CUS417/55.15 G.R.O.

[Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin]

13, Norham Gardens, Oxford.
Tuesday PM 15th (Sept., 1914)

Dear Sister

Nothing could be too absorbing to make me appreciate your troubles less - And I have thought so much of the loss of your dear friend Margaret Burnett. I wrote last week - but I am sure I have not said a word about May & James Little. It was a mercy they died as they did and she did not linger alone. Is Blanche Barrett dead? It gives me rather the shakes when I think May was only 1 1/2 years older than I - & I may have a stroke or some antique disease any day - but I'll keep going. The grass is not growing under my feet just now - excuse the slang expression. Of course we are feeling hopeful today over the retreat from Paris - but one hardly dares put too much faith in it. The news came Sunday afternoon or when we came out from from Cathedral in the morning it was posted on the Town Hall. The Yoemanry stationed in Christ Church were at the Service and Scott Holland preached a wonderful sermon. Poor dear Reggie - cant go to church - he really says he cant endure the prayers & hymns - To me it is a relief to get ready to burst and not be able to. The attitude W.O is in seems more unreal than anything else - He allows everyone to abuse the Germans & even says vicious things himself of the Kaiser - He is sending letters & books to Pres Wilson & all the prominent men - about Germanys lying attitude. It is really extraordinary to hear him - You may hear that we have 7 Louvain people in the house. The enclosed will show you what we are doing - I have written several people to help - Pauline among others and [I] sent her a card on Friday p m just as we heard a family was coming - The Pooles have a Prof with his wife and two babies who just escaped & one manuscript from the Library - the only thing saved from the University. He gave us the address of the Prof of Bacteriology in Folkestone & we asked him to come with his wife & family - to my horror I found at 9 P M Friday that there were 5 children & they were due at 11.15 Saturday - Parsons, Lizzie & William away! - We hustled about & had all ready - went to meet them & only Prof D- came - When he found he was not to pay board he would not bring his family - It seems they were at the seaside near Ostend & got away easily bringing money & clothes & 2 maids. So they have a decent place at Folkestone. I am getting him a house and they will come for the winter. The 2 Professors lunched here and the stories were awful. Anything more wonderful than the kindness of people here I could never imagine. Letters are pouring in with offers of Hospitality - but money for clothes etc is very important. The lodging houses here will all be empty this winter & we shall have to help these people - I want to get a good sum in order to pay board for Belgians. Personally I would rather do that than have them in this rackety house and not speaking French easily makes it rather ghastly. Saturday I was expecting Orville Bullitt & Collis - so had first to send them word not to come and then to come - but they changed their plans & couldn't come. Collis has a commission & is going to camp - Orville came yesterday. He has been waiting in London for his mother. I have just had a wire saying Florence is better but will not leave Dinard - so Loulie will probably come here Saturday. Orville sails tomorrow & Willie is in Paris - He went from Dinard to see about the apartment & get his grandmother's legal papers out of the safe. He is staying on thinking he might see the seige - but at present it looks as though that would not be - Let us pray so. Loulie may go to Harrogate for the cure - but I hope she will rest here for a time, her experience has been too ghastly. I wonder if I told you -

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her mother's funeral was at 4 p m & she & Billy arrived at 11 - Poor Alice has never yet been able to get a letter - only telegrams. I have written her everything & Mr MaxMüller has sent it in the British Ambassadors bag to Rome. Mr M M has a job in the Gen P.O in London censoring letters. Every foreign letter is opened and read. The details of work - amount to something simply enormous in every direction - Revere is away still. I feel very worried about it all. Willie was opposed to his joining anything at once - so it is decided for him to come to Ch.Ch. They are to wear uniform - do lectures - no games - form the new company of officers Training Corps (O.T.C) and work hard at that. The chances after that training are much better - Arthur Howard is doing the same. Donald is at the front and so far all right - Harry doing home defence. I try not to think we have prevented Revere going into active work at once - but he is so young and so inexperienced it seemed unnecessarily cruel for Willie and this O.T.C- training will be much better for the future. I have such busy days - Up early either cutting sandwiches for recruits luncheons in College or flowers for the Hospital - Doris Thomson has charge of the Flowers at our Base Hospital and gets mine. Then the work room from 9.30 to 1 & from 2 to 4.30 or 5 - The evenings are for writing & reading the Times & bed very early - too sleepy to stay awake - which is a mercy for one might think & become a coward - Incidentally there are adoring W O Americans to be seen. Last week the Beauvais Boris - Miss Irwin - Grandma Toland (Priscilla) Bushes - & many others - including loving doctors up for luncheon. W.O and Mr Armour are organizing the Canadian Hospital in London with a Convalescent Hospital is beginning to fill up now with wounded - 80 Germans in one ward. Prisoners of course they will be - I have not been there since badly wounded men have come. I am afraid to go for I like that so much better than sewing &inspecting garments that I dont like to begin.

Tell Barbara that the big lecture room is full of wounded Germans. In our woorkroom we are making clothes for Belgians - night shirts for a Hospital and in a rush 500 sacks to hold straw for recruits to sleep on in College Halls - When you read these things you will feel as though Oxford would look changed - but it doesn't - only people look so worried and anxious.

It is announced today that London & Oxford are the marked places for German airships - but who knows! The Bushes promised to call you up and tell you of seeing us the last thing. They should be home Friday. Pretty little Mrs Shawn Kelly is at the Wileys with her baby - he in Paris.

Now I am going to bother you - Will you arrange to have the enclosed put in the papers - whichever you think best - & receive subscriptions which can be put to my account. Arrange that with Ned - I shall be a thousand times obliged. Then please send this letter to Marjorie and ask her to return it to Sallie at N. care of Mrs Poor.

Good night

Grace.