

[Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin]

[Oxford] Monday 27th [Dec., 1915]

Dearest Sister

If I skip Saturdays or Fridays post as I did last week - I am lost and I believe the same thing will happen, unless I wait with this. I have written Ned & the girls - Thanks you so much for the stockings. They are splendid - I like these silk ones so much. I hate putting on thread ones. The maids were enchanted at being remembered & all ask me to thank you for them. The sweets have not arrived yet - They could not have come by the St. Louis - but they will turn up soon I am sure. The case with all the wonderful things came Christmas night & I have just opened it. You are a wonderful person - and too too generous. Your own made socks are splendid - I sent two pairs to Jack McCrae - and held the others for nice feet - William perhaps - and the powder too. Did I tell you that William sends his socks & flannels here for Bateman to wash - so that he is kept in most tidy condition, he is still at Woolwich. All the things in the box are useful - I will write Mrs Danielson - she is a trump. The two coats are beauties and Wanda who is here for two weeks will help me place them on two needy Belgian backs. The socks are splendid - We are collecting 900 pairs for extras for the Oxford & Bucks. I got your cable & hope mine reached Canton thank you -

Thursday a m 30th. This is a queer performance as I have sent a letter in between thanking you for your wonderful cheque - The sweets came and are much appreciated - I hope the Wrights or Otilie writes - but they haven't much capacity for writing or sense of propriety from my standpoint but they are the dearest family - Otilie dined here last night - she begins to really seem like her old self. Campbell will probably get his discharge soon and he and Otilie go home leaving the children here. The University people wrote that the students had fallen off so that they could not keep the place vacant after January - C- will have served 1 year and as McGill is over-staffed at any rate he feels justified in leaving - They cannot take the children as their house is let - The chicks are splendid here and it seems wicked to risk the voyage & journey & put them in a Hotel in Iowa City. Otilie will come back in June & spend the summer taking them back when cool enough. Hilda, Palmers wife who is a foolish little thing is having a baby in April. She is waiting for Palmers leave to decide what to do. I hope she goes home with Otilie for I think she worries Mrs Wright - but she will do her own way. Christmas would have been awful if I hadn't had the chance to help in the Hospital - Bill didnt come - Campbell G- didnt come & willie was rather seedy - He had an influenzary cold about three weeks ago which caught him when he was overtired and he has had trouble in throwing it off - so I have kept him in bed three days and made him steam his throat and take a tonic, - he is now much better. I helped with the dinners in big Surgical 6. The turkeys were carved in the Ward and many men could sit at tables - The plum puddings were lighted & all was cheery - except that in the middle of dinner a convoy arrived and the stretcher cases were brought in - They were not very bad cases but all had been very sea sick and were feeling wretched. I was delighted because I was able to really help - and fed one or two with bad arms. I am giving the splendid bags from Susan & Margaret to the men who came too late for presents - 12 going to the McMaster girls to distribute in the Soldiers Hut in the Infirmary. We dined at the Wrights Christmas night - not W.O, and the youngsters played games -

CVS 47/55 71 G.R.O.
(Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin, Dec. 27, 1915 - 2)

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Archie was here & Captain Russel from McGill. Revere writes very cheerfully now for although he has not reached his destination he has responsibility. McGill Camp is broken up - many officers come English Hospitals - Revere sent to the new place where they will begin to organize & make ready - Col Birkett gone [to] Montreal on "Duty" for change of arrangements about 4th year students who are with them. Two new Field Ambulances are being formed - Harry Wright changed to one - and we suppose Revere, but it is simply impossible to understand all the delays and changes. I only care that Revere is cheerful & satisfied with work. There is little doing in France. Please tell me if Jessie Drapers son is in the English Army? I heard he was from Mr John Lane and he sent me his address etc but I really couldn't believe it. - I sent two pairs

the powder Dec. 30th. Bill has arrived - for 7 days leave - looking fat and well just like a R.C. Priest. Seems rather dumpy I think but perhaps he was seasick crossing - We have had a terrible gale. 10 superb trees down in Ch. Ch - meadow. Yesterday I went to town - lunched with Bob & Adèle & drove to the Hospital - Babs is at Stanway. Adèle has not been very well - rather worn out I fancy but looks very fit. She said she had sent you the pcs of the Hospital. Mr C has given her an excellent motor - one that closes in so she is protected. It takes about 25 minutes from their door to the Hospital - It is a wonderful house for it - . & 12 acres of land - loaned by the man who owns all the Maypole Dairies - They have 62 patients - all convalescents thus far. It is admirably equipped and they could operate as they have an excellent little theatre. To me it seemed overstaffed but perhaps they may need them. Miss Wedgewood (Eliza's sister) is a very difficult person - but Adèle thinks she has conquered her. Adèle is the administrator and all communications with Base & War Office go to her direct. Bob audits the accounts. I felt very sad for it seemed to me Bob was nothing more than a page boy - She made him run upstairs six times before we left the house and at luncheon to fetch & carry - and talked incessantly about "my Hospital" - Cochran has a house in the country & is hunting. Adèle said all her friends are filled with envy - but funnily enough I didn't feel that way - Bad - severe surgical cases appeal to me so much more.

This afternoon I carried the bags of Susan & Margaret to the men who came after the Christmas presents were given out and they were all so pleased. Good night. Heaps of love

Grace.

Bill didn't come - Campbell - I was rather weary - He had an influenzary cold about three weeks ago - and he was overtired and he has had trouble in his chest - and he has been in bed three days and made him steam his chest - and he is now much better. I helped with the dinner - and the things were carved in the Ward and many men could sit at the table - and the things were lighted & all was cheery - except that in the evening a party arrived and the stretcher cases were brought in - but they were not very bad - but all had been very sea sick and were feeling miserable. I was able to really help - and fed one or two with my own hands. Giving the splendid bags from Susan & Margaret to the men who were the best of the presents - 12 going to the McMaster girls to distribute in the infirmary. We dined at the Wrights Christmas night - and the daughters played games -