

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

November 1916

NOVEMBER. 1 & 2. All quiet - All Saints day yesterday some of us went to 6.30 a.m. service - & in the afternoon put flowers on the graves of some of our men. Wet - & calm this morning. Had the 1/2 day off yesterday - walked over the cliffs & home by the beach with Marcey & Waite - & got drenched with sea water - tres bon. Port still closed.

[November] 3rd. Big boats heading for Havre this morning so perhaps the Port is open. Yesterday one boat got across - because she did not catch the wireless message - that she was to return to port soon after she left - 7 of them started & were called back, because a French boat was blown up just outside S'hampton. Off in evening went for a lovely walk along the Havre Rd with Matron. Moonlight was perfect. Stars also.

[November] 4th. Chief event of yesterday, Maj. Martyn returned to the great joy of all of us. And brought me the most beautiful pair of black silk stockings that I have ever possessed - Great care must be taken of them.

[November] 7th. The last 3 days have been quiet. Convoy in on the 4th - amongst my lot were 3 Germans. 1 badly wounded - 2 not so bad. Shall I ever be quit of Germans. I wonder. Concert last night given by the Staff male & female - quite good - went for a walk with Marcey in glorious moonlight - after it.

10th Nothing of note has happened - the Germans are still with me - One morning there was word of evacuation & I went on duty early - & dressed them & got them on to stretchers & gave morph[ia] to the painful ones - Then word came from Havre - cancelling the order - & back to bed they all had to be put. I don't think I shall ever be without Germans. We spent a pleasant evening at the Officers' Mess last night - music & Bridge - all very pleasant - Maj Nicholins [?] & Maxey played - Maj Martyn & first me.

[November] 11th. Convoy expected. It was due at Étretat at 3 a.m. but evidently did not arrive as we were not called up - & now the 6.30 call bell has rung - & still they have not called us second breakfast folk - Off last night - went for walk with Wood.

[November] 13th. Am nearly driven crazy with these terrible 150 Austr-i-lians. They are not ill - & are the dirtiest & most untidy men. I have ever had dealings with - & only 2 orderlies to cope with the lot. No other news.

[November] 14. Place still seething with Australians - only 15 went yesterday to C.C. On Sunday night - they broke out all over the town - took no notice of the police - & went to the Cafés - & generally made nuisances of themselves. 2 arrived home - next morning dead drunk - they are horrid men. It was so strange this morning I was sitting at my window in the dark - drinking my tea - & brushing my hair. The washerwomen were already at work - by the dim light of dawn - washing at the sea's edge - & the men drawing the day's supply of water from the tap - & so much going on in the dark.

[November] 15th. This morning at 5.30 the place reminded me of a fairy tale. It was brilliant blue moonlight, & the stars glittering, air frosty. The washerwomen were all at work - washing on the shore - Others coming up with their enormous packs on their shoulders & the water carriers - with their washing tents on barrows - filling them at the tap - & taking them home - for the day's supply of water. It all looked so eerie - in the moonlight - & everything & everyone cast sharp black shadows on the ground. We are still seething with Australians - I have 100 still, they are getting to be less unruly now thank goodness. Off yesterday afternoon, went for trudge along the shore with old Waite - we wanted to go through the cave that comes out at the

Station but the tide was too high for us to get in. Maj. Martyn announces that he would like to come & see you - & stay for a few days - after the War - I said - I was quite sure you would welcome him.

Volume Three ends here and we have no diaries for the next 18 months.

Volume Four begins on 21 June 1918 which suggests that one or two volumes have gone missing.

If anyone reading this website knows the location of the missing volumes - perhaps in a secondhand bookshop or even in a museum collection - we would dearly love to hear from you; please contact Dick Robinson at dick@gardencottage.org.uk