

CU5417/55.30 G.R.O.

[Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin]

[Oxford] Thursday P.M. 10th [Dec. 1914]

Dearest Sister

To me it seems as though I hadn't written you for ages but perhaps I have - no, I didn't write you last Sat and not yesterday. I have just come from town - cheap ticket Thursday - and Henry wired me to fit a black coat & skirt I ordered in October. I am still wearing summer serge and straw hat with black bow - Adèle lunched with me and seemed more cheerful although she says it is only because she is occupied as everything is so awful for them. The Redmonds have offered Louis a place in N.Y and they will probably go in January although there is a chance of Redmond taking over another branch of business which would keep them here but nothing is settled. That stupid boy had no contract with Redmond. Adèle says it is worse than hopeless about Bob. She wants him to come over - take a rest and perhaps get a salaried job and live quietly here. I cannot see what they are to do. Cochran is here and Schrinee from Africa and she is playing with them and helping Belgians with Cochran money. Julia has gone home and has done splendidly. Tuesday I have to go to town again for a Canadian concert - and after that I hope not to go near London for months - It gives me the blues.

The enclosed shows what Margaret Pearce has been doing and I have been so interested. She has heard of the safe arrival of the Ambulance and the Regiment has it. I wish I was driving it. I think I wrote you Mr Reynell was there - he stayed 10 days and left much stronger. He is working with Lady Dudleys Australian Hospital and they have now a Hotel at Boulogne. And 40 Ambulances rushing back & forth. He came back for an appendix operation. I sent you Archie Mallocks letter - I have not heard again. It is a wonderful chance for him & he is a clever surgeon & so intelligent he will learn a lot. We have had Medical Examiners over Sunday & all the week. - Dr. Freemantle & Smith inquiring for you. Freemantle is a Major in the R.A.M.C. & has charge of an enormous Eastern Division. The excitement about an invasion has calmed down. I sent you a picture of St Giles. In our work room we are busy putting warm sleeves into 1000 waistcoats & making p(y)jamas for the Hospital. I am sending you a picture of the Singers house turned into a Hospital - I wrote of our first visit there. We go quite often on Sunday but at present Benning is quite seriously ill with Bronchitis and we have no motor - It is very inconvenient for there are so many steps to be taken. I am watching for Miss Danielsons other boxes & Mrs White's box of dresses from Philadelphia. I shall soon have all the Christmas presents tied up & ready and shall hand over the surplus to the other Committee to give their children. You said Miss D. had \$50- for special case - Madame Persyn is to have a baby the end of January & must go into the Acland Home. They are in a paying guest place for she could not keep house - and has 5 children already under 7 - I have everything ready for her - even her own things but it will cost a good deal & I thought the \$50 might help. They haven't a penny except what we give them. The children only speak Flemish - He is a Professor of Philosophy - and has such a wonderful face - he is a peasant by birth, so he says. Really Miss Danielson's things are too wonderful. Parsons wants to keep the Ivory Soap. I am not sending Christmas presents at all. I think you kept back somethings for the children - hope so at any rate. I am sending to Canton the weekly paper "Land & Water" which has most interesting articles by Hilaire Belloc on the War. After you have read them you might send them to Joe. I am sending it also to Sallie and those are my only gifts. The money simply flies here in the many things one wants to do and Willie always says "Take care - the worst is yet to come."

(Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin, Dec. 10, 1914 - 2)

Have I told you our drawing room is a sewing room? Wanda MaxM. has charge of it. Has Belgian Professors wives here sewing from 9.30 to 1 - every day - altering clothes & making heavy cotton underclothes - They have it until Monday before Christmas. Wandas maid & a dressmaker from Elliston's help - cut & fit. The room is a hideous mess - I must say.

Edith Miller Colyer Fergusson is coming to us for Christmas - Max is at the front driving a food Transport. Mrs M-M is so proud of him and I knew it would please her to have Edith near - It seems so terrible to have people of her age unhappy by this war - it is hard enough for the young but pathetic for the aged. Just now the news from France is calm - Jim Pearce writes since he went back there it is much quieter. Of course the news of the German cruisers sunk is glorious. Anything like that braces people up. The Russian news one cannot rely on at all - and so much depends on it. Oh - if I could only talk to you. I have an idea you must feel my letters dont tell enough - and it is so hard to know what to tell. Each day we seem to have some one to help in a different way - just now Mr Barrows asked if I could get Mr Minot of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin to speak to their son who is a prisoner of war at Torgau and a messenger is allowed to go from the Embassy in Berlin - so I have written him - The one who was to have come to Christ Church, & Mr Page puts my letters in the bag. Last week it was Mrs Ramsay Wrights sister in Jerusalem. As for Willie I hardly know how he lives - people ask so many favours of him. Mary King is with Margaret Pearce for the winter - she is lively & active & they help a lot with the wives of the soldiers of Jim P['S] regiment. I am finishing this on the 11th but forgot to say so before. If you think it worth it send it to Joe - We are getting all our letters off to-day. Philip Osler is coming to us for Christmas - it will be dull for him. Monica goes into the Training School after Christmas - Mrs S- keeps well - & amuses herself visiting Highlanders (wounded) in the Hospital. Doris is here now - her husband being in camp. The Thomson girls are perfect bricks - they run the fruit & flower committee for the Base Hospital and it is no easy job as their room is across the street. At present - there is no great rush of wounded coming in - I shall think hard of you all at luncheon at Canton on Christmas Day. I hope you are leaving the arrangements much to your capable nieces.

Hug everybody for me & give my love - ready and shall hand over the surplus to the other Committee to give their children. You said Miss D. had \$50- for special case - because person is to have a baby the end of January & must go into the Asylum. ^{Apply} at a paying guest place for she could not keep house - and has 5 children already under 7 - I have everything ready for her - even her own things but will cost a good deal & I thought the \$50 might help. They haven't a penny except what we give them. The children only speak Flemish - He is a Professor of Philosophy - and has such a wonderful face - he is a peasant by birth, so he says. Really Miss Danielson's things are too wonderful. Parsons wants to keep the Ivory Soap. I am not sending Christmas presents at all. I think you kept back something for the children - hope so at any rate. I am sending to Canton the weekly paper "Land & Water" which has most interesting articles by Hilaire Belloc on the War. After you have read them you might send them to Joe. I am sending it also to Gallie and these are my only gifts. The money simply flies here in the many things one wants to do and Willie always says "There came - the worst is yet to come."