

I am furious at being so old

[Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin]

[Oxford] Saturday Aug 22nd 1914

Dear Sister

I sent off a letter by the Olympic last night and was sorry I hadn't time to write more about all I have heard and done since Thursday - but I couldn't - We reached Liverpool just too late to catch the 9.30 Oxford train - There was no special - so we had to wait until 11.30 - After getting off the luggage helped by our ever useful Great Western man we went to see the Cathedral - this calm proceeding being more to Revere's liking than seeing soldiers - There were plenty everywhere - on the Dock and in front of all Public Buildings. The trip to Oxford was uneventful - We took on two carriage of recruits at Birmingham and left weeping wives and mothers in the Station. At Oxford we found W.O. looking very fit and well and evidently thankful to see us, never once saying "Why did you come back" - and listening patiently to the tales of our experiences & apparently satisfied that Revere had seen one Aunt - two Uncles - two Godfathers - four babies - two Godsons and many friends. Oxford looked the same and it was hard to believe why we had rushed back. Tea was on the Terrace - The garden a mass of gorgeous blooms - a fresh crop of roses and wonderful snapdragons.

First I talked & told our experiences & then W.O. told his - He left Aberdeen the day we sailed and went to Colonsay that evening in the yacht - Monday Harry Howard arrived & brought the news - They tried to get away that night all of them but couldn't. All wires were cut off - and trains used only to move Scotch Soldiers & no reservations could be made. They never got to London until Friday morning I think - Donald Howard has gone to Belgium with his regiment - Harry waiting for his commission. I think Willie went directly to London where he found Edmund - worried to death about Isabel Meredith and the Bank - W.O. evidently spent the following week mostly in London where there is a Canadian Committee to arrange for the applications coming from Canada - And he undertook to do what he could about the Medical & Nursing applications - Then here a most wonderful work has been done. The Examination Schools have been turned into a thoroughly equipped Hospital - operating room - p.m. room - Chapel & every detail complete - The court yard with pavillions built to contain beds. I think there are 350 beds - The large picture of the Kaiser put in the cellar - Opposite, the Masonic Hall has 50 beds - part of the same organization - Magdalen School turned into a Hospital - & 80 beds in the Infirmary grounds - 1000 Territorials in Christ Ch - Balliol & Keble have been moving on into camps - every one has come home - all Heads of Colleges but Brasenose - who is lost in Germany. All helping - all working like slaves. The plan is for our Hospital to receive patients who are in Netley the big Army Hospital near Southampton - I mean patients there now from the Regular Army - They want that free at once - to put in the wounded coming across the Channel - then gradually others will come to us. These Military Hospitals have been established all over the country - 3000 beds in Cambridge etc - Willie says that the quiet, calm way in which it has been done could never be believed without seeing it.

Red Cross workers everywhere. Prof Thomson turned his big laboratory into a work room and Mrs Melville Lea & Mrs Arthur Thomson started a work room at once. I could not begin to tell you what they have done. - I spent nearly all day there yesterday & as Mrs Lea has given out I have been made the Chairman.

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It is in the Museum. They have furnished the Hospital with night shirts & day shirts enough to start with - & I could not tell you the other things for the soldiers who have started. Friday morning I reported at the Hospital and shall hope to have regular work there, - but fancy this workroom will take much time for the present. Everybody looks very serious & earnest. W.O. quite different to what I have ever seen him - The newspapers are so different to the American & Canadian papers - no pictures - except in the small cheap ones - This enormous number of troops has been moved across the Channel and into France - no one really knows how many - about 150,000. Of course we know so many men - I hardly dare think of the young ones - Revere meditates & is very quiet. He will join the Training Corps in College at once. I was obliged to go to London this morning and it is strange to see the red + on Devonshire House

