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The Suffragette Movement : An Initmate Account of Persons and Ideals

(London: Longmans, 1931)

Christabel Pankhurst

Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Votes

(London: Hutchinson, 1959)

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THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

AN INTIMATE ACCOUNT OF PERSONS AND IDEALS

BY

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST

NEW INTRODUCTION BY
DR RICHARD PANKHURST

T. 77 D. 1021

Published by Virago Limited 1977
4th Floor, 5 Wardour Street,
London W1V 3HE

First published by the Longman Group Limited 1931
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Printed in Great Britain by litho at The Anchor Press Ltd
and bound by Wm Brendon & Son Ltd, both of Tiptree, Essex

ISBN 0 86068 025 8 Casebound edition
ISBN 0 86068 026 6 Paperback edition

Virago Reprint Library No. 3

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This book has been published with financial assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain

PREFACE

I GRATEFULLY render thanks to all who have assisted me in preparing this book, and especially to Mr. R. G. Longman for his sympathetic understanding of the author's aims and difficulties in a work at once so intimate and so composite.

I have essayed to describe events and experiences as one felt them; to estimate character and intention in the mellowing light of intervening years. My desire has been to introduce the actors in the drama as living beings; to show the striving, suffering, hugely hopeful human entity behind the pageantry, the rhetoric and the turbulence. In this effort I have often been thrown back upon my own experience. I have given it frankly, knowing that I could thus describe with greater poignancy and vigour the general experience of those who cherished and toiled for the same cause and encountered the same ordeals.

No history, whether of movements or of persons, can be truly expressed apart from the social and economic conditions and thought currents of its time. I have endeavoured to convey these not through the medium of statistics or argument, but by incidents in the moving course of life.

The book is largely made up of memories. In the earlier chapters, the key and the basis of those which follow, I have paid tribute to pioneers whose labours made later achievements possible. Their story is dear to me for its tender recollections and for the spirit of earnest public service which animated their work.

The many deeds of devotion and heroism chronicled in the later pages are greatly outnumbered by those I have been compelled, most reluctantly, to omit.

E. Sylvia Pankhurst.

was now declaring that she had wasted her time in the I.L.P. She astonished, by an abrupt refusal to contribute, the good comrade who called for her small annual donation to the Keir Hardie wages fund, the modest £150 a year, voted by the I.L.P. Conference in 1901, to maintain him in Parliament. She declared that she would do no more for Labour representation till women's interests were considered.

She decided that the new organization, which she would form without delay, should be called the Women's Labour Representation Committee; but when Christabel returned from a meeting with Miss Roper and Miss Gore Booth and learnt the name her mother had chosen, she said it must be changed, for her friends had already adopted this title for the organization they were forming amongst the women textile workers. Christabel did not at that time attach any importance to her mother's project; her interest lay with that of her friends. Mrs. Pankhurst was disappointed and distressed that Christabel should insist upon their prior claim to the name she wanted, but she bowed to her decision and selected instead: "The Women's Social and Political Union." It was her intention to conduct social as well as political work; she envisaged the provision of maternity benefit, and other such amenities for the members of the new organization, which at that time she intended should be mainly composed of working women, and politically a women's parallel to the I.L.P., though with primary emphasis on the vote.

On October 10th, 1903, she called to her house at 62 Nelson Street a few of the women members of the I.L.P., and the Women's Social and Political Union was formed. Under its auspices a campaign of resolutions calling for action by the N.A.C. was immediately initiated amongst the I.L.P. branches. It must be admitted that a degree of impatience was evinced, which was somewhat precipitate, following, as it did, on a long period of inaction towards women's suffrage on Mrs. Pankhurst's own part. Christabel, young and impetuous, was scarcely two years old in active suffrage work; the rest of us younger still. As in a family quarrel, bitter reproaches were let fly too readily on both sides of opinion regarding the new activity.

Katharine Bruce Glasier was then editing the *Labour Leader* in Black Friars' Street, Manchester. I called at her office with a W.S.P.U. resolution for which publication was desired. She at once commenced to scold me for the aggressive attitude of our family, declaring that since her daughters had grown up, Mrs. Pankhurst was no longer "sweet and gentle" as of old. I burst into tears at thought of the breach growing up between

old friends, but my weeping only inflamed the annoyance of the irate lady, who by no means realized that she had an advocate for friendship and conciliation in my own breast. I was as anxious as she for the growth of the Labour movement. I saw very clearly that the bulk of the I.L.P. membership was ready to support us, and that it was not in the I.L.P. that either the power or the opposition lay.

Keir Hardie came presently to Manchester. The torrents of W.S.P.U. frenzy were outpoured before him. A bevy of angry women prepared to fight him on every point. He raised no objection to the most impatient of zeal. On the contrary he greeted all this with the keenest sympathy. Votes for women? Of course! The Party must be brought into line, and a big campaign set on foot. A separate women's organization? Excellent! The very thing to provide the necessary spur. A simple one-clause measure to give votes on the same terms as men? Certainly. Give him the necessary data; he would prepare a pamphlet and get the I.L.P. to publish it. Christabel wrote out the facts and arguments. With a few words of his own to preface and conclude the manuscript, he signed it and sent it for printing as it stood. On the N.A.C. he moved at once; a request was sent out to I.L.P. branches to ascertain the proportion which would be regarded as working class amongst the women local Government voters in their area; working-class women being defined as "those who work for wages, who are domestically employed, or who are supported by the earnings of wage-earning relatives." Upwards of forty branches undertook this laborious task, and out of a total of 59,920 women local Government electors canvassed, the working women voters were found to number 82·45 per cent. Here was the evidence which would enable the I.L.P. executive to convince its members that they could press for the enfranchisement of women on the same terms as men without handing an advantage to the propertied classes. Mrs. Pankhurst toured the I.L.P. branches, calling for the adoption of such a Bill; Keir Hardie, wherever he went, urged the same plea. At its Cardiff Conference, Easter, 1904, the I.L.P. elected Mrs. Pankhurst to its executive, which was instructed to secure the introduction to Parliament of a Votes for Women Bill. Keir Hardie arranged for this to be done by Will Crooks. The nucleus of the Parliamentary Labour Party was already in being; a long and stormy struggle to win for Votes for Women a place in its active programme had begun.

Behind all this arose a poignant, human incident: the kind Ellen had married; her husband was chronically unemployed. She had taken to charring, then returned to be our housekeeper,

more, and she came forth shuddering from the greyness and solitude of the cell.

For months I had not seen her. In August the Lawrences invited a crowd of Suffrage and Labour people to a performance of Old English Folk Songs and Dances[1] by the Esperance Girls' Club in the gardens of "The Mascot." Annie Kenney greeted me gaily: "This is *my* home now. Would you like me to take you round the garden? Would you like me to pick you an apple or a pear?" She radiated her joyous satisfaction, a perpetual fountain of smiles and ecstasies. So she passed on to new circles and new experiences, with her thin neck and her golden hair, her twinkling blue eyes, and her mouth gasping as though to drink in every new sensation, her restless, knotted hands tearing her gloves as she dragged them on, reciting the little odd snatches of poetry she was acquiring by the way.

In 1904 Dora B. Montefiore had raised the ancient slogan: "Taxation without representation is tyranny!" and for refusal to pay her income tax had twice suffered a distraint upon her goods. On the W.S.P.U. agreeing to champion her stand, she now barred her doors against the bailiff. Her house, on the Upper Mall, Hammersmith, "Fort Montefiore" as it became known, was surrounded by a high wall with a stoutly-built doorway. The "siege" began on May 24th, 1906, and continued for six weeks. Meetings were held outside, and Theresa Billington was photographed passing a loaf over the wall. Eventually the brokers forced an entry, and a piece of furniture was seized and auctioned.

On June 30th Christabel had taken her LL.B. degree at Victoria University with honours in the first class,[2] a distinction shared with but one other student in that year. She was the only woman law student at the college, and had already obtained the prize for International Law. When she went up to take her degree there was a humorous hostile demonstration by some of the men students, one of whom, as he afterwards confessed to me, was Walton Newbold, later, for a brief period, the first Communist Member of Parliament, or, as he was fond of calling himself in those days, the representative of the Soviet Government and the Third International. That he proceeded soon to repudiate the Russian connection was characteristic.

Her degree taken, Christabel left Manchester to become chief organizer of the W.S.P.U. at a commencing wage of £2 10s. a week. Adela, on her release from prison, had also become a

[1] Collected by Cecil Sharp. Mary Neal was the first to organize their performance through the Esperance Girls' Club.

[2] In 1903 she had matriculated in the second class.

W.S.P.U. organizer. When Mrs. Pankhurst had told the Prime Minister that women were prepared to sacrifice their livelihood for the cause, she spoke with feeling; her waning enthusiasm for Emerson's having snuffed out what meagre degree of prosperity had ever smiled on it, the business was now closed. The quarterly fees of her registrarship were still largely drawn upon for liabilities arising from the defunct Emerson's and the W.S.P.U. Whilst she travelled about on the Votes for Women mission, her sister, Mary Clarke, who was now her deputy in the registrarship, remained at Nelson Street with Harry, keeping house on the proceeds of the daily fees, and doing it somewhat too sparely for the needs of a growing lad. Having been taken from West Heath School, Hampstead, in July, 1906, Harry's future was now the subject of occasional, inconclusive debate. His irregular schooling and poor eyesight rendered it impossible for him to sit for any examination.

The two years of my scholarship were almost at an end. I was facing the world with the last month's payment in my pocket. W.S.P.U. work had been packed into every moment left over from college work, with no spare time to prepare anything which might produce the money for a crust of bread. The teachers in the painting school had advised me to apply for a free studentship to enable me to complete the five years' course and take the diploma, but I would not, for I saw no possibility of supporting myself under those conditions. Where now should I seek for work? Of the firms to which I had previously sold designs, the ill-fated Emerson's had been a customer. I did not wish to visit them now. Moreover I was ill, tormented by neuralgic pains in my arms and hands and around my ribs. I had suggested to Mrs. Pankhurst that I should be relieved of the W.S.P.U. honorary secretaryship some months before in order that I might prepare myself to meet this pass, but she heatedly insisted that I should retain it till Christabel came to London. I did not wish to become a paid worker for the W.S.P.U., nor did Mrs. Pankhurst desire it. She thought it not well for all her family to be on the Union pay-roll. I was emphatically determined to maintain my own independence. The dream of being an artist in the cause of progress still held me. Moreover, in spite of my love for Christabel, I was, even then, not fully in accord with the spirit of her policy, which eventually always swept Mrs. Pankhurst along with it.

In those closing days of the college session, so full of anxiety for me, and those of my fellows, who were also facing a precarious future, I expected a letter from my mother, if only of encouragement. None came. We were no longer a family;

the movement was overshadowing all personal affections. I had written to her regularly every second day in all the years of my absences. Now, my last letter unanswered, I ceased to write at all, except on matters of importance. The world seemed lonely and cold. It was six weeks before any communication passed between us. I was tired to the breaking-point, and it seemed that Mrs. Roe was wondering whether I should be able to pay the rent when I left the college. Suddenly I resolved to resign the honorary secretaryship: in my uncertainty for the future, I could not give my mind to it as before. The growing work of the Union was inevitably drifting more and more towards Clements Inn, where the Pethick Lawrences were already devoting most of their time to it, and into the hands of the paid organizers. Christabel, too, was nearing the end of her college term: she would be coming to London as chief organizer.

