

(Lady Osler to Mrs. [From Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin])

Stow-on-the-Wold on the Broadway Road.

Friday May 26th [1916]

Dear Sister

W.O had a consultation about 8 miles beyond here and insisted on my coming as he hired a motor. He dropped me off here and I took a walk and have been sound asleep in a field under a white may bush - with daisies, buttercups, + clover, forgetmenots & many others under my feet. Such a fine view across the Cotswold with Kingham and Chipping Morton in the distance. I have loved it - and we are now to have tea in a nice old Inn. I only wish you were here. The day is too superb. I believe my condition of mind is peculiar. I almost resent the glory of the country and the blue sky when I think of the horrors across the Channel and the misery in the hearts everywhere. I believe it is easier to bear when the clouds are grey and the rain coming down, although that is selfish for it is dull for the wounded to be shut up in the Hospitals. Campbell Gwyn who came on Sunday, left as we did and will have two days in town & Folkestone on his way back. He looks years older and seems so weary. The Canadians are in that perilous Ypres salient - and all the officers say it would have been better to have given it up last autumn & have straightened the line. ^{Since} After last April (1915) when the Canadians saved Calais they have been kept there and the last few months the Guards have been there too. I think they felt the Canadians might get the glory. Campbell said as he said ^{he said} goodbye "Aunt Grace for Heaven's sake keep Revere back if you can, as long as possible". One feels that anything Campbell tells you must be authentic & sensible for he rarely speaks and he has told me so many things. One tries not to let these weary souls talk but they will - I suppose the reason that all the very young men who come over want to tear madly about in London - do plays and restaurants - is to forget - but it makes them appear careless. Campbell told me that for 3 miles in front of the trenches he had just come from - he did not believe there was an inch you could put your finger where there were not bits of shell - buried in the ground - it is a solid mass. All the men who come back are perfectly optimistic and say of course it is all right - go on sending "men and guns - men and guns" Campbell says huge guns are coming all the time - and not yet used, preparing for the future. Isn't it ghastly to speak of the "future"? W.O is simply wonderful - he reads more in the papers I think than he used to at least he pretends to, but rarely talks of the War. He has so many interests - Spends all day Monday at Cliveden which is simply splendid now & officers tell me they live for his Monday visit. That vulgar old Col Gorrell is still there and even Nancy admits that he is a wonderful organizer - all his food arrangements are wonderful. Miss Campbell is very happy with her work there. They have an enormous gymnasium where the wounded get splendid exercises to help stiff joints under an excellent masseuse. This Heart Hospital Willie is interested in is not Canadian but run (medically) under about four big medical men and a good staff - and they are doing splendid research work which will be of immense value in the future. He goes there every Thursday. Paignton has been very quiet recently and W.O has not been for a long time. The Matron we saw the day after she arrived has been a great success I believe, & Dr Penhallow is the Chief Surgeon & very skillful. I am sending £5- of your money to the Matron to take wounded in one of those big motors about 30 go and can have tea on the Moor - and simply adore it. I believe I sent you her letter and I think you would like me to do it. Our Oxford Hospitals have not been full for a long time although the last cases were very bad - & the officers ward is usually full - They can take 85 officers. I am sure I am always repeating myself. One of the

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things Campbell told me about the prisoners was interesting - He says he often sees Germans being led through the trenches being taken out - and our men jump up and offer them anything they have to eat. Another interesting item - was of an American in Campbells Company from Detroit who saw his German school master from Detroit passing along as a prisoner - & went forward to speak to him - The prisoner said "I really wasn't in Detroit to teach German - I had another job" - Devilish spies!! and so clever!!

Did you hear that Arnold Whitredge has got the Military Cross - his people must be delighted - We are seeing a nice young American named Fowler who came over as M^r Page['s] secretary - February after war began he got into the artillery & is now in the Flying Corps. He is taking a flying course on engines here and is living in Christ Church. Jack Slessor is doing splendidly. He was one of 6 aviators to attack the Turkish Camp - from Suez - and has now gone to the Soudan with a Flying Corps - acting as embarkation officer - not 19 yet. It seems as though the strain must be too great. It makes me raging to be old. Mrs Griffith drives her car at night to the station to meet the ambulance trains - last night she went out alone at 12.30. Is not that real usefulness?

May 31st. Joan grows sad - as her fiancé has to be "boarded" tomorrow - & may go to France although I do not really think he is fit - Ethel has told Joan she can stay over - I fancy she knows she will be worrying at home. This month has been wonderful for them and they have had entirely their own way - too much so for my old fashioned ideas about engaged people. I am sending this by Mrs W. After all there isn't anything in it to censor. Recently there is constant talk of the War being over in six months or a year - but I can never believe it and no one knows - Every one coming home says "It is all right, all right."

Don't let people say England is not doing anything. The other afternoon I went out for an hour. First house was the Barrons - son a prisoner since October 1914 - nephew who lives there with them wounded. Over to the Acland house to see a country friend - one son killed, one with leg stiff and 2 inches short from wound. Then to the Wrights where there are 3 sons serving & Mrs Blake there with 2. Then to the Sherringtons to condole with her as her only child of 18 had just gone to France. Then to see Mrs Macdonnell - only son killed & found with her Mrs Symonds, whose only child had left Salisbury without being able to come home. After that I tottered home and wondered what fate was in store for the Oslers. They have an enormous gymnasium where the wounded get splendid exercises to help stiff joints under an excellent massage. This Heart Hospital Willie is

Today I have heard from that French girl who spent the month with us - she is married. And you never heard such an account - Her husband is fighting - 3 brothers - 6 brothers-in-law and 13 nephews - It simply makes one gasp.

Good night - you will be exhausted. The 2 pairs of shoes came and are splendid - Many thanks.

Yours

Grace