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THE LIFE OF
EMMELINE PANKHURST



BRITISH WOMEN IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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THE LIFE OF EMMELINE PANKHURST

THE SUFFRAGETTE STRUGGLE
FOR WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP

BY

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST

Author of

The Suffragette Movement; The Home Front.
A Mirror to England in the Great War; Save the
Mothers: A Plea for a National Maternity Service



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CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

1858-1879

EMMELINE GOULDEN was born in Manchester on July 14th, 1858. "She should have been a lad!" her father said; it was his highest expression of regard, but she heard him with rebellion in her heart. She knew herself more eager, stronger, than her brothers; why should some barrier, not of her blood or spirit, be erected against her, whilst they were free?

Precocious in development, she was set by her father to read the newspaper while he breakfasted, at an almost incredibly early age. Her brothers called her "the dictionary" for her faultless spelling. She learnt the piano with equal facility, as a tiny child playing at sight; but she never would practise, frankly declaring herself "not musical." She read omnivorously everything she could lay hands on. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Holy War*, and especially Carlyle's *French Revolution*, stood out as most vividly remembered in after years; the last, she insisted, had influenced her whole life. Her young mind was early disposed to rebellion and reform by the stories of her paternal grandfather, who as a youth

had been kidnapped by the "Press Gang" for service in the Navy abroad, and returning after long years, could discover no trace of his family or friends. He had narrowly escaped with his life when the people were charged by the military in the historic franchise demonstration of "Peterloo" on St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, in 1819. Her grandmother had been an early member of Cobden's famous "National Anti-Corn Law League," and her poignant tales of the "Hungry 'Forties" stirred Emmeline's heart.

Her father, Robert Goulden, gained public applause as the foremost amateur actor in theatre-loving Manchester, at a time when the Athenæum Dramatic Society, which he led, was a name to conjure with in the city. He had begun life as an errand-boy for one of Manchester's largest cotton houses, and rose steadily to a junior partnership. He married Jane Quine, the beauty of Douglas, the tiny capital of the Isle of Man, only daughter of a Manx farmer. He presently accepted the offer of a man of means without practical experience, to be partner and managing director of a new cotton printing venture at Seedley, a still rural district on the outskirts of Salford, Manchester's more squalid sister town. His family were ensconced at Seedley Cottage, a large white house divided from the factory only by his own fields and gardens. His wife was in her element, her dairy prolific, her kitchen producing enormous quantities of pickles, jams and pies. There was much entertaining. In the midst of this tide of activity she reared ten children.

Holidays were spent in the Isle of Man; Goulden

had bought a house in Douglas Bay. The young Gouldens had great times, rowing and swimming, exploring the lovely lanes and glens, visiting their kind grandmother, who plied them with soda cakes, and her uncle, old Robbie Crane, a great character, learned in Manx lore. The position of the eldest sister in so large a family was often onerous. Emmeline was forced to mature early, leaving pranks to her younger.

It was a time of heart-stirring struggles for constitutional liberty and the freedom of the human mind and personality, at home and abroad. In all these, Robert Goulden was on the side of liberation. He was on the Manchester Committee to welcome Henry Ward Beecher, one of the famous apostles of negro emancipation. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel in defence of the slaves, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, dominated the Goulden household. The mother made it a frequent subject of discussion and story for her children. She was enthusiastic in fund-raising activities to aid the newly emancipated slaves, and the little Emmeline was given a "lucky bag" to collect pennies for the cause.

In the Fenian Rebellion of 1867, the Lancashire Irish were involved. Kelly and Deasy, two of the leaders, were arrested in Manchester. An attempt was made to rescue them from the prison van. A shot was fired to break the lock. Brett, the policeman, sitting inside, was killed. Three men, Allen, O'Brien and Larkin, ever after referred to by their compatriots as the "Manchester Martyrs," were hanged for the fatal shot. Humanitarian feeling revolted at the execution of three men when no murder had been

intended. The affair made a lasting impression on the nine-year-old Emmeline; already she realized: "Justice and judgement were often a world apart." She and her elder brother Walter were weekly boarders at a little dame school. That week their mother did not come to take them home as usual; they would have had to pass the prison ground where the public execution was taking place. When they went by next day, Emmeline saw the breach in the wall, made to admit the populace to see the hanging. She never passed that wall, with the new piece bricked in, without a shuddering thrill.

When she was about fourteen, the future militant first attended a meeting in support of the cause she was to make her own. Returning from school as her mother set out to hear the famous Suffrage advocate, Lydia Becker, she begged to be taken too, and went with her school satchel on her back.

Manchester was then the centre of the women's emancipation movement. In 1866, when John Stuart Mill presented to Parliament his historic petition for women's citizenship, an active Suffrage Committee was already in being there. Among its founders were Elizabeth Wolstenholme, Richard Marsden Pankhurst, Jacob Bright, brother of the famous John Bright, with his wife, Ursula.