You would never believe the stories & experiences of people getting home. Isabel Meredith, Dinah & her friend arrived Thursday. Edmund sent Cooks man to Aix - two attempts - the second time he found a friend in Paris with a big car which he hired & reached Aix - It took 4 days from Aix to Boulogne - only allowed one small trunk the car being filled with petrol tins - They drove rapidly - but were held up every few miles - to show their passports. At night got rooms where they could but could not sleep on account of tramp of soldiers. I saw Isabel in London today - very weary but so thankful to get home - she said the kindness at Aix & of the French everywhere could not be exceeded. They passed through miles of English soldiers as they reached the Coast. The Boulogne route is kept open - Calais closed - but of course the time tables are only made at the moment. Our trains are running but subject to change and no responsibility taken except by passenger about promptness. Orville Bullitt reached London last night after 8 days in trains from Munich - Loulie & Willie left Berlin the day before the lines were closed - & reached London the Bank Holiday - no trunks no money - Telephoned here - & we had gone - Fortunately saw Cora driving through the street & she took Loulie to Marshall's where she got two gowns & all she needed - Her trunk turned up yesterday after three weeks. Her maid is near Pau - & cant reach her. It is the moving of troops in France that makes it so difficult and nearly all motors have been taken. Edmund is at Buxton with Ellie taking the cure. W.O. has been up to see him as he was quite ill - but he is improving now. He hopes to sail about Sept 6<sup>th</sup> taking Merediths & Mary & her children. This town is full of Americans waiting - & London too - 2000 left yesterday on the Olympic. Our nice Secretary has enlisted but not gone yet - Benning & William are here - We are only using the motor for necessity & to help tired people - I am cutting down all expenses - so as to have money to use for other things - Napkin rings & bare table - no sweets - & 2 courses for dinner. The first week, prices went up in the skies but are better now.

*Indis. C.  
[the Thompson]*

Monday night - I have been all day at the work room - sent off 200 shirts & started much work - We are beginning things for women & children at odd moments. Nearly all the large houses in London are used for different good works & hundreds of country houses are turned into Hospitals already - All this Red Cross training has been splendid. Josephine Phelps has gone to Belgium - is in Brussels. It is almost impossible to explain the feeling. The world is so occupied with the cruelty to Belgium that ones own troubles & fears seem forgotten: even Mrs Max Müller calling the Kaiser a "Mad vicious brute". I was glad to find the dear lady alive - I feared this would kill her. Her son arrived Saturday from



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Buda Pest coming through with the Ambassador returning. The Bucklers were in a Chalet in the Savoy Mountains & were really without a penny - Mr B- managed to get through & has gone back on a bicycle with gold - I could write on & on telling what I have heard but you would be exhausted. Today the news is bad - but one cannot really trust anything. I am sending a copy of the "White paper" The report of the Diplomatic transactions & you can see how Sir Edward Grey fought against it - We went to Ewelme for church yesterday - 30 men have gone from the village & hardly any men in the Choir... Will you please send this to Dundas - & ask them to send it to Mrs McCagg - The Spimney Pointe à Pic - & she can send it to Sallie please - It is not worth much but will not be possible to write to every one -

Good night

Affly

Grace -

Motors form an extraordinary part of the movement - The Royal Automobile Club had 10,000 to use for troops & gentlemen just handed over their superb cars. Loyalty makes one squirm & weep.

*Even from Ewelme: just as they were from Ewelme with the husband of Alice & I*  
I expect to go to court. No wonder the excitement of the men in the "Barracks" been turned into a thoroughly equipped hospital - operating room - X-ray room - Chapel & every detail complete. The heart yard with pavilions built to contain beds. I think there are 100 beds. The large picture of the Kaiser put in the cellar. Hospital, 2nd floor, Hall has 50 beds - part of the work of organization - Hospital, 3rd floor, Hall has 50 beds in the infirmary grounds - 1000 beds in Christ Ch - Balliol & Yale have been moving on into camps - some are the same home - all Heads of Colleges but Brasenose - who is lost in Oxford. All helping - all working like slaves. The plan is for our Hospital to receive patients who are in Helley the big Army Hospital near Southampton - I mean patients there now from the Regular Army. They want that first at once - in fact the wounded coming across the Channel - then gradually others will come to us. These Military Hospitals have been established all over the country - 5000 beds in Cambridge etc. - Willis says that the quiet, calm way in which it has been done could never be believed without seeing it.

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