The committee was meeting in my room at Park Walk that evening: I wrote a letter of resignation, left it on the table for Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, and took my drawing-board and materials to the rooms of a fellow student. Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Edith How Martyn, B.Sc., a teacher and member of the I.L.P. and already a close friend of Theresa Billington, were at once appointed as joint honorary secretaries in my place. The committee now consisted of the honorary secretaries and the honorary treasurer, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, Annie Kenney, Mary Neal, C. Hodgson, Elizabeth Robins the novelist, and Mary Gawthorpe and Mrs. Martel, who had both become organizers of the Union. Mrs. Pankhurst was greatly annoyed that I had not deferred my resignation till Christabel could be present to preside over the choice of the new honorary secretary. She feared that divided counsels would result from the appointment; her prophecy proved correct. Henceforth the committee meetings were held in the Lawrences' flat at Clements Inn.

I resolved to leave Park Cottage as soon as the last days of the college term had run their course. It was quiet enough there now, for the organizers were in the provinces, but I did not wish to encounter Mrs. Roe or any of them in what might be a stiff struggle with want. I engaged two unfurnished rooms in Cheyne Walk, on the Embankment, next door to the house once occupied by Turner. I was so racked with pain that I took nearly a week to pack my small belongings. Then I hired a lad with a handcart to take my easel, camp-bed, packing-cases of books and paints, and my one little bag of clothes. These, pitched in at random, with the penny-in-the-slot gas meter and a gas ring capable of boiling two small pans, were my only

furniture. I sat among my boxes, ill and lonely, when, all unexpected, Keir Hardie came knocking at my door. With quick discernment and practical kindness, he took command of the situation. He lifted the heavy things into position, and when all was, so far as it could be, in order, took me out for a meal at the little Italian restaurant where Harry and I had lunched on many a happy Sunday. I was immensely cheered, but the immediate future was dark enough. I had 25s. in the world, and my rent was 11s. a week. I cut my expenses to the lowest ebb: Egyptian lentils, and loose cocoa, sold in the King's Road, close by, with the addition of water alone, I selected as convenient and fairly sustaining; bread, milk, eggs, fruit and everything else were discarded as too expensive. After some months, Egyptian lentils became so distasteful that I was unable to swallow them any more. In the meantime they served. But where to look for work? I called at the offices of several magazines. There was always a titter when my name was announced. If the editors consented to see me, they assumed that I wanted to write about Votes for Women, and at that time they were unwilling to give much space to the subject, still less to pay for it. They seemed unable to switch on to the idea that I might be able to do other work. I called at the Bodley Head with some sketches for illustrating an old favourite, "The Open Air" of Richard Jefferies. I saw John Lane; he was exceedingly kind, but reminded me that the copyright of the work had not yet expired. He told me the publisher who held it, and even looked up the address for me to go there at once, but I was too crestfallen at the thought that I had expended my slender resources on a work that must stand or fall by the decision of one publisher, to put its fortune to the test. I thrust the sketches in a drawer. When I was almost at the end of my pence, Keir Hardie got me a commission for a couple of illuminated addresses. Later I wrote a series of articles for the *Whitehall Review*, and got other odds and ends of work which kept me going. Sometimes I made designs for the W.S.P.U. One of these was a banner, depicting Woman as Mother and Worker, which was unveiled at the Portman Rooms in 1908, and the cartoon for which was placed over the W.S.P.U. literature stall at the Hungarian Exhibition at Earl's Court that year. A stall at such an exhibition was regarded as a new and very enterprising departure for a suffrage society in those days. One of the most popular W.S.P.U. productions was the brooch presented by the Union to its released prisoners, a miniature portcullis, bearing the broad arrow in purple, white and green. I had forgotten that it was my own idea and design, till the fact was recalled to me in turning over the files of *Votes*

CHAPTER V

CLEMENTS INN

ON taking up her work as organizer of the W.S.P.U., Christabel had hastened immediately to a by-election at Cockermouth, which polled on August 3rd. She was joined by several other women speakers, all members of the I.L.P. There were three candidates: Liberal, Conservative and Labour, but it was made clear that the W.S.P.U. was in the field purely to attack the Liberal. Christabel was most pointed in emphasizing to the electors that she cared not a straw whether they voted Tory or Labour. Coming from I.L.P. women, these tactics were a shock to the Labour Party. George N. Barnes, of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, one of the Labour Members hitherto most friendly to us, was the first to display his consternation. I was on the terrace of the House of Commons with Keir Hardie one day during the election; Barnes approached us with the words: "Cockermouth! I hear the women are independent!" Keir Hardie said "Yes" in a way he had which precluded further discussion, but that was by no means to be the last of the controversy.

From Cockermouth Christabel came to London to open a campaign in the constituency of John Burns, in Battersea. As the assumed special representative of Labour and democracy in the Government, he was selected for attack by way of exposing the hollowness of the Government's professions, since it would not practise them towards women. Pavement chalking announced the meetings; in the dinner hour at works gates, in the afternoon and evening at street corners. A big muffin bell was rung to summon the crowd. The people soon knew what it meant, and shouted in delight: "The Suffragettes! Come along!" To Christabel these campaigns seemed as the very wine of life. With what eagerness she would mount the chair and the platform and begin: "Now I'm going to tell you about our tactics!" She saturated her mind with politics. From the daily Press, assiduously studied as the first business of every day, from the memoirs and writings of prominent politicians, and the standard works on Parliament and the Constitution, she drew the material for her speeches. Street corner audiences heard from her a keen and ruthless analysis of the Government's latest proposals in home and foreign affairs, enlivened by saucy quips and scathing denuncia-

tion. It was all destructive; but how much easier to win applause by destructive condemnation than for any constructive scheme, however brilliant, however beneficent! That she was slender, young, with the flawless colouring of a briar rose, and an easy grace cultivated by her enthusiastic practice of the dance, were delicious embellishments to the sterner features of her discourse. Yet the real secret of her attraction was her audacity, fluent in its assurance, confidently gay. "Queen of the mob," J. J. Mallon named her. "Lively arabesques," Max Beerbohm called her gestures. "An enthusiast" in the *Daily Mail* wrote of her during the Peckham by-election:

"Her questioners are for the most part earthenware, and this bit of porcelain does them in the eye, quaintly, daintily, intellectually, glibly. Look to it, Mr. Gautry, or the witchery of Christabel will do you in the eye."

Elizabeth Robins, the novelist, fell in love with her, and with the movement. The result was her drama: "Votes for Women," first produced at the Court Theatre on April 4th, 1907, and her novel *The Convert*, developed from the same theme. Christabel had the admiration of a multitude; hundreds, perhaps thousands of young women adored her to distraction, and longed to be and to do likewise. For the next six years her life was crammed with occupation and incident. Speaking, writing and being interviewed, thinking out plans and tactics, and organizing their performance. To those who had known the lethargic Christabel in the days of Emerson's, and remembered the schoolgirl who could always have done much better if she would, her activity was a marvel. For a time she even managed to fit in a course of dancing lessons by way of recreation. Her physical welfare was meanwhile watched over by Emmeline Pethick Lawrence with the solicitude of a mother. For years she lived as the guest of the Lawrences at Clements Inn, and every week-end which could be snatched from meetings she spent with them at Holmwood. They took her abroad at every holiday.

Mrs. Pankhurst upheld her as an oracle, the Pethick Lawrences lauded her political genius to all comers. As for me, I detested her incipient Toryism; I was wounded by her frequent ruthless casting out of trusty friends for a mere hair's-breadth difference of view; I often considered her policy mistaken, either in conception or in application; but her speaking always delighted me; her gestures, her tones, her crisply-phrased audacity. I admired her, and took pleasure in her, as I had done when we were children together in Russell Square. I avoided crossing swords with her; for six years I refrained from dissent from her decisions, in word or deed. I could not have done this so

consistently were it not that I regarded myself as one who had come into active political life only as a sacrifice to the urgency of the need, departing from the path I had marked out for myself, and to which it was then my intention to return. There came a time when I could efface my desire for the development of another policy no longer; but this was not yet.

In October, 1906, the W.S.P.U. opened offices in Clements Inn; at first there were but two rooms: the large general office and Christabel's room. Emmeline Lawrence worked in her own flat upstairs. Frederick Lawrence had his editorial office for the *Labour Record* in the same building. In 1906 he became business manager of the W.S.P.U. When Mrs. Lawrence became the treasurer the accounts of the Union were placed under professional supervision; first under the honorary auditorship of A. G. Sayers, Chartered Accountant. As the income rapidly increased, the auditing was taken over, on a business basis, by the firm of Sayers & Wesson. The Government prosecutor in the conspiracy trial of 1912 testified to the fact that the accounts of the W.S.P.U. were kept with the precision of a first-class business concern. Lawrence was meticulous in matters of detail and economy, conservative in assuring a surplus to meet all contingencies; but he had large conceptions of equipment and advertisement, which would have done credit to a general of "Big Business." He was a rigid disciplinarian, demanding accuracy and attention from all who worked under him; but he never made the mistake of placing new burdens on a staff already working to the limit of efficiency, nor did he attempt to make the shilling do the work of the pound. For each large additional venture he insisted upon new offices and a new staff; and Emmeline Lawrence, with her remarkable capacity as a treasurer, coupled with the great enthusiasm engendered by the militant tactics, was always able to call up from sympathizers with the movement such money as might be required. "Our treasurer," Christabel once declared, "excites the envy of the entire political world." Of a certainty every other organization in the country wondered at the income of the W.S.P.U. It rose with increasing momentum; reaching £3,000 in 1906-7, £7,000 in 1907-8, £20,000 in 1908-9, £32,000 in 1909-10. Then there came a truce for nine months; the income decreased somewhat, but was still enormous, being £29,000 in 1910-11. Actually the donations had risen to £23,668 16s. 8d. from £18,057 8s. 10d. in the previous year; it was the income from other sources which had dropped. In 1911-12 another truce again resulted in a certain reduction of income, which nevertheless reached the large total of £25,494 17s. 9d., the donations amounting to £19,844 5s. 3d. The years 1912-13 and 1913-14

showed another great increase, reaching £28,502 9s. 6d. and £36,896 6s. 4d., but by this time the finances were under other auspices and another policy. By the end of 1907 the Union already occupied thirteen rooms in Clements Inn, and by the end of 1909 it had spread into twenty-one rooms. In 1910 the literature department was transferred to a shop in Charing Cross Road, other departments taking up the space it had vacated at Clements Inn, the offices in both buildings now comprising thirty-seven rooms. The salaried officials at this time numbered one hundred and ten, the greater part of the propaganda being done by volunteers. All the larger meetings were made a source of income.

In 1907-8 upwards of five thousand meetings were organized, including the first women's suffrage meeting ever held in the great Albert Hall. When the offices at Clements Inn were first opened, weekly "At Homes" were held there on Monday afternoons. In February, 1908, these meetings were transferred to the small Portman Rooms in Baker Street, and a fortnight later to the large Portman Rooms. In July of the same year a move was made to the large Queen's Hall, which was frequently filled to its utmost capacity. Literature sales rose from £60 in 1906 to £9,000 in 1910. In October, 1907, the Pethick Lawrences founded the paper *Votes for Women* and handed it over to the Union in the following year, at which time the cost of its production was covered by advertisements and sales. In 1909-10 the paper reached the zenith of its circulation, having risen in that year from 16,000 copies weekly to nearly 40,000. After this the circulation declined, from causes which will be enumerated later. It was too exclusively a one-subject propaganda organ to command the large circulation which the great efforts made to promote it, and the extensive scale of other W.S.P.U. activities might suggest. Moreover the Union, with an income and central offices far exceeding those at the disposal of the Labour Party, for instance, was a creation of rapid growth under burning enthusiasm. It had not the multitude of local organizations which may under favourable conditions be developed in a lengthy period of growth by a movement like Trade Unionism. The W.S.P.U. effort was not so much to form branches as to create an impression upon the public throughout the country, to set everyone talking about Votes for Women, to keep the subject in the Press, to leave the Government no peace from it. In these objects phenomenal success was achieved. Organizers were holding campaigns, individual volunteers working in districts where no branches existed; indeed the movement was much more largely one of individuals working directly under the headquarters, than of

branches. By the end of 1911 there were thirty-six local W.S.P.U.'s in London, ten of which had their own shops, and twenty-eight centres in the Home Counties. Here, drawing its inspiration largely from headquarters, was the greatest concentration of the Union; in the rest of England, Wales and Scotland were seventeen shops and fifty-eight centres, some of them very strong and active.

In the early days the office "At Homes" were informal gatherings of enthusiasts. Christabel, a slight figure in green with rosy, engaging smiles, mounted a chair, a sheaf of letters and cuttings in her hand, to give the news of the week. Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, a newly released prisoner, an organizer from the provinces, a visitor from overseas, would take up the tale. Old Mrs. Sparborough would bring round the tea, with a wealth of quaint stories and old saws: "Gin was made of junipers and beer of hops once upon a time; now they are made to make men thirsty!" In less than two years all this had been replaced by the impressive weekly gatherings in the large Queen's Hall, which no other organization of men or women in the country attempted to fill save as an occasional rare event. The staff, in the main, had been members and enthusiasts before coming to the office. Miss Kerr, the office manager, eminently methodical and correct, had been running her own typewriting office. She was the daughter of an architect, of whom she had forgotten all save his acerbity, the memory of which, reaching down from her youth, had predisposed her to be a Suffragette. The chief bookkeeper, good-humoured, business-like Beatrice Sanders, was an I.L.P. member, wife of William Sanders of the Fabian Society. Mary Home kept newspaper cuttings and research material, a pale young woman, with a hare lip, leading a repressed life as the only daughter of an Indian army doctor knighted and retired to Kensington in his old age. Learned young Æta Lamb, a frail orphan, born in Demerara, flitted about like a disembodied spirit, for her paleness and her shyness seldom appreciated at her worth. A steady secretary kept in order the engagements of the fly-about Flora Drummond. Jessie, the youngest of the irrepressible Kenneys, was generally engaged on matters affecting militancy. She was as eager in manner as her sister Annie, with more system and less pathos, and without any gift of platform speech. There were hosts of casual volunteers who came in to address envelopes and wrappers for a few odd hours, the plague of good Miss Kerr, who found it well-nigh impossible to impose upon them her excellent order, and to prevent a distracting babel of talk and laughter arising from their tables. Amongst the younger element, always at the office when their work was done, was young Jessie

Spink, a shop assistant, who wore Christabel's portrait on her chest, and eventually changed her name to Vera Wentworth, becoming an organizer with ambitions towards novel writing and the university. There was Vera Holme, an orphan educated in a French convent, and now singing in the chorus of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, who presently became chauffeur to the W.S.P.U., a noisy, explosive young person, frequently rebuked by her elders for lack of dignity. As the staff rapidly grew, the casual volunteers were eliminated from the office. There was work outside for them, paper selling, poster parading, pavement chalking, militant action of various sorts.

Since the days of the first Caxton Hall meeting women of all ages and classes, but especially of the middle class, had been flocking into the W.S.P.U., drawn by the magnet of the militant tactics and the gigantic publicity they achieved. There was a great stirring of the social conscience. The swing of the electoral pendulum from Tory to Liberal and the birth of the Parliamentary Labour Party, had taken place amid a long-continued fire of propaganda, in which the searchlight of publicity had been turned upon the evils of overcrowding, jerry-building and rack-renting, of overwork and under-payment, of dangerous and ill-regulated trades, the hardships of unemployment, the hideous insecurity of the wage worker in the face of illness and old age, the cruel insufficiency of the Poor Law. In the spring of 1906 the *Daily News* held a sweated industries exhibition in the Queen's Hall, where women out-workers, many of them mothers with babies at the breast, were seen making garments, shoes, flowers, boxes and so on, aided at times by their tiny children, at rates so low, and under conditions so miserable, as to awaken horror in the public mind. Statistics of women's wages in other industries were published. The women's Trade Union movement was rising; strikes broke out; from every side came evidence of grievous under-payment of women workers, and of the appalling miseries of widows, and the wives of invalid and unemployed men. Tragic cases of poor women, which in other days might have passed unnoticed, were seized upon to point the moral of woman's inferior social status: Daisy Lord, the young servant sentenced to death for infanticide; Margaret Murphy, the flower-seller, who, after incredible hardships, attempted to poison herself and her ailing youngest child, when she lost the purse containing the scanty proceeds of her sales at the Derby; Julia Decies, committed to seven years' penal servitude for throwing vitriol at the man who had betrayed and deserted her; Sarah Savage, imprisoned on the charge of cruelty to her children for whom she had done all that her miserable poverty

her history, a deputation of women, a hundred and fifty strong, went to the Chamber of Deputies to demand the vote.

On December 23rd a Liberal Parliamentary Committee for Women's Suffrage was formed, the all-party committee established at the beginning of the session being allowed to lapse.

Shortly after my release from prison that autumn, Mrs. Lawrence wrote asking me to go to her for a fortnight in Italy. Again I saw those fair scenes under the splendid sun: Verona, lovely among the plains; Venice, of ancient splendours; Torcello, mysterious jewel of the lagoon. During our halt on the shores of Lago Maggiore I would be off, while the others were asleep, by winding paths to some tiny terraced village, where, setting down my stool, I would make sketches of the men, women and children eagerly waiting their turn, and would cease from work only when the brief violet twilight presaged swift darkness. That care-free life from which I had turned aside allured and delighted me as of old. In Milan I went with Mrs. Lawrence to ask the Conte X for a permit to visit the women's prison. He gave it with cordiality. The prison surprised us. It seemed bright and homely after the machine-like grimness of Holloway. The cells were large rooms with casement windows, like those of an ordinary dwelling, which the inmates could open and shut at will, though there were bars outside. The furniture was that of an ordinary, plain room, the dress like that of the peasants at large. The exercise ground seemed a relic of earlier barbarism, each prisoner in a separate little yard, a soldier with his gun on guard high up in the centre.

In Venice we met the famous Scandinavian writer, Ellen Key. She told us that the twentieth century would be the century of the child. She seemed uninterested in Votes for Women. I hurried with eager steps to the old apartment in the Calle dell' Arco, but found it deserted—the Englishwoman and the Countess were away.

CHAPTER VII

THE BREAK WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

TIME often makes nonsense of political prophecy. The Suffragette leaders inherited from the older movement the theory upon which they never wearied of insisting, that Votes for Women must be brought in as a separate Government measure, and that any attempt to deal with it in connection with an Adult Suffrage Reform Bill would end in manhood suffrage alone.[1] Never were prophets more confident, yet never were predictions more completely falsified by events, and never did Time more convincingly reveal that the effort, the earnestness and the sacrifice had been fruitful; the vaunted political prescience mere trumpery, to be torn to tatters by the realities of events. If the Suffragettes had never intervened in the elections, if they had gone there to oppose all Parties, or no Parties, given the determination of women to go to prison to advance their cause, the movement would have grown and flourished.

The severance from the Labour Party had all the bitterness and heart-break of a family quarrel. Keir Hardie cherished both movements; to him they were but phases of the same cause; but the militants were impatient, the Labour Party slow and amorphous, a mere agglomeration of Trade Unions groping towards a common policy. To Keir Hardie militancy was a divine fire; to Macdonald disreputable "antics." He had no desire to retain these termagants in the Labour movement; to his temperament it appeared that association with the W.S.P.U. must be at the expense of votes in the constituencies. Moreover his ideal of independence for the Labour Party, under the conditions then existing, was a peaceable accommodation with the Liberals whom these harridans, as he thought them, were attacking with unexampled virulence. The dislike which Macdonald had for the militants was abundantly returned by them, above all by Christabel, who regarded all Socialists, Labourists and Liberals as arrant humbugs unless they were prepared to place Votes for Women before all other issues. Like Lydia Becker before her, she considered that all other reforms should be held up till women could participate in their enactment. Very early she based her hope and her policy on the speedy return of a Conservative Government. As Macdonald was apprehensive of losing supporters by association with the militants, so she feared that even a trace of alliance with

[1] Christabel Pankhurst in the *Labour Record*, February, 1907.

the Labour movement might weaken the W.S.P.U. Moreover she could not brook a divided allegiance; she wanted to build up a body of women caring for no public question save the vote, interested in no party or organization save the W.S.P.U.

The attitude of Keir Hardie was wholly different; he wanted the Labour Party to work for Votes for Women because the cause was just, entertaining no ulterior motive. In face of principle, he never counted votes, or feared that one good cause would hurt another. He stood for humanity and progress, his ardour knowing no closed compartments.

The view of Macdonald towards militancy was that of a large section of the Labour Party officialdom. Moreover the Labour Party had come into being on economic issues; Mrs. Pankhurst herself, as a propagandist in the Labour and Socialist movement, had for many years almost laid Votes for Women propaganda aside. From its inception the Labour movement had accepted the principle of sex equality, and given verbal assent to womanhood suffrage. As a question for immediate political pressure by the Labour Party the suffrage had but lately been mooted, and scarcely even yet on a national scale. To make it a foremost plank in the active Party programme, an extensive work must be done in the branches, to move the officials. The main obstacle to be overcome within the Labour movement was the Adult Suffrage controversy. The militants insisted upon support for a limited Bill which, though technically it would establish political sex equality, would enfranchise only one woman in thirteen; the Labour Party stood, and characteristically must stand, for Adult Suffrage. The argument: "Oh yes, we shall get women admitted first, and then we shall go on together for adult suffrage," was too narrow, too tactical, for popular appeal; it might convince, but it did not enthuse; it had constantly to be re-stated and re-argued. Adult Suffrage was the main refuge of those who did not care for Votes for Women and disliked the militant tactics. The active and advanced minority of the Party, which did the main share of the Party's work throughout the country, was virtually united behind Keir Hardie for Votes for Women at any price. Therein lay the pity of the quarrel. Yet whatever the Labour Party might desire to do, when it came to a question of sheer political weight against the Government, it was, as yet, too small to be powerful; it might, and did, unseat a Government candidate here and there, but in the Commons it was the Irish Party which was able to hold the Government to ransom; with Irish support the Liberals could maintain office even though Labour Members should vote against them. This fact dominated the entire pre-war history of the Parliamentary Labour Party, on

this and every other issue. It produced discouragement and divided councils within the Parliamentary Party, and criticism and discontent in the Labour movement at large.

The W.S.P.U. anti-government policy was much advertised as the policy of Josephine Butler in her fight against the C.D. Acts and of the Irish under Parnell. Towards the Labour Party it was provocative. Initiated by women who were members of the I.L.P., a constituent section of the Labour Party; by women, moreover, who appealed to Labour men and women and to Labour branches for support, it went to the electors saying: Give your vote against the Government; we care not whether you give it to the Tory or Labour candidate. It was made clear that whilst complete devotion to Votes for Women was demanded of the Labour Party, no support for the Labour Party would result, since the W.S.P.U. was pledged not to support the candidates of any Party. Persuasive speakers and canvassers were withdrawn from active work for Labour candidates, in order to pursue this new policy—a serious matter to a struggling movement to which every volunteer was an important asset.

The policy was resolved on already before the General Election of 1905-6 had brought twenty-nine L.R.C. members to Parliament; at a time, indeed, when Will Crooks and Keir Hardie had introduced the Women's Enfranchisement Bill on behalf of the handful of Labour Members who had been returned at recent by-elections. The policy was put into combatant practice, with all its bristling provocations, in the first session of the Labour Party's existence. It is true that Votes for Women had not been placed in the active Parliamentary programme of the Party that first session, but the W.S.P.U. demand had come at the eleventh hour. In spite of its ostentatious neutrality towards Labour candidates, there was at the time great support for the W.S.P.U. in the Labour Party, and above all in the I.L.P. Labour and Socialist branches gave W.S.P.U. organizers active assistance, their platforms were open to its speakers. Throughout the long struggle and its acrid denunciations this friendly spirit still in large measure remained.

The Pethick Lawrences, on joining the W.S.P.U., regarded it still as a part of the Labour movement. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence wrote in the *Labour Record*:

"The women of the Labour Party are at one with the men in their determination to hasten the day when every adult citizen in the country shall have the right to vote. Before that day comes, the bar of sex disqualification must be swept away. . . . This is a people's movement. It is the awakening of the working women of this country to their need to representation."

There were tendencies in the early days of the W.S.P.U. towards the adoption of other objects than the franchise alone; indeed towards a general assistance to reform movements. In May, 1906, on the motion of Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, the Central London Committee of the W.S.P.U. sent a resolution to the Government calling for a commission of inquiry into the unrest amongst native races in Natal. On May 14th the Glasgow branch of the Union attempted to interview the President of the Local Government Board on behalf of the unemployed, and sent him a resolution supporting the then demand of the Labour Party that unemployment should take precedence of all other questions during that session of Parliament. The demand for a Government measure for women's enfranchisement followed. In the summer and autumn of 1906 Adela Pankhurst, organizing for the W.S.P.U. in Yorkshire, mustered the local members in support of the textile strikers at Daubhill and Hebden Bridge, and two members of the W.S.P.U. were actually summoned as strike pickets; articles by Adela on these campaigns appeared in the *Labour Record*. All this was totally at variance with the policy of Christabel. She desired absolute and vigorous concentration on the vote, and on that alone; her persistent effort was directed to eradicate from the W.S.P.U. all other interests.

When the Cockermouth election revealed that the W.S.P.U. had determined upon a policy of election work without support of Labour candidates, the Manchester Central Branch, of which Christabel and Theresa Billington were members, had discussed their conduct. Not desiring yet to make a complete severance with the I.L.P., Christabel appeared to defend her policy in person. The branch capitulated to her arguments, and declared her policy "not inconsistent" with the constitution of the Party, thus countenancing a degree of personal independence in its members which Christabel herself, the most rigid of disciplinarians, would not have tolerated for an instant had the positions been reversed. This branch decision did not settle the question in the Party. Resentment was intensified by the Huddersfield by-election, where Annie Cobden Sanderson and the other released prisoners, all members of the I.L.P., drew the audiences from the candidates, and where, though the Liberal majority was lowered, the Labour vote was also reduced, the Unionist being the only apparent gainer.

Already a move had been made to counter the activities of the W.S.P.U. Margaret Macdonald had taken the lead in forming the Women's Labour League, which held its preliminary conference on June 21st, 1906. Keir Hardie opposed the formation of this body. He saw in it a rival to the W.S.P.U., moreover he

wanted the women to be in the Labour Party and the Socialist societies on equal terms with men. He did not wish them relegated to a special section outside the main current of the movement, expected to help the Labour Party in elections, but powerless to control its policy. He approved the W.S.P.U. as a fighting body, created for obtaining the vote, and to raise the status of women. To such objections Mrs. Macdonald replied: "I was glad that we in the Labour Party had not separate women's organizations like the other Parties—but now that some people are running off and forming them, I think we should do the same." At an I.L.P. baby-naming ceremony about that time, the child's mother asked Keir Hardie to place the badge of the League on her baby's breast. He turned to me and asked for a W.S.P.U. badge to place beside it.

Another effort to counteract the W.S.P.U. influence was the formation of the Adult Suffrage League, with which Margaret Bondfield and Arthur Henderson were associated. Had this organization worked for Adult Suffrage, it might have performed a most useful function; but it did not. Keir Hardie wrote of it in the *Labour Leader*:

> "It holds no meetings, issues no literature, carries on no agitation on behalf of Adult Suffrage. It is never heard of, save when it emerges to oppose the Women's Enfranchisement Bill. Its policy is that of the dog in the manger."

In certain Labour quarters there was bitter resentment at Keir Hardie's open support of the W.S.P.U., and at the great prominence he gave to Votes for Women itself. From the first announcement of the Government Bill to abolish Plural Voting, he had opposed the measure, on the ground that when any change should be made in the franchise, women must be included. No other Labour Member as yet adopted this view; all the others supported the Plural Voting Bill as a step in the right direction. When the measure reached the Report stage Keir Hardie joined with the high Tory, Lord Robert Cecil, in an amendment postponing the operation of the Plural Voting Bill until the General Election following the enactment of Votes for Women on the same terms as men. In support of this amendment only one Member of the Labour Party followed its leader into the Aye Lobby, this single Member stating that he had done so only because he had not the heart to leave "Old Keir" to vote alone.

In spite of all this controversy it had been announced in October, 1906, that the Labour Party would put Women's Enfranchisement amongst the measures it would ballot for in the coming session. At the Labour Party Conference at Belfast in January, 1907, the strife was renewed. Christabel, with her

CHAPTER VI

HARRY

CERTAINLY there was no peace for me at Penshurst, or for anyone else who had touch or sympathy with the militant movement. Keir Hardie came down to see me. He told me that the thought of forcible feeding was making him ill. The levity in the House had surprised and saddened him. "I cannot stay here if it continues," I told him. "I shall have to go to prison to stand by the others." "Of what use to make one more?" he asked me ruefully. "Finish what you are working on at least!" So I resolved. Then a great blow fell.

I returned from my work in the little wood, with my canvas on my back, to find a telegram announcing that my brother had been brought to London, seriously ill. I found him at the nursing home in Pembridge Gardens, completely paralysed from the waist downwards, and suffering intolerable agony. He had been obliged to cease work and return to bed the previous day, and had waked in the morning to find himself unable to move. The people with whom he lodged had sent to Mrs. Maclachlan, a member of the W.S.P.U., who lived near, with the message: "Mr. Pankhurst is dying." She had brought him in her car to the nursing home. He had contracted that terrible and obscure disease, known as infantile paralysis, which sometimes occurs in adults, and in which the grey matter of the spinal cord is the seat of acute inflammation; and destruction, more or less great, occurs in the spinal motor nerve path to the muscles. We could only wait till the inflammation had abated to know how far the lesions extended, and whether there could be any hope that he might regain the use of his limbs.

Mrs. Pankhurst was to sail in a few days' time for a lecture tour to America. So ruthless was the inner call to action, that, finding her son thus stricken, she persevered with her intention. It must be added that she would thereby have the opportunity of earning money which might be needed for her boy, but there was never a moment of doubt as to where she should be substituted—on the platform or by the bedside of her son. The movement was paramount. She left us two together, not knowing what might be his fate.

Each day Dr. Mills tested the boy's progress. He lay there

extended in his nudity, proportioned like the ancient Greeks, lovely as an image of the young Adonis, showing no trace of illness, save only in his clear, smooth pallor. "A beautiful boy," the doctor murmured in shocked distress each day as he left his room. Gradually he recovered the power to move his toes; then that, too, ebbed away. He could raise himself with his arms by a pulley above his head; that was all; pain he felt in all acuteness, but all movement from the waist downward was destroyed for ever.

In his long, sleepless nights of agony he often asked me: "Shall I be able to walk again?" I lied to him faithfully: "Yes, yes." Then, later, when weeks had passed, learning a desperate cunning, I added, as though this were the whole, unpleasant truth I had wished to keep from his knowledge: "You must not be impatient; it will be rather long." Soon I should have to tell his mother that he would never be able even to sit up unaided; to tell her and to warn her: "He must not know it; he is not strong enough to bear it yet."

She returned to learn the truth my letters had not disclosed to her. "He would be better dead!" she cried in startled consternation. "No, no!" I urged her. "His mind is active; he will occupy himself; he will be happy." Together we pledged ourselves to do what remained for his welfare. I was to stay with him, and when he was strong enough I should continue my work, helping him to find interests he could pursue, thus stricken as he was. A youth with his powers in the bud, though prostrate of limb, he would compensate in mind; his kind philosophy would defy despair; desperately I willed it; it must, it should be so.

Friends of the movement, going to India for a year, generously placed at our disposal their house and studio, and their servants. Convalescent now, Harry was to be moved there next day. Then suddenly he was less well. The move was postponed. Dr. Mills met me with clouded face. The bladder trouble of last year had recurred. Steadily it gained on him, bringing its toll of wearing agony. Consultants were called in; they gave no hope. Recovery was impossible; he might live perhaps three weeks.

In those long nights of pain and fever, delirious or alert, he talked to me of his childhood; his father's death; the shock to the little son to see dear Father's face so changed when they carried him to his bedside on that last day. He told of his hard life down at Mayland. The superintendent thought him a "muff," and treated him with a rough contempt. He had striven to prove his grit: toiled at hard tasks, endured the

bitterest cold. Once it had been his lot to gather a crop of turnips into sacks, and carry them on his back to the gate of the field, in readiness for the cart which would come hastening to take them to the train with barely the time to load. He had filled the sacks and sewn them up before he realized they were too heavy for him to shoulder. He feared to delay by undoing them to reduce their contents, shrank from the bitter reception awaiting him should he fail. Staggering and straining, almost exhausted, he managed at last to get them to the gate at the appointed hour. Even now he groaned in agitation at those memories, as though battling again with those hard conditions. He described, whilst I hid my face and set my teeth to hide my sorrow, the sordid poverty of his lodging; the degenerate husband, the crushed and weary wife, whom the lad in his gentle kindness had tried to help, the ill-nourished children, the animals woefully neglected. One night, as he had lain in bed there, he heard a strange bleating. He went outside and found the goat had given birth to her young in the snow. He spoke of it with a cry in his voice. Deeply shocked, and moved by the mystery of new life in this harsh adversity, he opened the shed and made a bed for her. Suffering continual distress for the poor creatures at his lodging, his own hardships were increased by his sensitive reserve. "Oh, Harry, it was too much for you!" "Don't cry, dear; it has made a man of me." His arm was round me. "It has killed you, my darling boy!" Oh bitter, unspoken thought!

One night when the pain seemed to be crushing him down, as he told me later, he confided to me his love for "Helen." He had arrived in Manchester for the by-election in April of the previous year. The Suffragette committee rooms were in darkness. "Is Mrs. Drummond here?" he questioned. A voice which made him tremble answered he knew not what. He was in love. . . .

When she appeared to his sight he saw she was of his own age, fair and tall, with a bright little face, well poised on a graciously curved throat. He regarded her as the most adorable of beings. Driving the Suffragette four-in-hand at the election, he always contrived a place for her beside him. What days of bliss! But when the election was over she returned to her boarding school at Brighton. He had written to her and received an answer; and once he had gone down there and spent the night on the cliffs, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. He had seen her for an instant, as she passed by in a troop of girls. Her parents were wealthy, he had been told, and now, more than ever, so sorely stricken, he despaired of ever

being able to reach her. I soothed him to rest, determined to bring her to him.

Next morning I telegraphed to Mrs. May. She came, ugly as an old toad, but human and understanding. Did she know who the girl was? Could she find her? In an hour Helen was with me. I begged her: "Think of him as your young brother. Tell him you love him; he has only three weeks to live." Gallantly she played her part, if part it were. To me, who watched them with anxious absorption, her constant tenderness was very real. All day she sat with him, and at night slept on a sofa to be near the telephone, lest I should summon her. I never did so, but always she was prepared.

Great joy transfigured him, endowing him with extraordinary fortitude; for several days he firmly refused to permit the injection of anodynes, having conceived the idea that they would undermine his character, and render him unworthy of his love. It was with difficulty that Dr. Mills overcame his determination, and only by persuading him that his character would be unharmed. His transcendent happiness comforted the poignancy of my sorrow; he had reached the highest pinnacle of joy. His illness enclosed those two young creatures within a haven of dream; the hard realities of life were shut away. They planned a delightful convalescence; they would go to Venice and take me with them. "Dear Sylvia," they were very kind to her; they called her to sit beside them and share their happiness. She was content; life has no greater gift than this, she told herself. He has achieved the highest point of being: life cannot long endure thus perfect, thus unclouded.

His mother was not glad of his love; she reproached me for having acted without waiting to consult her. This girl, she repined, was taking from her the last of her son.

One night in delirium, or in dream, he imagined that Helen had been stolen away and imprisoned by her father on his account. He cried out in a man's angry tones against himself: "That young scoundrel!" Then clinging to me in misery, with unseeing eyes, bewailed her loss, piteously moaning: "Little Helen . . . little Helen . . . just a few of us . . ." In vain I told him it was a dream, assuring him she would return to-morrow; he did not hear me. Together we wrestled with his loss till he fell back exhausted. Returning day effaced all memory of his dream, renewed his confidence and joy.

Although the doctors declared his malady increasing, and precluded hope, not one of us could believe this radiant boy was dying. We said it with our lips; our minds refused to know it, until those final days, when all his frame was racked with

torture, and only the stifling aid of drugs enabled him to drift into unconsciousness. The end came in the new year—lightly at last, with one small, stifled gasp, as though to wake. . . .

In those sad and yet precious months of illness his life from childhood passed before me in his talk; his gentle, loyal character, unsullied by flaw or smirch, revealing itself with limpid clearness. Reserve and shyness fell from him; his mind gained in maturity. As though subconscious memories were at work, his gestures and phrases strangely recalled his father. Ever more closely he twined himself about my heart; my life seemed merged in his.

When the great blank fell, some remnants of his glory clung about me.

. . . .

His mother was broken as I had never seen her; huddled together without a care for her appearance, she seemed an old, plain, cheerless woman. Her utter dejection moved me more than her vanished charm. We rode that sad way in the funeral coaches, stricken with regret—regret that we had not saved our boy. I saw him, beautiful, gentle; little forgotten incidents forcing their way into my mind of the toddler with flaxen hair, the eager child watching the trains, the schoolboy meeting me on his holidays, the youth with his dreams. We stood in our hopeless impotence beside the grave. The sods fell down. We parted in the misery of our regret.

Before Mrs. Pankhurst left London she asked me to arrange for a headstone, for she and the Doctor had never been able to bend themselves to the sad task of placing a stone over their first little son. "Choose something you like," she said; then with insistent passion: "Sylvia, remember, when my time comes, I want to be put with my two boys!"

"Blessed are the pure in heart," were the words I chose to be written over them—for that sweet purity and gentleness was all they had.

. . . .

After our great bereavements life seems grey. I went to the little cottage on Cinder Hill; gathered the paintings and the writings, with all their interest gone; collected my little furniture from the rooms on the Embankment, which Aunt Mary had taken over for a time; and found myself a studio in Linden Gardens, close to the nursing home; and there endeavoured to gather up the broken threads of my life. "Let me still come to see you!" Helen said. "No, dear girl, you must forget; go; and be happy, or I shall blame myself that I have cast a shadow over your future."

Later Harry's small belongings were sent to me. Amongst them I found some little slips of vellum on which he had written:

"I saw thee, beloved,
And having seen, shall ever see,
I as a Greek, and thou,
O Helen, within the walls of Troy.
Tell me, is there no weak spot
In this great wall by which
I could come to thee, beloved?"

last, a hospital cell, as I knew by the sound of babies crying, and the iron bedstead in place of the plank, I climbed to the window and called out loudly: "Are there any Suffragettes here?" There was no response. I tapped the walls on either side, as prisoners do; still no one answered. My companions had evidently been taken to another part of the prison. I was sorry for that: I wanted the others near me to aid them in their struggle.

Rule 243A being in force, we were exempt from the search and permitted to wear our own clothes. Writing materials were not allowed, but I was well supplied with paper and pencils; I wore a bag of them round my waist, under my skirt, and had an additional thick wad of paper as a lining to my brush-and-comb tidy. As it was known that we should hunger strike, we were at once placed in hospital cells, which differed from the ordinary cells in having an ordinary bed with a spring mattress instead of the plank. In spite of the hunger and thirst strike I was able to write fairly steadily, for the greater part of most days, until near the end of my imprisonment, lying on the bed in such a position that what I was doing could not be observed through the spy hole, and always on the *qui vive* to conceal my work between the sheets. I kept a calendar scratched with a hairpin on the white-washed walls of my cell, and printed favourite verses there to keep myself occupied during the periods when my secret writing was likely to be interrupted. For this the governor, a tall, sandy-haired man with a long red face, several times sentenced me to various terms of "close solitary confinement," but as exercise and books from the library had already been withdrawn as a punishment for the hunger strike, the additional punishments were only a matter of form. I permitted myself the great luxury, for such it became, of rinsing out my mouth only once a day, lest the tongue should absorb moisture. I was careful never to swallow a single drop. I was always cold, but I felt only a trace of hunger, and less as the days passed. Thirst strikers crave only for water. Food such as I had never before seen in Holloway was daily placed in my cell: chicken, Brand's essence, fruit. The varied colours diverted my eye in the drabness of the cell, but I had no more inclination to eat the still life groups on my table than if they had been a painting or a vase of flowers. Nevertheless the first night I took the precaution of putting the eatables on the floor under the table, with the stool in front, in case I should go to them in my sleep; then realized the absurdity of such measures, for I could not sleep.

On the third day the two doctors sounded my heart and felt my pulse. The senior told me he had no alternative but to feed

me by force. Then they left the cell. I was thrown into a state of great agitation, heart palpitating with fear, noises in my ears, hot and cold shivers down my spine. I paced the cell, crouched against the wall, knelt by the bed, paced again, longing for some means of escape, resolving, impotently, to fight to prevent the outrage—knowing not what to do. I gathered together in the clothes-basket the prison mug and plate, my out-door shoes—everything the cell contained which might be used as a missile, and placing the basket on the table beside me, stood with my back to the wall, waiting to hurl these things at the doctors as soon as they should appear. Presently I heard footsteps approaching, collecting outside my cell. I was strangled with fear, cold and stunned, yet alert to every sound. The door opened—not the doctors, but a crowd of wardresses filled the doorway. I could not use my missiles upon them; poor tools! Yet nervously the hand that lay on the basket clutched a shoe and it fell amongst them as they closed with me. I struggled, but was overcome. There were six of them, all much bigger and stronger than I. They flung me on my back on the bed, and held me down firmly by shoulders and wrists, hips, knees and ankles. Then the doctors came stealing in. Someone seized me by the head and thrust a sheet under my chin. My eyes were shut. I set my teeth and tightened my lips over them with all my strength. A man's hands were trying to force open my mouth; my breath was coming so fast that I felt as though I should suffocate. His fingers were striving to pull my lips apart—getting inside. I felt them and a steel instrument pressing round my gums, feeling for gaps in my teeth. I was trying to jerk my head away, trying to wrench it free. Two of them were holding it, two of them dragging at my mouth. I was panting and heaving, my breath quicker and quicker, coming now with a low scream which was growing louder. "Here is a gap," one of them said. "No, here is a better one. This long gap here!" A steel instrument pressed my gums, cutting into the flesh. I braced myself to resist that terrible pain. "No, that won't do"—that voice again. "Give me the pointed one!" A stab of sharp, intolerable agony. I wrenched my head free. Again they grasped me. Again the struggle. Again the steel cutting its way in, though I strained my force against it. Then something gradually forced my jaws apart as a screw was turned; the pain was like having the teeth drawn. They were trying to get the tube down my throat, I was struggling madly to stiffen my muscles and close my throat. They got it down, I suppose, though I was unconscious of anything then save a mad revolt of struggling, for they said at last: "That's all!" and I vomited as the tube came up. They left

me on the bed exhausted, gasping for breath and sobbing convulsively.

The same thing happened in the evening, but I was too tired to fight so long.

The governor came to my cell that day or the next accompanied by the crowd. I was accused of striking the principal wardress with the shoe which fell from my hand. The others gave evidence that I had done so. "Did I hurt you?" I asked. She answered "No." I said no more. The governor sentenced me to some days of solitary confinement.

Day after day, morning and evening, the same struggle. Sometimes they used one steel gag on my jaw, sometimes two. "Don't hurt more than you can help," the senior sometimes said when his junior prodded with the sharp point of steel. My gums, where they prised them open, were always sore and bleeding, with bits of loose, jagged flesh; and other parts of the mouth got bruised or pinched in the struggle. Sometimes the tube was coughed up three or four times before they finally got it down. Sometimes, but not often—I was generally too much agitated by then—I felt the tube go right down into the stomach; a sickening, terrifying sensation, especially when it reached the breast. My shoulders were bruised, my back ached during the night. I scarcely slept. Often I fainted once or twice after the feeding.

Infinitely worse than the pain was the sense of degradation; the very fight that one made against the outrage was shattering one's nerves and one's self-control. Daily there grew on me more strongly the realization that the other human beings who were torturing me came to the task with loathing and pity and would have refrained from it if they could. Sometimes when the struggle was over, or even in the heat of it, in a swift flash I felt as though my entity had been broken up into many selves, of which one, aloof and calm, surveyed all this misery, and one, ruthless and unswerving, forced the weak, shrinking body to its ordeal. Sometimes, breaking forth, it seemed, from the inner depths of my being, came outraged, violated, tortured selves; waves of emotion, fear, indignation, wildly up-surging. Whilst all these selves were struggling, resisting, shrinking from the tortures, would rise in them a fierce desire to scream. The ruthless one permitted: "Yes, let them hear it! Others too often suffered dumbly, hiding their wrath and agony! Yes, let them know." Occasionally after the torturers had left the cell, that poor body and its voices, which seemed not part of me, protested, wailing in rage and misery. The ruthless one allowed it. "Yes, let them hear!" Then a small fear would creep up, lest all those voices, of those maddened, agonized sensations, those huge,

untamable emotions, should overwhelm alike the ruthless and the calm self, and, with great effort, I would silence them—lie still and, when I could, clean off all the filth left from the outrage—and put myself to write on my precious store of paper, cautiously lest I might be surprised. At first I kept a regular diary, but as the toll of days lengthened into weeks I lost heart in it; the events it chronicled were too hateful to be dwelt upon. I gave it up and used my paper for more inspiring things, with fear that it might be filled up too quickly. With this thought I wrote verse as the most concentrated form of expression, and the greater part of a play dealing with the Biblical story of David and Bathsheba. I hoped to complete it after release, but in the stress and turmoil of those days it was thrown away by someone tidying up my papers. Sometimes to crush down despondency I would draw on my slate. Once it was an illustration to Omar Khayyám's "Awake for morning in the bowl of night has flung the stone that puts the stars to flight," which helped to divert my mind from the torture. Another time it was Ezekiel xxxiv., where it is told that the shepherds have eaten the fat and clothed themselves in the wool, but they have neither cared for the sick nor sought the lost, but with force and with cruelty have ruled them, so that the flock, for lack of a shepherd, has been scattered and has become meat to all the beasts of the field. Reading the words I saw in my mind's eye a group of shepherds feasting together on the edge of a cliff beside a fire at which they had roasted a young lamb. A ram had caught its horns in the branches of a tree overhanging the chasm. Many of the flock had fallen and were lying dead on the rocks below. The shepherds were dressed like the shepherds of old, but their faces were those of the Cabinet Ministers. Here was another picture for my slate, but a slate is a dismal thing to draw on; one cannot long retain one's zest in making drawings to rub out.

