

CUS47/55.39 G.R.O.

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

13, Norham Gardens, Oxford.

Feb 13th (1915)

Dearest Sister

Norman wrote of their crossing in an enormous ^{Sally} port and marching bag - after that he could tell me plans. Mrs Stickney. The post went today without anything very satisfactory from me I fear. I really hadn't a chance to write yesterday and I find that our letters are delayed if they do not go to London by [the]middle [of the] day on Friday - The service in the P.O here is short and in London too I suppose and the mail is advertised to close Friday 10 PM - Goodness knows what may happen now - the if this blockade begins really. The people had a very thrilling time on the Lusitania and an American doctor who is here tonight was on the Baltic. All the men were called on deck at dawn the last morning - Boats were hung out and all preparations made as they thought an attack from a submarine was coming - They used the wireless & destroyers came and took them into Liverpool - Jack Osler was on board but we have not seen him yet - he came to join his old Regiment. Revere was expecting to go yesterday but the ship with nurses has been delayed somewhere and I think he will now have his inoculation before he goes to Cliveden - Troops have been changing here this week - enormous numbers going into a big camp at Northampton and less trained ones coming here - A letter from Norman telling of his crossing etc. It is very gratifying to have these men send their family letters to me first - Archie Malloch sends us his home letters with pictures of amputations & many interesting surgical things for his father. Look on the map and see where he is - Lapanne - just on the coast between Dunkerque and Ostend and near Furnes. The Hospital is a Hotel - only 25 ft. from the sea - His room is at the very top and he says at night he can see the bombs bursting over Ostend. The cases brought there are terrible - just fresh from the field or Trench - Great Heaven isn't it the very devil. Today I have just been wild with despair about it all & the heartstrings just nearly pulled out with sympathy. Wanda M.M is in town for a month's holiday so I am looking after the people more - our Belgians - Ramsay Wright is becoming much more interested and is helping - A Prof Thonan Geologist from Louvain who has been living at Merton College some time has now been given a house and brought his wife & baby - Yesterday she came to say the landlady had left no linen for change - etc - so I went to see her and have made her quite happy today. I took her out to buy pots & pans - Fancy her experience Her first baby born one day - Louvain bombarded the next. She & baby moved into the cellar - & from one part of the cellar to another as the house fell in. Finally they were in a vegetable bin for three days - then the water pipes leaked in & they crept out and took refuge in a church - & finally got away. Not a vestige of house left nor a rag of clothing Her people lived at Ypres - they reached there but were driven out - and all came to England Now the parents house is ruined and they are just heart broken and worn out.

You can imagine what a pleasure it is to be able to help make them comfortable now - thanks to my very generous American friends - I have had a very busy week. Much to be done at our work room - 100 housewives & holdalls finished - p(y)jamas - and some flannel vests for soldiers. The Government provides such heavy flannel shirts & cardigans that they do not consider under vests necessary - but of course every one wants the soldiers to have them and it is almost impossible to buy enough woven ones. We have a good pattern for a flannel one - Marion also sent me an excellent pattern for soft shoes for these poor tender frost bitten feet - so are all making these.

And in a just case, she says:

