

(Services for Unknown Soldier) G.R.O

CUS417/41.27

[Lady Osler to Mrs. Chapin]

[13 Norham Gardens, Oxford]
Thursday Eve., 11th [Nov., 1920]

Dearest Sue

I was at the Abbey at 9 o'clock. The Band played from 10. At 10.15 the choir & clergy entered the altar - then the two minutes' silence. Then they passed to the North Porch and you could hear the procession coming -

I have just been talking with Marion & heard that Martin had reached New York which is an immense relief to her. She was up last Monday for Bab's 26th birthday and seemed very well & looked quite a new woman. She stayed with the children & I had tea there. I have not written you for a week which is a most unusual thing for me - but my last was such a dose it must have taken you all the week to wade through it. This eve I had yours of the 31st telling me of little Fitzie and of Marion W- being with you. I hope this will find her still there for I cannot get a letter off to her by tomorrow's post and you must share this. The Maxmullers came by an early train last Saturday for the week end & the boys' half term. I managed to have the boys here but they discovered the boys were not allowed into a house in Oxford but could be taken to friends outside or Inns in the country. After a great to do they took the boys to lunch at the Boar's Hill Hotel and on for tea at *Mumham* where the Walter Burns boys had taken some boys. Maxmuller has no appointment yet. He is in better spirits & so is she but reduced to a skeleton. It was very nice having them here. Wanda has grown so demonstrative with me and expresses so much feeling - it is really quite astonishing.

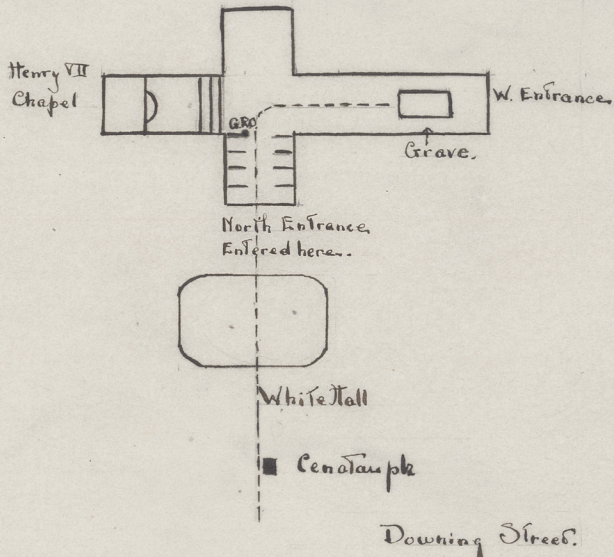
Mumham?

Lately each day seems to have brought many things to do and much writing. I have found quite a number of books missing - not very valuable ones - but an occasional volume out of a set of medical books - & I am hunting them up or replacing. I am trying to get many small manuscripts of Willie's addresses - speeches, etc., ready for binding & with the many interruptions it takes time. Some days I can't settle to it. The Frank Oslers are here until the 18th & then I shall feel I have done my duty by them. I have never known him so nice or seem so well & she treats him like the scum of the earth. Last Friday the Bishop dedicated the Cross at Lynam's. I went - It was a perfect afternoon & so charmingly done. It is near the river in the playing field - designed by the Skipper's father and quite perfect. I send the card.

And now dear sister about today. I hardly know how to write about it, for it seems impossible to say what it really was. It was almost mysterious. Sunday morning I received a card to the Abbey - I had applied but never thought I would get one. Before the notices were out I asked Mary Carnegie* if there would be any distributed from the Deanery & she said no, so I sent my application in the way directed in the papers. Worse luck - Belle was here and was thrown into hysterics nearly because she could not go. I had to go up the day before - to make an early start & could not get in anywhere, so asked Rosy Fay. She took me in and I had a nice cosey time with her. We had our supper by her fire and breakfast in her kitchen. Monday night Mary Carnegie telegraphed me she had a ticket for me so I gave mine to Belle & she went up - but it was a bad place and she says she saw nothing. I had a wonderful place - front row - corner seat by the steps of the altar and everything passed me. Oh - how I longed for you & Marion. The music was heavenly. The choir is always wonderful - Then that gorgeous Guards Band - & their Trombone Corps in Henry VII Chapel responding - & doing the Reveille and Last Post.

I am so happy about Phoebe's boy.
* Formerly Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain.
Friday morning - 12th. 9.30. Your cable & Marion's has just come.
Thanks you darlings - I knew where your thoughts were.

I was at the Abbey at 9 o'clock. The Band played from 10. At 10.45 the choir & clergy entered the altar - then the two minutes' silence. Then they passed to the North Porch and you could hear the procession coming -



bands & pipers - 55 V.C's came in, you will see by the list - The coffin with Union Jack, King's sword & a tin helmet - King alone - three princes - followed by Premier, Cabinet etc., etc. All the Generals, - you really must read it. The King left by West door and then everyone filed by in twos & out the West door. Somehow I did not feel as one felt at the Canadian service - I believe it was because I am paralyzed & shocked & wrecked with sorrow & woe & a selfish feeling to be out of it all. I wired you I had a seat & knew you would understand - Did you? I came out & allowed myself to be moved along towards the Cenotaph, It is

beautiful - wreaths piled high in the street. Two lines of people from Trafalgar Square to the Abbey - marching slowly on - many dropping flowers - men hatless, women often a moment on their knees - thousands of police - and all as wonderful as you remember they can be - & not a sound. Really I wonder what material these British people are made of! one day the King & country are expecting to be overturned - the next the King is marching by himself through the streets behind "An Unknown Warrior's" coffin & the thousands of people doing homage & hardly a dry eye. I nearly screamed because you were not there. I forgot to say that Lady Garrod was staying with friends & called for me in their motor at 8.30 & took me to Victoria Street so I reached the Abbey comfortably. It has been a glorious day. Just a little mist in London with the sun shining through giving the lovely colour in the Abbey - you know -

I came home at 1.35 - Luncheon car on now - Was in the Latin Chapel this afternoon late wondering how much longer & thinking of all our dear soldiers - Oslers, Gwyn, Billy Wright & many more. Thousands of mothers and wives today have thought - perhaps the Unknown Warrior is mine. One could not help thinking that every moment. How thankful I am we know where Billy & Revere are.

That nice Rosey had lovely roses here when I came home today. I think she is a fine character. Good night dears, I am dead beat and must to bed.

Your

Grace.

I am so happy about Phoebe's boy.

Friday morning - 12th. 8.30. Your cable & Marion's has just come. Thanks you darlings - I knew where your thoughts were.