At night I scarcely slept, and when free from pain those dark, quiet hours were more peaceful than the day. I would lie still, thinking of things for which there is too little time in the hurry of one's life. Passages from the Bible I had read during the day brought resplendent visions.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth of peace."

Sometimes I tossed in feverish impatience and anxiety. I felt once that a dear friend was beside me in the cell, and afterwards there smote upon me sometimes a fear that this dear friend was dead.

Not a whisper of news came to me from the outer world, nor even from within the gaol itself. My mother was arrested and

a taxi for Holloway. I remained there till January 10th, decidedly piqued at having been caught so easily.

For some time messages had been reaching me that Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel desired to see me in Paris. I was loath to go, for as the ports were watched I was likely to be arrested on embarking, and I was unwilling to expend my energies in another hunger and thirst strike except as the price of a rousing struggle. I realized that, like so many others, I was to be given the *congé*. In November Elsa Dalglish had been persuaded at Lincoln's Inn House that her duty was to resign the honorary financial secretaryship of the East London Federation, and to "concentrate" on the honorary secretaryship of the Kensington W.S.P.U.[1] as the East End work was on "wrong lines." I was unwilling to argue points of view, which I knew would not be reconciled, unless by the development of events. I was anxious to avoid a rupture in the full impact of our struggle with the Government, and, as far as possible, to stand together in the fight. Yet so insistent were the messages from Paris, that a few days after my release, and as soon as the welcome meetings were over, I agreed to go. The arrangements for the journey were made by Lincoln's Inn House. I was smuggled into a car and driven to Harwich. I insisted that Nora Smyth, who had become financial secretary of the Federation, should go with me to represent our members. My uncle, Herbert Goulden, always kind and thoughtful, to my surprise appeared to accompany me to the boat. He knew, I suppose, the reason for which I was summoned to Paris, though we did not discuss it. I was miserably ill in body, and distressed by the reason of my journey. A small private cabin had been booked for us in an assumed name. I reached it without mishap, but my uncle came down to tell us that detectives were on the boat. So ill that I almost wished I might die, I was tortured throughout the night by the thought that I should be seized on emerging from the cabin, and dragged back on the return voyage next morning. The detectives, however, were not seeking me, but on the trail of diamond thieves, and I landed at the Hook of Holland unmolested. The journey, which in other circumstances would have been delightful, seemed only excessively tiring.

As soon as we reached Paris the business was opened. Christabel, nursing a tiny Pomeranian dog, announced that the East London Federation of the W.S.P.U. must become a separate

[1] I had been honorary secretary of the Kensington W.S.P.U. for a short time and had asked Elsa Dalglish to take the position, thinking that we could thus link up our popular campaign work from East to West.

organization; the *Suffragette* would announce this, and unless we immediately chose to adopt one for ourselves, a new name would be given to us. Norah Smyth was known both to Christabel and Mrs. Pankhurst. She had served as unpaid chauffeur to Mrs. Pankhurst; she had been the companion of Helen Craggs at Newnham, and had assisted the W.S.P.U. headquarters in other ways. Dr. Ethel Smyth said of her to Mrs. Pankhurst in my hearing: "She is just the class we want." She happened, in fact, to belong to a distant branch of Ethel Smyth's own family. Having experienced both aspects, she had chosen to work with the East London Federation as the branch of the movement which appealed to her as most useful. Like me, she desired to avoid a breach. Dogged in her fidelities, and by temperament unable to express herself under emotion, she was silent. I said she had accompanied me to represent our members and to report to them. Therefore she should be told the reason for our expulsion. Christabel replied that I had spoken at Lansbury's Larkin release meeting, which was contrary to W.S.P.U. policy. "Lansbury was a good fellow, of course, but his motto was: 'Let them all come!' The W.S.P.U. did not want to be 'mixed up with him.'" She added: "You have a democratic constitution for your Federation; we do not agree with that." Moreover, she urged, a working women's movement was of no value: working women were the weakest portion of the sex: how could it be otherwise? Their lives were too hard, their education too meagre to equip them for the contest. "Surely it is a mistake to use the weakest for the struggle! We want picked women, the very strongest and most intelligent!" She turned to me. "You have your own ideas. We do not want that; we want all our women to take their instructions and walk in step like an army!" Too tired, too ill to argue, I made no reply. I was oppressed by a sense of tragedy, grieved by her ruthlessness. Her glorification of autocracy seemed to me remote indeed from the struggle we were waging, the grim fight even now proceeding in the cells. I thought of many others who had been thrust aside for some minor difference.

We drove in the Bois; Christabel with the small dog on her arm, I struggling against headache and weakness, Mrs. Pankhurst blanched and emaciated.

We returned to our conversations. "Moreover," urged Christabel, "your Federation appeals for funds; people think it is all part of the same thing. You get donations which might come to us." "That is what *we* say!" Norah Smyth interposed at last; it was a practical point of interest to the financial

secretary. " We know people have sent money to Lincoln's Inn House on account of our big demonstrations, for which we have the bill to pay!" " How much do you want? What would you think a suitable income for your Federation? You can't need much in your simple way!" Christabel challenged her. " All we can raise for our work, like you!" " Suppose I were to say we would allow you something," Mrs. Pankhurst interposed; she was obviously distressed by the discussion. " Would you——?" " Oh, no; we can't have that!" Christabel was emphatic. " It must be a clean cut!" So it went on. " As you will then," I answered at last.

Afterwards, when we were alone together, Christabel said that sometimes we should meet, " not as Suffragettes, but as sisters." To me the words seemed meaningless; we had no life apart from the movement. I felt bruised, as one does, when fighting the foe without, one is struck by the friend within. My mind was thronged with the memories of our childhood: the little heads clustering at the window in Green Hayes; her pink cheeks and the young green shoots in the spring in Russell Square; my father's voice: " You are the four pillars of my house!"

The Federation was unaltered. We had defended the W.S.P.U. against outside attack; we still would do so. Our place in the Union had been merely nominal: indeed the local unions were united by no tie of organization, only by sympathy and support to Lincoln's Inn House. There was no real change, yet the sadness remained. Any resentment I might otherwise have felt, then and always, was allayed by commiseration for Christabel: how terrible to be away over there, giving the orders leading to imprisonment and torture for other women! I would not take that part. A thousand times easier to be in the struggle and share its anguish. I knew the call of a compelling conscience, stronger than all the shrinking of unwilling impulses, dominating the whole being, permitting no reprieve from its dictates. Under that force I believed she, too, was acting. When the War came I was glad of the " clean cut" she had insisted upon.

Norah Smyth and I left Paris immediately. She had arranged with the others that we should travel by a circuitous route through Normandy, taking some days for the journey to give me time to regain strength before running the risk of arrest on touching English soil. I left it all to her. Provided with disguises procured on the journey, we landed unrecognized at Southampton, and were motored to London by a man supporter accustomed to carry Christabel's visitors. He had

been notified by her messengers where to meet us in the town. On reaching London we at once summoned a general meeting of the Federation. The members at first declared they would not be " thrown out" of the W.S.P.U., nor would they agree to a change of name. I persuaded them at last that refusal would open the door to acrimonious discussions, which would hinder our work and deflect attention from the Cause. The name of our organization was then debated. The East London Federation of the Suffragettes was suggested by someone, and at once accepted with enthusiasm. I took no part in the decision. Our colours were to be the old purple, white and green, with the addition of red—no change, as a matter of fact, for we had already adopted the red caps of liberty. Mrs. Pankhurst, annoyed by our choice of name, hastened down to the East End to expostulate; she probably anticipated objections from Paris. " *We* are the Suffragettes! that is the name *we* are always known by," she protested, " and there will be the same confusion as before!" I told her the members had decided it, and I would not interfere.

When the W.S.P.U. sent out a brief announcement of the separation, the newspapers jumped to the conclusion that a split had occurred, because the W.S.P.U. had resolved on a truce from militancy, which I had refused to accept. The *Daily News* observed exultantly:

> " There could scarcely be a more crushing condemnation of militancy than its formal abandonment by all save one of its inventors and patentees."

The W.S.P.U. protested:

> " There is no change in the policy of the W.S.P.U. . . . The statement already issued by the Union is a recognition of the fact which for a long time has existed—viz., that Miss Sylvia Pankhurst prefers to work on her own account and independently."

Christabel followed this up with a letter over her own signature:

> " The true position is that since the W.S.P.U. does not exist for the mere purpose of propaganda, but is a fighting organization, it must have only one policy, one programme and one command. The W.S.P.U. policy and the programme are framed, and the word of command is given by Mrs. Pankhurst and myself. From the very beginning of the militant movement this has been the case. Consequently those who wish to give an independent lead, or to carry out either a programme or a policy which differs from those laid down by the W.S.P.U., must necessarily have an independent organization of their own."

The subject was further developed in the *Suffragette*, coupled with a reference to a new organization for men and women, "The United Suffragists,"[1] which had just been formed, and in which it had been announced that militants and non-militants were to join hands: "Now that something like fifty Suffrage organizations have come into existence those who are connected with the W.S.P.U. . . . are determined not to have their energies and subscriptions divided and sub-divided." The attitude which led to such expulsions as my own and the denunciation of old supporters like Zangwill was upheld:

"As victory grows nearer and the fight, therefore, grows sterner, distinctions have to be drawn and a stringency displayed which were less needful in the early days of the militant movement . . . the course becomes specially dangerous and careful piloting is needed. . . . The Suffragettes as the fighting force—the advance guard—necessarily stand alone. Theirs is a glorious isolation—the splendour of independent strength."

In the following issue appeared a warning against "Liberal intrigue":

"It is as the result of Liberal intrigue and inner weakness that the Labour Party has come to naught and is to-day powerless and despised. Here is a tragic end to twenty-five years of effort and sacrifice, generously spent by those who brought the Labour Party into being!"

Strange that the woman who wrote thus should depart absolutely from the Suffrage movement on the outbreak of war. Yet in those days she appeared inflexible in that one purpose. To me it seemed that her isolation in Paris was the main cause both of her growing intolerance and of her sudden retirement. Yet, withal, one must say: she was the true begetter of the militant movement, though others bore a greater share of the physical suffering of its travail, and the labour of

[1] Barbara Ayrton Gould, daughter of Hertha Ayrton the scientist, and step-sister-in-law to Israel Zangwill, was the honorary secretary. She had visited me before its formation, suggesting that she should join the East London Federation and become assistant treasurer or occupy some other office. I told her I had no doubt the Federation would welcome her, but she afterwards wrote that "there was a general desire" for a new organization of men and women and she was helping to form it. The United Suffragists mustered a large proportion of those who had been thrown out of the W.S.P.U., or had left it on account of recent developments. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Nevinson and Evelyn Sharp were members of its committee. Its long list of vice-presidents included William de Morgan, potter and novelist, who had become a subscriber to the W.S.P.U. in 1912, Bernard Shaw, George Lansbury, Israel Zangwill, Lady Olivier, whose husband later became a Member of the first Labour Government, Sir Harry Johnston, the explorer, Beatrice Harraden, St. John Ervine, Sir Ronald Ross, the Ranee of Sarawak and several well-known authors, physicians and ministers of religion.

many equally devoted workers maintained its life. Carrying the majority of the W.S.P.U. membership with her, she had travelled far from its starting point in the I.L.P. and her interest in the Women Textile Workers' Labour Representation Committee. Her early speeches had dealt almost entirely with the industrial status of women; her later utterances with the political tactics required, in her judgement, for winning the vote. She who had deprecated and shunned every mention of her sex, now hinged the greater part of her propaganda upon the supposed great prevalence of venereal diseases and the sex excesses of men. "Votes for women and chastity for men," became her favourite slogan, elaborated in articles in the *Suffragette* and a collection of these called *The Great Scourge*. She alleged that seventy-five to eighty per cent. of men become infected with gonorrhœa, and twenty to twenty-five per cent. with syphilis, insisting that "only an insignificant minority—twenty-five per cent. at most"—escaped infection by some form of venereal disease. Women were strongly warned against the dangers of marriage, and assured that large numbers of women were refusing it. The greater part, both of the serious and minor illnesses suffered by married women, including the vague delicacy called "poor health," she declared to be due to the husband having at some time contracted gonorrhœa. Childless marriages were attributed to the same cause. Syphilis she declared to be "the prime reason of a high infantile mortality." The mutilation of a "White Slave Traffic" Bill in 1912, the notorious Piccadilly flat case in 1913,[1] cases of assault on young children punished with leniency by the Courts, were seized upon, week by week, to illustrate the text that "Man is not the 'lord of creation,' but the exterminator of the species." The injuries of women in the sex relationship were now put forward as the main reason and basis of militancy. The tremendously advertised *Great Scourge* was on the whole well received. The *Medical World* cast some doubt upon its statistics, which had been largely culled from American writers:

"Were eighty per cent. of the male population infected with gonorrhœa, the state of the country would be too appalling to contemplate . . . but even if there is some exaggeration, the figures are far too high!"

[1] Queenie Gerald, charged with living on the immoral earnings of other women, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment on July 10th, 1913. Men prominent in social and political circles, whose names were kept out of the case, were said to be frequenters of the brothel, which was alleged to be of luxurious type. Sadist practices were said to be carried on. The case created a tremendous sensation. Keir Hardie wrote a pamphlet on it, which was published by the National Labour Press.

The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, appointed in 1913, reported in 1915 a prevalence of such diseases which was certainly serious, but very much smaller than that asserted in *The Great Scourge*. Sir William Osler placed syphilis as fourth amongst the "Killing Diseases,"[1] and the Commissioners estimated that not less than ten per cent. of the population in large cities was infected with syphilis, congenital or acquired. Thirty to fifty per cent. of sterility amongst women they attributed to gonorrhœa. Later researches suggest that even these estimates were exaggerated. Post mortem examinations of still-born infants by Holland and Lane Clayton showed 8·7 per cent. of syphilis. Other investigators found from eight to eighteen per cent. In the British Army in 1912 a strength of 107,582 men showed an average of 593 men incapacitated from venereal disease.

How exaggerated was the alarmist view of syphilis as the prime cause of the high infant death-rate has been revealed by the great reduction in infant mortality which has happily been secured. The establishment of mother and infant Clinics and Welfare Centres, and other social improvements, did much to reduce the then terribly high rate of infantile mortality. Our East London Federation was subsequently to bear a notable part in this work.

Apart from any intrinsic merit, a great advantage of *The Great Scourge* propaganda in W.S.P.U. eyes was that, like the vote itself, it cut across the usual line of Party programmes. It did not offend the sensitive class consciousness of those frail hot-house blooms, the Conservative supporters of Women's Suffrage, whom the W.S.P.U. was eager to encourage. By its sensational nature, this propaganda encouraged the fevered emotions, and sense of intolerable wrong, required to spur women to the more serious acts of destruction. Christabel was now, in effect, preaching the sex war deprecated and denied by the older Suffragists. Mr. Lawrence had often said he had thrown in his lot with the militant women in order that the Suffragette struggle might not become "a sex war." Not from the speeches of

[1] The death-rate per million of men over fifteen years of age from venereal diseases was given as follows:

I. Upper and middle classes	302
II. Intermediate between I and III	280
III. Skilled labour	264
IV. Intermediate between III and V	304
V. Unskilled labour	429
VI. Textile workers	186
VII. Miners	177
VIII. Agricultural labourers	108

Mrs. Pankhurst, who never lost her gift of sympathy with her audiences, but from the columns of the *Suffragette* the deduction was clear: women were purer, nobler and more courageous, men were an inferior body, greatly in need of purification; the W.S.P.U. being the chosen instrument capable of administering the purge. Masses of women, especially of the middle class, were affected by this attitude, even though they remained outside the ranks of the Union. The pendulum had swung far, indeed, from the womanly humility of Victorian times. No matter; it must right itself.

The propaganda for sexual purity made strong appeal to the clergy and social workers, brought by the nature of their work into close contact with the sad effects of prostitution and the sexual abuse of girl children. Mrs. Fawcett, always strictly temperate in her observations, testified to the fact that Votes for Women had made great advances amongst the clergy during the years 1913-14, the period in which the W.S.P.U. had shrieked this propaganda of "chastity for men" in every key of vehemence and excitement. A number of clergy were ardent supporters of the W.S.P.U., speaking from its platforms, contributing to its organ, hailing the militants as heroines and martyrs.

In the East End, with its miserable housing, its ill-paid casual employment and harsh privations bravely borne by masses of toilers, life wore another aspect. The yoke of poverty oppressing all, was a factor no one-sided propaganda could disregard. The women speakers who rose up from the slums were struggling, day in day out, with the ills which to others were merely hearsay. Sometimes a group of them went with me to the drawing-rooms of Kensington and Mayfair; their speeches made a startling impression upon those women of another world, to whom hard manual toil and the lack of necessaries were unknown. Many of the W.S.P.U. speakers came down to us as before: Mary Leigh, Amy Hicks, Theodora Bonwick, Mary Paterson, Mrs. Bouvier, that brave, persistent Russian, and many others; but it was from our own East End speakers that our movement took its life. There was wise, logical Charlotte Drake of Custom House, who, left an orphan with young brothers and sisters, had worked both as barmaid and sewing machinist, and who recorded in her clear memory incidents, curious, humorous and tragic, which stirred her East End audiences by their truth. Told with her brief, inimitable keenness, they would have made the fortune of a realistic novelist. "You ought to breed," was her first spoken greeting to me, when she came to my side as I was being carried to speak on a stretcher on release from one of

CHAPTER VI

GREATER DESTRUCTION—SUFFRAGETTE MILITANCY TURNS UPON ULSTER

THE destruction wrought in the seven months of 1914 before the War excelled that of the previous year.[1] Three Scotch castles were destroyed by fire on a single night. The Carnegie Library in Birmingham was burnt. The Rokeby Venus, falsely, as I consider, attributed to Velazquez, and purchased for the National Gallery at a cost of £45,000, was mutilated by Mary Richardson. Romney's "Master Thornhill," in the Birmingham Art Gallery, was slashed by Bertha Ryland, daughter of an early Suffragist. Carlyle's portrait of Millais in the National Portrait Gallery, and numbers of other pictures were attacked, a Bartolozzi drawing in the Doré Gallery being completely ruined. Many large empty houses in all parts of the country were set on fire, including Redlynch House, Somerset, where the damage was estimated at £40,000. Railway stations, piers, sports pavilions, haystacks were set on fire. Attempts were made to blow up reservoirs. A bomb exploded in Westminster Abbey, and in the fashionable church of St. George's, Hanover Square, where a famous stained-glass window from Malines was damaged. There were two explosions in St. John's, Westminster, and one in St. Martin's in the Fields, and in Spurgeon's Tabernacle. The ancient Breadsall Church, near Derby, was destroyed, and the ancient Wargrave Church. The organ was flooded at the Albert Hall, the damage amounting to £2,000. The bombs and other material used were of a much more professional and formidable character than those of the early period of secret militancy. One hundred and forty-one acts of destruction were chronicled in the Press during the first seven months of 1914. In respect of these there was a total of thirty-five arrests. There were one hundred and seven cases of arson, but only nine arrests. On the other hand, window smashing and outrages in picture galleries and museums,

[1] Amongst 261 of the more serious acts of destruction attributed by the Press to the Suffragettes in the years 1913 and 1914, an estimate of the loss appeared in 78 cases only. For these 78 cases the estimated loss totalled £722,850. The remaining 183 cases must have shown a much higher total had the damage been given. They included the destruction of two ancient churches, piers, grandstands, timber-yards, factories and private houses, including Lloyd George's new house and Sir William Lever's bungalow.

made under the public eye, almost invariably resulted in the arrest of all the perpetrators.

The destruction of church property becoming more serious and frequent, and the Suffragette prayers and interruptions in churches more unrestrained, the feelings of some of the clergy became acerb. The Rev. C. H. Percival, Vicar of All Saints, Branksome, Bournemouth, went so far as to say he would "honour the man or woman who took the law into his or her own hands against the Suffragettes." Dean Inge, when a woman wrote to him to protest that a verger had struck her in the face while she uttered her prayer, replied: "I am glad to have your name and address, which may be useful to the police." He averred that the "shameless monkey-tricks" and the "infamous crimes" and "unparalleled wickedness" of "the scoundrels" with whom she appeared to be in sympathy had "ruined for a generation" a political reform of which he had long been in favour. Thus may the prophets be misled. On the other hand, the Bishop of Kensington wrote in the *Daily Graphic*: "The present outbursts of militancy are mainly due to the persistent disregard of the claims of women." Canon Scott Holland, in a strong plea for the Suffrage, wrote that forcible feeding was "hideously cruel," and "maddens people into criminal acts of indignant retaliation." The Bishop of Durham, when interviewed by a W.S.P.U. deputation, said: "I will do all I can to help, and will do it as soon as possible." The Bishop of Leicester, Dr. Peake, in reply to a deputation, said that forcible feeding was a detestable practice, politically, legally and medically indefensible, but pointed out that four bishops and five hundred clergymen had already protested against it.

In February forty women, much distressed by accounts of the Holloway prisoners, went from one of the W.S.P.U. meetings in the Knightsbridge Hall[1] to the Bishop of London, to urge his intervention against forcible feeding. He promised his help, and eventually made two visits to Holloway, after which he reported that forcible feeding was performed "in the kindliest spirit," and pleaded for a cessation of militancy, promising in that event to lead a Votes for Women deputation to the Prime Minister. "A whitewash brush has been put in your hand, my Lord Bishop!" was the W.S.P.U. reply. In fact his statements had made light of the effect which forcible feeding had had upon the prisoners, though the Judge who presently sentenced

[1] The Monday afternoon "At Homes" had removed there from the London Pavilion, the management of the former hall having objected to the platform struggles with the police.

replied that our action was not in conformity with W.S.P.U. policy; as to me, she said: "Tell her I advise her when she comes out of prison to go home and let her friends take care of her, as Annie Kenney and Mrs. Drummond have done." Norah Smyth was shocked by the reply. She knew me well enough to understand that I should not withdraw. Moreover she considered it would be humiliating to me and to the Federation to give way. "It is like Asquith saying the women could walk out of prison if they would give an undertaking!" she protested when she afterwards showed me the letter. "You ought not to have written at all," I told her. "Did you not understand in Paris that no family or other considerations are permitted to intervene?" But this was later.

In prison the days crawled by, weary and painful from illness, yet otherwise calm. For the first time I made no fight to hasten release—the longer they kept me, the better for my purpose. I made no effort to write. My thoughts were occupied with the struggle before me. I wondered how long it would last. I had never believed myself so near the limit of my endurance as the doctors, in prison and out, had assured me to be the case. I suspected one could last much longer without food and water than was generally supposed by those who had dealt with the hunger strikers. I anticipated that the end would be very painful and protracted. I conceived a possibility, not, I hoped, a probability, that at a certain stage I might lose command of myself, lose perhaps my memory of present events, and fall into a state of semi-consciousness when nourishment could be pressed upon me. If that were to happen, with returning strength I should have to begin all the weary struggle over again. I hoped this might not be, that my mind would remain alert until the last. Yet I was resolved for all contingencies.

