

(Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin) (Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin)

(Oxford) Tuesday Eve March 2nd [1915]

Dearest Sue - what I have spent on it I shall charge a rental to the Committee - The Committee consisting of the V.C. W.O. Wanda H.K. & Ramsay Wright - The two females doing all the work.

I feel that I was a burdensome fool to send word about the slippers - It never occurred to me they cost more than 50 cts. I vow I will hold on to myself with more discretion in the future. I also asked Thérèse and she must loathe me. She has sent me some nice underclothes - too thin really but excellent shapes etc. The head bandages were perfectly splendid and Major Parker to whom I gave them said they were far and away the best he has had - just now there are few head wounds coming in - but the preparations being made everywhere give one the shivers. A letter today from Col Birkett at McGill says they are ordered to come prepared for 1040 beds instead of 520 - The other Canadian Hospital just leaving Salisbury the same. 400 more ordered for Cliveden. Of course Revere is an absorbing thought with us. Willie has just returned from Cliveden having been there for an official inspection - They have 120 patients already & everything is splendid shape. Revere seemed happy - I resisted going. He writes cheerily & Willie says looks well. He is working in the Quartermaster Dep. arranging supplies - marched the men to church Sunday - and dined with Nancy - The Hospital at present is in the Tennis Courts - a huge place for 7 sets I believe & Squash Courts too - The officers are living in Taplow Lodge a house near by. The Astors are at Plymouth most of the time - he has an Election on - and is also in a Territorial Regiment stationed there. We had Dr Major McClaren from St John, N.B. for Sunday. He is the Head of No 1 Gen Canadian Hospital & ordered to double his equipment before leaving for France very soon. Norman's Unit has moved from Havre to Boulogne - & will be associated with the Royal Medical Corps. Wasn't he fortunate? Campbell Gwyn has been (in) the Trenches - I had a letter from Jack McCrae yesterday - just out - and he said his men had done well - I have become a visitor for this district on the Canadian Red + so that I can look after any who come here and will be reported to me. We hope to have convalescents at any time. The Harcourts take Belgian & Colonial convalescent officers - Did I tell you Mary King has gone as a probationer at the Paignton Hospital. It leaves Margaret Pearce alone - but I think she does not mind so much. She has a good French Governess in the house & is very busy - 6 men have gone from their place and he second Chauffeur is now gone - She drives her own car. It is extraordinary to hear people tell how they are cutting down expenses. I must send you today's Times that you may see the expense of the War and what it will mean in Taxation. I must now pay an Income Tax here as husband & wife's income counts as one under the new rule. I think we should let Benning go. At the same time I don't see what Willie would do - He needs the car so much and it is used for wounded soldiers to drive out & will be more. Benning has been wretched all winter - I think William should enlist but Willie thinks he is too feeble. At present I am very busy furnishing a house for [a] Belgian family. Prof & Madame Persyn - of Antwerp & Ghent - Prof of literature - have been in a Board Residence place all winter with 5 children & very uncomfortable - She has had her baby No 6 - under 7 years - in the Acland Home - and I have promised them a house - Do tell Miss Danielson that the \$50 went towards Mad P- having the baby - All went well and she is having the time of her life - resting peacefully in bed & not caring to budge. The house will be finished & ready when she is up & out. I have taken the house - & when I

have found out what I have spent on it I shall charge a rental to the Committee - The Committee consisting of the V.C. W.O. Wanda M.M. & Ramsay Wright - The two females doing all the work. There is a nice bit of garden and I hope the poor things will be happy. Prof P. may have to go back but she certainly cannot. I shall never recover from the audacity with which we offered Hospitality before we knew where the money was coming from - but of course we thought then we should have them in our houses. With a few exceptions these Belgians are a people of unrefined habits - They have enormous appetites and are not in the least dainty like the French. I suppose after a time we shall be forced to take them in our houses unless the Rockefeller people come to my rescue - When I think how little personal discomfort I am enduring - none in fact I feel ashamed - but I cant offer my stalwart form for a target. The war situation at present seems out of all grasp for me. The Dardanelles business gives immense satisfaction & one prays they may go on. I am terrified about the U.S. - I rely on a weekly report from Mr Max Müller from his Foreign Office knowledge.

Good night

Grace