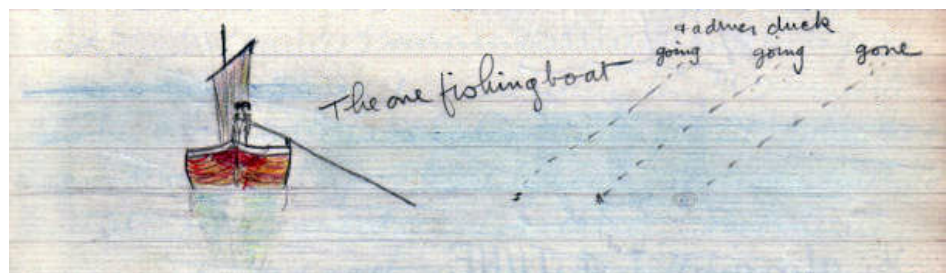
Rules concerning batheing arrived yesterday.

"No mixed batheing will be allowed.

The nursing staff will bathe at a given place at the given time 2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. when a boat will be in attendance.

Batheing before breakfast will only be allowed, with a responsible Sister in charge."

**Dead calm morning -
no sun - 1 fishing
boat - many diver
ducks.**



[May] 31. A convoy of about 300 - arrived yesterday - which filled us right up - & overfilled the hospital - Some will be going on to England by the next boat. Off for 1st supper instead of second - otherwise not off duty, lists, lists, lists, besides the treatment, kept me busy - The V.A.D., had one the afternoon & one the evening - & worked like blacks when they were on. Good little creatures.

Yesterday, was the first of 3 days Fête for the R.C. Church. "First Communion" for the children. They went to church in a long procession - girls in white carrying very long candles - boys with ordinary suits, left arms tied with white ribbon white sailor hats. I think there were over 100 of them.