Release came on June 18th. The wardresses took me, as usual, in a taxi to Old Ford Road. A crowd had collected, for the pickets had telephoned I was coming. Norah Smyth had a motor at the door, waiting to take me to Westminster. Mrs. Payne helping me, I washed my face, changed the dress I had worn night and day in the prison, and came out immediately to take my seat in the car. The women were weeping. In a bodily sense I was weak, for this last hunger and thirst strike had followed only ten days after the preceding one, but I was cool and collected; only when I attempted to stand or sit upright I felt faint. I told Norah Smyth to call to the women to be of good cheer, and to drive with speed to the House of Commons. My mind was concentrated on the object, emotionless and unfearing, like one who is running a race.

The long summer evening was fading as we reached the House. A little crowd of our women were waiting for us there. We drew up near Richard Cœur de Lion's statue. Keir Hardie and Josiah Wedgwood came out to the car, both very gentle and kind. Keir Hardie said it would be best for me to go with them to wait in St. Stephen's Hall whilst they made efforts to communicate with Asquith. I smiled at his thoughtfulness: "I would, but they will not let me in," I told him. He went to arrange it, but came back saying that I was still black-listed.[1] I must do, he told me, as Members of Parliament do when compelled to withdraw from the Chamber; I must write a letter to Mr. Speaker apologizing for having "broken the rules of the House." It was simply a matter of form, he urged. To please him I consented. He returned with the news I expected: Mr. Speaker maintained his prohibition. "I must go to the steps; there is nothing else for it," I told him. He begged me to wait in the car a little while longer, and hurried away to get speech with Asquith. My companions, too, begged me to wait his return. I waited; the time seemed endless.

I called to my friends to help me, over-riding kind efforts to delay and obstruct me. Norah Smyth and the others supported me. They swerved from the Stranger's Entrance, unable, I saw, to face the policemen standing on the steps. Their instinct might be right—I should be moved immediately from that spot. I indicated the little square door to the left, nearer to Cromwell's statue, and there they laid me. A police inspector came forward to tell me I could not stay there. I replied I must wait there till the Prime Minister would consent to receive the deputation. There was some altercation. Policemen were bending to seize me, when Lansbury and Nevinson came running out to say that Asquith had agreed to receive us. I thought they might be mistaken, or saying it just to induce me to go away; to save me from being taken to prison. Then I saw Keir Hardie beside me. He told me, in his quiet way, that Asquith would receive six of our women on Saturday morning. I knew it was true; he would not lie. People began to cheer. Everyone was laughing and talking around me. Keir Hardie and Nevinson, Norah Smyth and Mrs. Watkins, dozens of people were helping me back to the car, amid waving of hands and handkerchiefs, congratulations and delight. "We are winning! At last we are winning!" Everyone felt this an omen of the turning of the tide. As many women as possible crowded on to the car. Back we went racing to the East End. Then: "Do you not think we could stop for a drink of water now?" I asked them. They laughed again.

[1] For throwing a stone at the picture of Speaker Finch being held in the chair.

We pulled up at a "Cabin" Restaurant; a jug of hot water was brought to the car. The news had flown round. "Happy to bring it! Of course no charge!"

Outside 400 Old Ford Road the crowd of women had been fretting and crying throughout the evening. The telephone rang. Mrs. Payne rushed out, her dear face beaming, to give them the news. They responded with laughing and cheering. The road was thronged when I reached it. What cheers! What laughter, and what excitement! Mrs. Payne hugged me; we kissed each other and laughed. What talk and excitement! We could not sleep.

Next day I prepared a statement to be read by Mrs. Julia Scurr. She was to lead the deputation. I did not care to go. Let these working mothers speak for themselves; it was for this I had struggled. The statement would give them their cue and break the ice for them. I had put into it what I knew to be near their hearts. They were photographed at our door before starting. Stout old Mrs. Savoy, the brush-maker, jolly and brave in spite of her dropsy and her palpitations—an example, indeed, to the *malades imaginaires*. "The best woman in Old Ford," George Lansbury called her. In spite of her poverty, she was bringing up two orphan boys, and was ever ready to share her last crust, or perform any service for a neighbour, from bringing her baby into the world to scrubbing out her room, or minding her children at need. She had called herself "Mrs. Hughes" for the day, because her husband, an elderly eccentric, almost past work, objected to having his "name in the papers." Motherly, anxious Mrs. Payne. Mrs. Bird, the wife of a transport worker, keeping a home for him and their six children on his wage of 25s. a week. Mrs. Parsons, a frail little woman, who, having a delicate father, had worked to help her mother to support her little brothers since she was twelve years of age; and now with a husband earning a small wage, was caring for her two little girls and an orphaned niece. Mrs. Watkins. Mrs. Scurr, who till the first advent of the Suffragettes in 1905-6, had been a "quiet housewife," but aroused by them to a sense of public duty, as she often told me, was now a vigilant Poor Law Guardian. They had been selected by the mass meetings as women known and respected in the districts where they lived.

They brought before the Prime Minister, in simple, moving phrases, the toilsome life of poor women. The Alien Immigration Board had but recently refused to permit a Russian girl to come into this country, because her prospective employer offered her a weekly wage of only 13s. 6d.; the Board declared she could not live in London under 17s. 6d. Yet none of the Trade Boards

set up to alleviate the conditions of women wage-earners had fixed a higher minimum wage than 13s. 6d. for a full week's work, and in most of the industries concerned there was much short time. Mrs. Savoy herself, who had worked forty-three years as a brush-maker, was only paid 1¼d. for a brush which took her nearly two hours to make. The Prime Minister and his companions started, as though it had been a bomb, when she put the brush, with its two hundred holes, on the table. "I do all the work; I keep my home; I ought to have a vote for it!" As a girl Mrs. Parsons had earned less than 1s. a day by packing cigarettes. Mrs. Bird, with her six children, declared herself better off than thousands of other wives, for thousands of husbands earned only 18s. a week, and many had larger families than hers. "The husband scarcely knows how the money is spent," one of them urged. "A man brings his money home and lays it on the table, and then he is able to go out. There are all the expenses of rent, clubs and everything, and then clothes wear out; and you have to find clothes for the children, and the things that wear out in the home: it all has to come out of the weekly money; you do not get any extra." "You can tell we do not get a living, but an existence." They spoke of the housing conditions, so hideous in their district; the yards "only fit for a dirt pail." "We have to leave our children to the mercy of the street." It was but a little while after the deputation that the child of one of our active members was run over and killed by a motor-'bus. "In a strike it is the mother who has to do the ferreting." "Our husbands die on the average at an earlier age than the men of other classes; modern industrialism kills them off rapidly by accident and overwork. . . . The Poor Law has treated us mercilessly. It is hated by every poor woman. In many cases out-relief is altogether denied to the widow and the deserted wife; only the Workhouse is offered, which means separation from the children. Where out-relief is given, it is surrounded by humiliating conditions. . . . The women local government voters number only one-sixth of the electorate. The Boards of Guardians are obliged to administer the rules of the Local Government Board, which is controlled by Parliament." Mrs. Payne disclosed her great sorrow: "I have had to work at the side of my husband making shoes, and to look after my daughter and do everything for her. From the time she was born until she died she never combed her own hair; she was mentally deficient and lived to be twenty-seven. . . . Once when my girl was taken bad she went into the Poplar Workhouse. My husband thought he was compelled to let her go. When I got there next morning they had put her in a padded room. I

German Peril." Mrs. Pankhurst toured the country, making recruiting speeches. Her supporters handed the white feather to every young man they encountered wearing civilian dress, and bobbed up at Hyde Park meetings with placards: "Intern Them All." The *Suffragette* appeared again on April 16th, 1915, as a war paper, and on October 15th changed its name to *Britannia*.[1] There week by week Christabel demanded the military conscription of men, and the industrial conscription of women, "national service" as it was termed. In flamboyant terms she called also for the internment of all people of enemy race, men and women, young and old, found on these shores, and for a more complete and ruthless enforcement of the blockade of enemy and neutral nations. She insisted that this must be "a war of attrition." In her ferocious zeal for relentless prosecution of the War, she demanded the resignation of Sir Edward Grey, Lord Robert Cecil, General Sir William Robertson and Sir Eyre Crowe, whom she considered too mild and dilatory in method. So furious was her attack that, in its over-fervent support of the National War policy, *Britannia* was many times raided by the police, and experienced greater difficulty in appearing than had befallen the *Suffragette*. Indeed it was compelled at last to set up its own printing press. A gentler impulse was embodied in an early proposal of Mrs. Pankhurst to set up Women's Social and Political Union Homes for illegitimate girl "war babies," but only five children were adopted. Sterner interests prevailed. Lloyd George, whom Christabel had regarded as the most bitter and dangerous enemy of women, was now the one politician in whom she and Mrs. Pankhurst placed confidence.

When the first Russian Revolution took place and Kerensky rose to power, Mrs. Pankhurst—like many others—journeyed to Russia, in the vain effort to prevent that vast country with its starving multitudes from retiring from the War. Her circuit was like that of Hervé, the French "anti-patriot," as for many years he had called himself, and of whom she had been an ardent admirer in her youth. Christabel received the commendation of many war enthusiasts. Lord Northcliffe observed that she ought to be in the Cabinet. Lord Astor told me, when I happened to be seated beside him at dinner, that he had received two letters from her; he had sent one of them to the War Office, the other to the Minister of Blockade. Undoubtedly he was much impressed by their contents.

When first I read in the Press that Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel were returning to England for a recruiting campaign

[1] *Britannia* announced the transformation of the W.S.P.U. to the *Women's Party*, November 2nd, 1917.

I wept. To me this seemed a tragic betrayal of the great movement to bring the mother-half of the race into the councils of the nations. "Women would stand for peace!" How often, how often had they and all of us averred it!

My own activities were no more to their taste than theirs to mine, and I was publicly repudiated by Mrs. Pankhurst,[1] through the medium of the Press. Adela in Australia was working with Vida Goldstein in the Women's Party there much as I was doing here. She took a prominent part in opposing Conscription and in securing its defeat when submitted to Referendum. She, too, was publicly repudiated by Mrs. Pankhurst. Families which remain on unruffled terms, though their members are in opposing political parties, take their politics less keenly to heart than we Pankhursts. Yet often in those days I woke in the night, hearing the words of the father who had guided our early thoughts: "My children are the four pillars of my house!"

It was at a great joint meeting we had organized in Trafalgar Square on Sunday, September 26th, 1915, that the newsboys began crying: "Death of Keir Hardie!" The news stared at me from the posters in their hands. Shocked and trembling, I turned to W. C. Anderson, M.P., of the I.L.P., who stood beside me: "Is it true?" "It must be," he answered gently, and turned with practical mind to draft a resolution. "I will move it," he said; "he was our man." I knew that Keir Hardie had been failing since the early days of the War. The great slaughter, the rending of the bonds of international fraternity, on which he had built his hopes, had broken him. Quite early he had had a stroke in the House of Commons after some conflict with the jingoes. When he left London for the last time he had told me quietly that his active life was ended, and that this was forever farewell, for he would never return. In his careful way he arranged for the disposal of his books and furniture and gave up his rooms, foreseeing his end, and fronting it without flinching or regret.

I spent the day which followed his death writing an article about him for the *Dreadnought* and refusing to see anyone; my sole respite for mourning and tribute to this great friend; then I was back in the surge of work, with the charge on my conscience to be doubly steadfast and true.

[1] *Britannia*, April 28th, 1916, published the following paragraph:

"A Message from Mrs. Pankhurst.

"Hearing of a demonstration recently held in Trafalgar Square, Mrs. Pankhurst, who is at present in America, sent the following cable: 'Strongly repudiate and condemn Sylvia's foolish and unpatriotic conduct. Regret I cannot prevent use of name. Make this public.'"

[This was a demonstration for Adult Suffrage and against Conscription.]