

(Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin)
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13, Norham Gardens, Oxford.

Dec 25th 9 P.M. [1914]

Dearest Sister

I have thought very much of you today and know it has been a double struggle having the luncheon at Canton. I only hope Marian's engagement has been a cheering spot and that all has gone well. Marian senior wrote me of it and seems pleased - it is a continued link in the family chain and I hope he has health and not his father's feebleness. I always think of Jim sitting on his mother's knee or slinking about at Bar Harbour with Sadie Rotch. I do not know where to begin this letter but better start by thanking you for your useful & sensible gift of stockings - they will be so useful. It is simply wonderful how one gets along on nothing new - I have bought one pair of gloves & some hair pins since I came home - Oh - yes a hat but I am still wearing my straw one because it sticks on and is comfortable. Revere is pleased at having the magazine subscription. Thank Margaret & John for the string case please. I shall be writing them soon. Let me see - Miss Danielson sent the cheque and I have put it aside for Madame Persyn's confinement - also some money Edmund sent me, so that I can make her very comfortable in the Acland Home. And all the things are provided for the baby. Then Miss Danielson sent more Christmas presents by post. I nearly lost them all as the box was broken to atoms and all the things falling out, however I saved them and all were useful. It was a business getting the presents distributed 325. I got the names, sex and ages of all the Professors children - then tied & marked them all - and tied each family('s) and addressed it to the mother. Then I sent what was left to the General Committee & to various people who had Belgians to look after. The other cases have not yet arrived - I had a case from Marjorie of shirts - socks & woolleys - which were sent off mostly to the front & to the Canadians at Salisbury Plain - Jack McCrae was here Sunday and said his men needed socks badly - While I was packing them off came a message from Mrs Griffith next door to know if I could help her with a box for her nephew in the Trenches - That's the way all the time and shirts & heavy scarfs & jerseys are always in demand. The other day I had a box of things from Baltimore that were useless for soldiers because they were grey & red. They must wear kahki scarfs & mits & I have told everyone. Grey socks are rather better on account of the dye - I am awaiting Miss Danielson's blankets Etc impatiently - I hope the ship hasn't gone to the bottom. Also 14 barrels of apples from Montreal for the Base Hospital.

I had an unusually busy week last week - as we had so many orders at our work room - 3 dozen shirts - 500 surgical dressings - 2 dozen felt mits for navy - 200 holdalls & 200 housewives. Mrs Balfour the other Boss got appendicitis & Mrs Thomson's brother died - so I was much rushed. We finished off the work here for Belgian ladies and they really got through a lot - This drawing room had to be cleaned very thoroughly and furniture covers changed - but it paid I think for the inconvenience and made the ladies happy. Margaret Pearce and I were Hospital Visitors last week too - we have to have two a week now that there are so many beds. Recently nearly all the cases have been frosted feet - except some bad head cases. Standing in the water is ghastly & then it freezes about at their ankles - The injury is more like exaggerated chilblains & of course at night when warm in bed is agony. It is strange to see the difference in the men. They are not nearly so nervous now as they were at first & can sleep better at night so the nurses tell me. I must now tell you about our

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Christmas - Philip Osler came last week as it did not seem advisable for him to go home - He is a queer boy and very silent. Never says more than "yes & no" to me. He is going to Scotland on the 30th for a visit I am glad to say.

Friday Campbell Gwyn appeared from Salisbury Plain and can stay until Tuesday - he looks so well and seems in good form. Jack McCrae was here over night, also flourishing. I have never been to Salisbury - for the weather has been too bad & Benning has been away - ill for 5 weeks, which is a trial - Then yesterday Archie Malloch came from France - to stay until Monday & Edith (Miller) Colyer Fergusson - whom I had asked - as Mrs M.M could not have her - so we are full. I had asked the M M's to lunch or early dinner & bring the children - Wanda & I had arranged it nicely when suddenly Mrs M.M who has not been downstairs for 6 months said she was coming down for early dinner today, & did - so we asked two Tupper (Canadians) who are here and the Ramsay Wrights came. We had a cheery luncheon and the M.M children came for dessert. This morning we went to church at Ewelme - & this afternoon have been at the Hospital & Infirmary - The wounded have had a wonderful day. I never knew such kindness as has been shown and the devotion of the nurses has been unlimited. The Wards were wonderfully decorated - & the Surgeons carved the Turkeys in the Wards which was a great delight. One has hardly dared think of the soldiers in the Trenches today - it is cold here and must be ghastly there. Of course it is very difficult to write about the actual war to you. Our papers are so reticent and yours tell so much - In your last you spoke about Dover - & there was no truth in that. There was a rumored German submarine off Dover & that was all we heard. The pictures of Scarborough are in the Illustrated and I fancy it is much damaged. It is from personal accounts that one learns most. Josephine Phelps got home Wednesday from Antwerp where she has been in a Hospital since Aug 12th. In the cellar with patients during the Bombardment The Germans have become very nasty at Antwerp lately & refuse passports to all English. Josephine was very tired & her people getting restless so she decided to leave & could get no passport. She & a friend decided to skip - The lady running the Hospital motored them out into the country. They all got out and sauntered along as though having an afternoon airing. The boundary is marked by flags. Suddenly they came to an unguarded path or narrow road - & the chauffeur who was walking near - said "cross the line" & they stepped over and were safe - Soon found a cart which carried them well on their way to Flushing where they waited for a Dutch nurse to come from Antwerp and she brought their bags. Wasn't that thrilling? I have only seen her for a few moments - but she has much to tell. Archie Malloch has been one month at Dunkirk - now has a few days & returns to a place called Lapanne where Mrs Guest & Jay Phipps have joined a Hospital run by the Queen of the Belgians & Archie will be there. It is a wonderful experience. His work [h]as been at night in the R.R sheds where the trains come in from the Hospitals nearer the front. The men are laid on cots - they redress the wounds - & representatives from various Hospitals with Ambulances take patients away - on all sides one hears of the wonders of the American Hospital in Paris. The Willie Bucklers have been working there.

Goodness - how much I have written! I havent seen Mary Cabot again - She wrote they were sacrificing the rent & going away - Do you know anything about Carolyn - the gay one whichever she was - I cant tell them apart. Mary said she was recovering from an accident & was in the country with a nurse. The other one is going to study at Wantage, a Convent place - perhaps she will