Mill's amendment to secure Women's Suffrage under the Reform Act of 1867, by substituting the word "person" for the word "man," had been defeated; nevertheless, it was still hoped the principle had slipped in, because a subsequent amendment to substitute "male person" for "man" had also been

defeated, and under the provisions of Lord Romilly's Act, words of the masculine gender legally included women, unless the contrary were expressly provided. On the initiative of Dr. Pankhurst, a tremendous campaign was made to get women's names on the Register. In the township of Manchester 92 per cent. of the women sent in claims, a truly remarkable manifestation! Deputations, headed by the Doctor, urged the Overseers to admit the women's names. In twenty-four townships they did so, but the revising barristers struck them off. Dr. Pankhurst then took the matter to the Court of Common Pleas; Sir J. D. Coleridge, Q.C., afterwards Lord Chief Justice, was briefed to appear with him. The judges in the two test cases, *Chorlton versus Lings* and *Chorlton versus Kessler*, confirmed the decision of the revising barristers, on the ground that, under the British constitution, women were not entitled to exercise any right or privilege, unless an Act of Parliament expressly conferred it upon them. Only in the case of punishments and obligations could the term "person" include women. Stung by this reverse, the agitation grew. Great meetings were held. The Mayor of Manchester gave the Suffrage Society the hospitality of the Town Hall and presided over its meetings. Dr. Pankhurst drafted a Bill to secure votes for women on the same terms as men; Jacob Bright introduced it. It passed the Second Reading amid cheers, but Gladstone prevented it going further. With such a stir, no one in Manchester could fail to take sides on the issue. Emmeline's parents approved it; she heard the talk of it at an early age.

In 1872, when she was fourteen, her father took

her to France. It was the year after the Franco-German war. She saw Paris scarred by siege, suffering under the German army of occupation and the indemnity imposed by the conqueror. She conceived a lifelong prejudice against all things German, a lasting enthusiasm for France. She was placed at the École Normale, in the Avenue de Neuilly. The school was one of the pioneer institutions for the higher education of girls.

The scholars were on vacation. Emmeline found only one tall, fair, lovely girl, some years older than herself, Noémie, the motherless daughter of the famous Henri Rochefort, the Communist Marquis de Rochefort-Luçay, who refused to bear his title. Narrowly respite from death as a leader of the vanquished Paris Commune, he had been sentenced to transportation for life to New Caledonia. The two girls contracted what was to prove a friendship of thirty years. Noémie was in agonized suspense for her father, and Emmeline, to whom adventure always made immediate appeal, thrilled to her stories of the Commune and his part in it, his duels, his imprisonments and escapes. When, after two years, news came that he had escaped in an open boat, and, picked up by an American liner, had won through to freedom, she shared her friend's delight to the full.

Emmeline was a little unwell; the school doctor advised she be released from lessons, and allowed to run about as she pleased. She took full advantage of this freedom, accompanied by Noémie, who had no love for study, and had been placed in the school, not for instruction, but for refuge. The two explored Paris

very thoroughly, and Emmeline learnt to chatter in French almost as fluently as in English. Of the boasted scientific education provided by the school, she imbibed little. She returned to Manchester, having learnt to wear her hair and her clothes like a Parisian, a graceful, elegant young lady, much more mature in appearance than girls of her age to-day, with a slender, svelt figure, raven black hair, an olive skin with a slight flush of red in the cheeks, delicately pencilled black eyebrows, beautiful expressive eyes of an usually deep violet blue, above all a magnificent carriage and a voice of remarkable melody. More than ever she was the foremost among her brothers and sisters. Mary, her favourite, next in age to her, painted flowers and recited poetry, ambitious to be an actress. Emmeline had no such talents, but she had definite opinions on many things, and could talk well with anyone. Friends of her brothers made her feel their admiration, but to her they seemed only insignificant good fellows. She was romantic, believed in constancy, held flirtation degrading, would only give herself to an important man. Despite her great confidence in other respects, she was overpoweringly diffident and shy of any sort of emotional or artistic expression. At a school performance she had to play a few bars alone on the piano, but her hands were paralysed by nervousness; her teacher leant over and played the notes across her shoulders. Yet when a lighted lamp, which hung from the ceiling, was detached from its socket by an accidental thrust, and would have fallen among the schoolgirls at play, it was Emmeline who had the agility and presence of mind to spring forward and

catch it between her hands. Shy as she was, she felt within her an urge to do and to be something in the world, to play a part in the whirl of adventurous social life and social change. She pined to return to Paris, and when, in the following year, Mary was sent to the École Normale in her turn, Emmeline secured permission to accompany her.

Mary's special school friend was the daughter of Albert Brisbane, the American pioneer Socialist, whose views the Goulden sisters ardently espoused.

Emmeline was reluctant to return to Seedley. Noémie had married a young Swiss artist striving to make his way. Already she had a baby daughter. How delightful, she urged, if Emmeline too would marry and settle near her. In Paris, wife to some able man, she would find a field for her gifts as hostess influencing a brilliant circle. The project made instant appeal to Emmeline; it was typical of the period that a husband seemed her door of opportunity! Noémie lost no time in bringing forward a suitor, a literary man already of some distinction; he was anxious to marry the charming English girl, provided a suitable dowry could be arranged. Her father, however, stormed; he would not give his daughter to any man who wanted her for money! The dowry denied, the suitor withdrew. Furious at his desertion, Emmeline was yet more angry with her father, considering it unfair and unworthy of him to refuse her a fortune. Ever after, she remained a passionate advocate of the French "dot," hotly enlarging on the paramount importance to a married woman of possessing her own means. Twenty years later, on a visit to Noémie in

Switzerland, she met again her old suitor, now middle-aged and corpulent, thought him "a dreadful creature," heard a gossip's rumour that he was cruel to his wife; but this was unforeseen.

Recalled at once to Manchester, she returned in high dudgeon. Mary also was discontented. Her plea that she might become an actress sternly refused, she concentrated on her painting; but when she got some of her work displayed for sale in a local shop, her father declared she would "ruin" him. If people guessed his daughter had so demeaned herself, they would say he was short of money; a disastrous rumour to circulate about a business man! Whilst their brothers were being prepared for the family business, or some other, the girls were expected to stay at home, dusting the drawing-room and arranging flowers. Their mother, anxious for her tall, handsome sons, whom she feared might marry imprudently, urged her impatient daughters to "make home attractive" for their brothers. Her injunction: "You should bring your brothers' slippers!" roused the retort that if she were in favour of "women's rights," she did not show it at home! The girls were perpetually in conflict with her ideas, complained of her notions of discipline. Sent to buy Christmas books for the younger children, Emmeline discovered Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and returned with it in glee; she was ordered to take it back to the shop as mere "rubbish"! Its satire on the current standards of child training displeased her mother as much as it delighted Emmeline.

him against all critics. He discoursed to her tenderly on exalted themes. Their marriage, in the winter of 1879, was hastened owing to the death of his parents; so sorely he took his bereavement to heart that Emmeline feared he would not survive till the spring.

She had entered into a companionship of great happiness and vivid interest, throughout which she adored her husband with all that ardent and impassioned loyalty of which she was capable, whilst he remained the most tender and affectionate of lovers. She begged his aid in her self-education; he zealously made out for her a programme, but she was temperamentally unable to devote herself to study; her desire was for action. When the daily round of events failed to provide adventure, she turned to fiction to supply it. All her life she was a copious novel reader, skimming swiftly through to gouge out what interested her, dealing with the newspapers in the same fashion. She soon had insistent occupation. She was co-opted to the Married Women's Property Act Committee, then in its final struggle to secure the Act of 1882. Four children were born to her within five years; the first, Christabel Harriette, in September 1880; myself, Estelle Sylvia, in May 1882; Henry Francis Robert, in February 1884, and Adela Constantia Mary, in June 1885. The last baby she felt was all too much, for her health was considerably over-

Doctor was generally admired for his eloquence and learning, and on great civic occasions, or when distinguished people visited the city, his oratory was always called for. In the principal centres of Manchester's social life, the Brazenose and the Arts Clubs, the Literary and Philosophic Society, and the Law Students' Society, he was an acknowledged leader. The newspapers were accustomed to refer to him with affectionate familiarity as "our learned Doctor."

taxed. She suffered intensely from neuralgia and from a form of dyspepsia, inherited from her mother. She was often prostrated by overwhelming headache and bodily illness. Patiently ministering to her was a faithful little Welsh woman, Susannah Jones, engaged as nurse to the first two infants, who remained till she married twelve years later. Mrs. Pankhurst had always the gift of inspiring devoted service. To Susannah she soon passed the spending of the weekly housekeeping allowance, because the maid could stretch it farther than her mistress, who was apt to spend too much on the bonbons and to discover she had nothing left for the muttons.

The war controversy had strained the Liberal Party to the breaking-point. The Radicals broke out to inaugurate a new reform movement, of which her husband was inevitably a leader. Already, in 1878, he had published his view of the next steps for Liberalism. In 1883, he resigned from the Liberal Association and announced his intention of advocating this programme as an independent Parliamentary candidate at the next General Election. Within two months, a by-election occurred in Manchester. The Liberal Association refused to contest the seat. Dr. Pankhurst stepped into the breach, making the steep road harder for himself by announcing his intention to abide by the new Corrupt Practices Act, not yet in force, which forbade hired cabs and canvassers. His opponent did not follow this self-denying ordinance, and spent £5,559 on the election, the Doctor only £451.

Dr. Pankhurst's election address was probably the

most challenging ever offered to a British constituency; it included removal from the British constitution of "all non-representative elements," a proviso covering the abolition of the Monarchy and the House of Lords, Adult Suffrage for both sexes, indemnity on equal terms both of Members of Parliament and Ministers of State for loss of time in the public service, the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church and removal of religious privileges and disabilities, free compulsory secular education, nationalization of the land, transfer from the executive to the legislature of the power to make peace and war and to conclude treaties, an international tribunal, submission to which would at first be voluntary, the "United States of Europe" leading to "an International Commonwealth," drastic naval and military reductions, and finally Home Rule for Ireland, for which no English candidate had yet dared to take a stand.

Labouchere and Michael Davitt, the Irish leader, gave him their support. The candidature aroused a storm of interest throughout the country, but the executive of the Manchester Liberal Association and the two Liberal newspapers of the city, dominated by the lately defeated Imperialists, instructed their followers not to vote for the Doctor, on the ground that his candidature was subversive of Liberal discipline. Emmeline and her family were ardent for her husband; her father was his election agent. Impulsively she appealed for support to Lydia Becker, the stern, impassive secretary of the Suffrage Society, only to be met with a cold rebuff. The result of the poll, 6,000

for Dr. Pankhurst, 18,000 for his opponent, shocked the young wife. Political animosities, emboldened by the defeat, visited on her father a commercial boycott. From the distress of it his health failed; financial difficulties grew up from which he never recovered. Her husband lost many professional clients. Then, alas, she had differences with her father, who would not accept the Socialist creed she eagerly imbibed from her husband. She longed to get away from Manchester.

In the General Election of 1885, the Doctor accepted an invitation from the local Liberal and Radical Association to contest Rotherhithe. His Conservative opponents sought to impugn the Doctor's reputation. A Conservative brewer, who was financially in low water, delivered, by arrangement, a speech falsely charging the Doctor with certain crudely absurd expressions against accepted religious belief. The slander, uttered at a meeting in support of A. J. Balfour in Manchester, was immediately advertised in Rotherhithe; it produced a stampede amongst a section of the electorate, the religious controversy being then particularly acerbated, for it was in the height of Bradlaugh's historic struggle. Still more disastrous was Parnell's decision to cast the Irish vote against all Liberal candidates, to destroy Gladstone's majority, and force him to abandon coercion and capitulate to Home Rule. The Doctor was out by 2,800 votes to 3,327.

Agonized by a second defeat, Mrs. Pankhurst inveighed against the Irish, but her husband refused to take umbrage, declaring Parnell's policy politically sound. He took action against the authors of the

slander. The case was tried by Justice Grantham, a Conservative Parliamentary candidate in the same General Election, and just elevated to the Bench by the short-lived Conservative Government. After a bitter attack on the Doctor, the Judge refused to submit the case to the Jury. Mrs. Pankhurst, fiercely protesting: "I want to go to prison for contempt of Court!" wrote him:

" May 14th, 1886.

" MY LORD,—Your judgement of Wednesday, and your summing-up to the Jury to-day, are the concluding acts of a conspiracy to crush the public life of an honourable public man. It is to be regretted that there should be found on the English Bench a judge who will lend his aid to a disreputable section of the Tory Party in doing their dirty work; but for what other reason were you ever placed where you are?

" I have, my Lord, the honour to be,

" Your obedient servant,

" EMMELINE PANKHURST."

The Doctor appealed, and finally got a verdict, but the damages were not adequate to the great expenditure. From his abundant kindness, he agreed to accept a mere forty shillings.

Mrs. Pankhurst, eager for financial independence, determined to be a shopkeeper, dreaming in her ardent fashion that she would emancipate her husband from professional work to concentrate on politics. In a part of the Hampstead Road, which at that time was mainly

a market for low-priced food-stuffs, she and her sister, Mary, opened shop as Emerson & Co., with a miscellaneous array of fancy goods, in which great place was given to milking-stools and photo-frames, coloured by herself in so-called "art enamel," and decorated by her sister's flower painting. It was all wholly unsuited to the neighbourhood; though the young shopkeepers many times sought to adjust their ideals to the custom, they never touched bedrock.

The Doctor had chambers in London, but his work obliged him frequently to be in Manchester. Mrs. Pankhurst occasionally accompanied him. During her absence, their four-year-old son, Frank, was suddenly taken ill. His mother returned to find his condition critical. Diphtheria was mistakenly diagnosed as croup, and the child died without the appropriate treatment having been applied. A dangerous condition of the drainage was subsequently discovered. Her loss roused in Mrs. Pankhurst a bitter revolt against poverty and its hardships. Had she not chosen that dismal neighbourhood, she told herself, her boy would not have been lost; the doctors would have treated him very differently had she gone to them, not as a little shop-keeper, but as the wife of a distinguished lawyer.

The children were hurried away from the house of pestilence; the premises advertised to let. Spurning her small beginning, feverishly seeking forgetfulness in a new venture, she opened another shop on much more ambitious lines, in Berners Street, off Oxford Street. New ideas in house decoration were afloat; she jumped into the current, buying old Persian plates, oriental brasses and embroideries from the City

importers and cretonnes in the School of William Morris, getting a small carpenter to make, to her own instructions, the white painted furniture with fretwork excrescences, which then had a furious rage. A rush of custom aroused in her breast high currents of elation. She rented a big house, 8 Russell Square, and equipped it from the stock of Emerson's. The two great inter-communicating drawing-rooms were soon a centre of meetings and conferences for advanced causes. Radicals, Socialists, Fabians and Agnostics gathered there, free-thinkers and libertarians of every school and country. Her maternal grief was assuaged by the birth of another son; she was the political hostess of her youthful dream.

She took part in the match girls' strike with Annie Besant, and deplored her subsequent desertion of Free Thought and Socialism for Theosophy. Supporting the "New Trade Unionism," Mrs. Pankhurst and the Doctor were at the Trafalgar Square meeting on the so-called "Bloody Sunday," November 13th, 1889, when the mounted police charged the crowd and Edward Linnell was trampled to death. He was one of the founders of the "Law and Liberty League," formed to protest against the action of the authorities, and to defend John Burns, who was imprisoned as a result of the affray.

CHAPTER III

DEFENCE OF THE MARRIED WOMAN

1870-1894

THE cause of Women's Suffrage had fallen on evil days. From first to last, its opponents were mainly the professional Party politicians who objected to the penetration of women into their particular sphere, the brewing interests, the wealthy unoccupied "men about town," and the naval and military officer class, all of whom feared that, as the early feminists predicted, the enfranchisement of women would really introduce a new era in politics; that they would enforce drastic social reforms, interfere with the liberties and pleasures of men by extreme temperance legislation and severe punishment of sexual offences, place the interests of peace before those of trade and Empire.

The Bill, blocked by Gladstone's opposition in 1870, had been obstructed or voted down by Government orders ever since. Lydia Becker, who once protested to Mrs. Pankhurst: "Married women have all the plums of life!", had split the Suffrage movement; she had handed Dr. Pankhurst's Bill to a Conservative, named Forsyth, and with him added a clause excluding married women, in the objectionable phrase: "provided

that nothing in this Act contained shall enable women under coverture to be registered or to vote." Coverture simply meant that a married woman, being regarded as under her husband's authority, had no legal existence; her property and earnings automatically passed to him; she could not enter into any sort of contract, or sue or be sued in a court of law. The addition of the coverture clause seemed akin to treachery, the more so as the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, which gave married women possession of their own earnings, had partially destroyed coverture. Their right to vote in municipal elections was even then being contested, and an adverse judicial decision, based on the contention that coverture debarred them, had been recorded in the case of *Regina versus Harald*. Lydia Becker, using the timid and half-hearted to defeat the pioneers who had initiated the movement before she entered it, secured a majority for her policy in the Suffrage Societies. Fervent in defence of the married woman, Dr. and Mrs. Pankhurst, the Elmys and the Jacob Brights, went on apart to secure the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, the right of mothers to the custody and guardianship of their children under the Infants Act of 1886 and other reforms.

Meanwhile, the Suffrage cause languished. Hope was renewed with the so-called Country Franchise Bill of 1884, but Gladstone's threat to abandon the whole measure if the Women's Amendment were carried, caused its defeat; 104 pledged supporters turned tail, including the husband of Mrs. Fawcett. The movement for women's citizenship had waxed with the great franchise agitations of the eighteen-sixties and

eighteen-eighties. When the hopes of reformers turned from further extensions of the franchise to the political education of the existing electorate, the Suffrage movement found itself striving against the prevailing current. The Corrupt Practices Act, which forbade the employment of paid election canvassers, caused a demand for the voluntary service of women. Political leaders, who were bitterly opposed to the Suffrage, formed women's auxiliaries to help their parties, which absorbed many prominent Suffragists, whilst forbidding all mention of votes for women, lest it embarrass Party leaders. Mrs. Pankhurst joined the Women's Liberal Federation, and remained for a time a stormy petrel, agitating that it should declare for the vote.

With the Local Government Act of 1888, which created the County Councils, came a stir of new life; five women stood as candidates. Jane Cobden and Lady Sandhurst were elected to the London County Council, Miss Cons was appointed Alderman. Beresford Hope, Lady Sandhurst's defeated opponent, successfully proceeded against her election in the Court of Queen's Bench. She appealed to the House of Lords, where six judges decided that in the case of men, the right of voting implied the right of election, but women could exercise no right unless expressly granted.

By this time, 340 Members, an absolute majority of the Commons, were pledged to support Women's Suffrage. In 1889, a Bill, again containing the detested coverture clause, was believed to have a chance of success. The defenders of the married woman determined the clause must come out. At the annual general meeting of the Central National Society for

Women's Suffrage, a group of the foremost pioneers, including Jacob Bright and Dr. Pankhurst, urged on by their respective wives, moved Amendments and secured overwhelming majorities against the clause, but the executive persisted in keeping it. There seemed no answer but secession. In July 1889, a group of ladies gathered at Mrs. Pankhurst's home in Russell Square, resolved to form the Women's Franchise League. Its council included the Pankhursts, the Jacob Brights, Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy and her husband, Ben Elmy, Josephine Butler, Cunninghame Graham, William Lloyd Garrison, the apostle of negro emancipation, Jane Cobden, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the American Suffrage pioneer, Lady Sandhurst, Mrs. P. A. Taylor, who had convened the first Women's Suffrage Committee ever formed in London, and had been a member of the London Committee which organized the petition presented by Mill.

The Franchise League held advanced ideas on life in general, breaking from the cautious timidities of Lydia Becker, Mrs. Fawcett and their circle, into a freer atmosphere. It adopted Dr. Pankhurst's original Bill, with a new clause declaring that no person should be disqualified for election or appointment to any office or position by reason of sex or marriage. It worked to secure complete equality for women in divorce, inheritance and the custody and guardianship of their children. It readily won the sympathy of broad-minded libertarians, to whom the freeing of the human spirit is always more important than ephemeral political tactics. Yet it had a difficult task.

In 1892, Sir Albert Rollit secured a place for another

Bill to enfranchise widows and spinsters. Though this measure also failed to pass, its promoters asserted so insistently that it would at least gain a "half-loaf" for women, that when the platform of a St. James's Hall meeting in support of it was stormed by the Franchise League demanding the inclusion of married women, Mrs. Elmy withdrew from the secretaryship of the Franchise League. In the emergency, Mrs. Pankhurst rushed for the support of Mrs. Jacob Bright. The two became joint honorary secretaries, an association of much happiness for Mrs. Pankhurst.

Despite her husband's ardent encouragement, she declared herself incapable of public speaking; even to utter: "I second the resolution," was a tremendous ordeal to her. She took infinite pains for the Franchise League functions, arranging elaborate teas, music by celebrated artists, speeches by famous people; Women's Suffrage had grown dowdy and dull; it must come forward in a new guise, surrounded by all that was elegant and *recherché*. More militant than any of their contemporaries, these gatherings frequently ended with the resolution: "This meeting resolves itself into a lobbying committee." Then, whilst the majority dispersed to their homes, the zealous few would depart in hansom cabs for the House of Commons to interview Members of Parliament. Yet, alas, no headway was made with the vote.

Haldane¹ and Grey,² then rising young politicians,

¹ R. B. Haldane, Q.C., afterwards Lord Haldane, War Minister in Asquith's Government.

² Sir Edward Grey, afterwards Lord Grey of Fallodon, and Foreign Secretary under Asquith.

had agreed to sponsor the original Bill, with its new and comprehensive clause, but they took no step to advance it. When the Franchise League ladies interviewed Haldane in the Lobby of the House of Commons, and urged him to bring the measure before the House, he replied it was "a declaration of principle" which could not be enacted for fifty years. That stirred the wrath of Mrs. Pankhurst; ever after she regarded Haldane with the bitterest and most indignant resentment.

In 1893, Dr. Pankhurst's health began to fail. Mrs. Pankhurst had to confess to herself that Emerson & Co. was a costly burden which must be liquidated. The falling in of a superior lease had necessitated removal from Berners Street. Ambitiously she had selected Regent Street, but the overhead charges there overwhelmed her. The tenancy in Russell Square, the last five years of a ninety-nine years' lease, had come to an end. Her husband had to pay a heavy sum for dilapidations. The owner then had it pulled down to make way for the Hôtel Russell. This experience of the prerogatives of the ground landlord heightened her opposition to the established order. The wearisome task of liquidating the ventures she had started so hopefully five years before made her ill. It was decided to go for the winter to Southport, but so far from benefiting by the change, she became utterly languid and depressed. They moved to Disley, in the Cheshire hills, and took rooms in a farm-house. She interested herself in the hay-making and harvest, hired a pony, drove her children out for long days in the country,

blackberrying with an eager zest which outran theirs.

Then suddenly she turned from all that—began attending meetings and committees in Manchester, found a house to her taste at 4 Buckingham Crescent, Daisy Bank Road, Victoria Park, worked with her old zest to furnish it.

The cause of the married woman was meanwhile rising to its crisis. It was a question whether the Local Government Act of 1894 would sweep away the legal barrier against the votes of married women, or would confirm it, and take from them also the franchise for Boards of Guardians and Vestries they already exercised. Ursula Bright toiled steadfastly. Walter McLaren, given charge of the Married Women's Amendment, enraged her by telling the House he only wanted to preserve their vote for the Vestries and Guardians, not to get them any new rights! The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, led by Millicent Fawcett and Helen Blackburn, its secretary, still worked for widows and spinsters only. Lydia Becker had died in 1890, but her influence still held.

Emmeline Pankhurst weighed in with tremendous energy, joined the Lancashire and Cheshire Union of Women's Liberal Associations, formed a joint committee of many organizations, organized a Free Trade Hall demonstration. Ursula Bright was doubtful of so ambitious a project, but delighted by its success. Presently she was expostulating at the impetuosity of the Manchester Committee, which, under the urge of Mrs. Pankhurst, was calling on Liberal Members of Parliament to vote down their own Government's Bill

should the women's cause be defeated—a foretaste of the militant policies to come! Like all the Suffragists of her period, Ursula Bright feared to alienate friends by demanding anything drastic; she wrote to Mrs. Pankhurst: "Remember, they unfortunately lose nothing by voting against us, except their self-respect, which is only a trifle!" Emmeline Pankhurst was of more impetuous temper!

Happily, the Act of 1894 went through with all Local Government franchises secured to women, married or unmarried, on the same terms as men. The last blow at Coverture had been struck! Bills to enfranchise widows and spinsters only were now discarded for ever! The Women's Franchise had achieved its purpose. Emmeline Pankhurst rejoiced greatly; it was the first great legislative success for women in which she had taken a vital part.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIALIST AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE

1894-1900

SINCE the eighteen-seventies, when she took her husband's part in his discussions with her father, Emmeline Pankhurst had counted herself a Socialist. The Doctor and she had been early members of the Fabian Society. They would have joined the Social Democratic Federation, but the personality of H. M. Hyndman and his anti-feminist attitude repelled them. They met Keir Hardie at the International Socialist Congress of 1888, rejoiced at his return to Parliament for West Ham in 1892, and his brave stand for the unemployed. When, in 1894, the Independent Labour Party he had formed the previous year engaged in its first Parliamentary contest at Attercliffe, they went down to help. Of all the people she knew in politics, of all the men who came into Emmeline Pankhurst's life, the one, after her husband, who meant most to her was undoubtedly Keir Hardie.

Dr. Pankhurst's adhesion to the I.L.P. aroused excitement in Manchester. The Party was being assailed

with great bitterness. The Doctor was boycotted by old clients. He did not flinch; nay, increased his platform activity; and at the first annual conference of the I.L.P. accepted membership of its executive. Mrs. Pankhurst told the *Manchester Labour Prophet*, a little local Labour organ, that since she joined the Socialists she had not received the customary invitations to the Town Hall. On July 20th, 1894, she was adopted as an I.L.P. candidate for the Manchester School Board; though not returned, she was forced to make a serious beginning on the platform.

The winter of 1894 was marked by a crisis of unemployment. In those days there was no insurance, no public relief of any sort for the so-called "able-bodied poor," save admission to the workhouse, which the bulk of the unemployed would not accept; had they done so, only an insignificant fraction of them could have been housed. Under the stirring lead of Dr. and Mrs. Pankhurst, a Committee for the Relief of the Unemployed was formed. Two thousand people were fed daily in Stevenson's Square, large numbers also in Ancoats, Gorton and Openshaw. Mrs. Pankhurst drove out each morning collecting gifts of food from the stallholders in Shudehill Market and the city merchants, then took her place on a lorry handing out soup and bread. She formed a women's sub-committee to cope with the urgent need of the mothers and children. These efforts were used as the basis for the demand that Parliament should make itself responsible for the unemployed, and empower local authorities to acquire such land, machinery and materials as might be needed to provide them with work at Trade Union

rates. In the height of the agitation, Mrs. Pankhurst was elected to the Chorlton Board of Guardians, heading the poll in Openshaw, where distress was greatest.

When the unemployed, led by her husband, marched to the Chorlton Poor Law offices, she was there, on the Board, to compel the admittance of a deputation. Its claims were scornfully rejected in a heated scene, but under her protests, by turns passionate and persuasive, and the deafening roar of the indignant crowd outside, the Guardians hastily reversed their decision, and dispatched a deputation of their own to the City Council, urging it to find immediate work for the unemployed, and to take joint action with the Guardians in establishing arrangements to prevent the recurrence of such crises. Her success in securing this unprecedented action gave her an ascendancy on the Board which she never lost.

In September 1895, she read a paper at the North Western Poor Law Conference on "the powers and duties of Poor Law Guardians in times of exceptional distress," contending that Statutes of Elizabeth and George III had empowered Boards of Guardians to employ workless people in all kinds of industry and to acquire land and material to this end. These powers had never been withdrawn by Parliament, but had been put out of use by the restrictive action of the Poor Law Commissioners and their successors, the Local Government Board. In that conference of case-hardened administrators and experts, it was the first time such proposals had been heard; yet the agitation which had raged through the previous winter lent point and weight to them, and her presence, unexpectedly gentle

and persuasive, induced a respectful hearing. Sir Walter Foster, M.P., observed that he had never listened to a more able and lucid explanation of the problem, or one more calculated to assist in its solution. Sir John Hibbert expressed agreement with the demand for wider powers for Boards of Guardians.

The stir created by the paper enhanced her influence on the Chorlton Board. The clerk, David Bloomfield, gave her every assistance in his power. Reform of harsh and hoary abuses was overdue. The old men and women who had come into the workhouse to end their days sat feebly huddled on backless forms; they had nowhere to keep their letters and little keepsakes, the women lacked even a single pocket in their clothes. The children were without nightwear. Little girls of seven and eight years, clad, winter and summer, in thin cotton frocks with low necks and short sleeves, their miserable little legs devoid of nether garments, were set to scrub draughty stone corridors, as were pregnant women until the very day of their confinement. Corruption and waste were rife. The diet was mainly of bread, served out daily by weight, in one solid ration, as in a prison. The majority of the inmates left a large portion of it; immense quantities went to the swilltub. The hospital and insane asylum were ill-managed and understaffed. A single young probationer was nightly stationed alone in charge of three pavilions.

Emmeline Pankhurst demanded reform with sorrowful wrath and persuasive plea, offering a practical solution for every difficulty. A group of supporters gradually formed around her. Lockers for their belongings, wooden arm-chairs were provided for the

old people. Dress and diet were reformed. The bread was cut and spread with margarine, made into puddings, substituted by other foods, each inmate having as much as he or she could eat. The hospital was reorganized. Best of all, in her eyes, was the decision, secured by her early in 1895, to remove the children to cottage homes in the country. She was on the building sub-committee, and expended a wealth of energy and zeal that the homes should be well built, both comfortable and pleasant to the eye. To achieve all this, she had tremendous contests with the reactionary rate-savers on the Board; the chief of whom was a boot merchant named Mainwaring, who was seen to write on the blotting-paper before him a self-caution for the expected contest: "Keep your temper!"

She delivered long reports to her Openshaw constituents, and now spoke also at big Socialist meetings in Manchester and elsewhere. Her speeches were simple and untechnical, mainly devoted to municipal Socialism. The miseries of destitution daily forced themselves upon her as Guardian; as Socialist comrade she heard them from the working-class mother's own angle, and learnt the bitter humiliations and inadequacies of both public and private charity.

Stronger than ever was her desire to get her husband into Parliament because of her daily contact with social conditions desperately calling for change. In the General Election of 1895, he accepted the invitation of the I.L.P. to contest the Gorton Division, of which Openshaw was a part. She was elated; her work there would aid in winning the seat, and in Parliament he would have Keir Hardie and this hopeful

young Party around him! Sir William Mather, the retiring Liberal Member for Gorton, urged his supporters to vote for Dr. Pankhurst, as a man who, above all Party considerations, would be a notable asset to the House of Commons. The President of the local Liberal Association withdrew in his favour; but the Liberal Association, unable to strike a bargain by securing the withdrawal of an I.L.P. candidate in a neighbouring constituency, sent out its fiat against the Doctor. In vain Mrs. Pankhurst, with tears in her voice, appealed at the street corners: "You put me at the top of the poll; will you not vote for the man who has taught me all I know?" In vain she dashed up to Liverpool to plead with T. P. O'Connor for the Irish vote; he answered: "We have nothing but admiration for your husband, but we cannot support the people he is mixed up with!" "When Keir Hardie stood up in the House of Commons for the people with a faithful, earnest, manly appeal, he stood alone. . . . Are you not going to send other men to support him?" Dr. Pankhurst asked. The voters answered: Hatch 5,865, Pankhurst 4,261; the expenses were: Hatch £1,375, Pankhurst £342.

Next day, Mrs. Pankhurst, bravely overcoming disappointment, hired a trap and drove off alone to the Colne Valley to help the I.L.P. candidate there. Returning through Gorton after another defeat, she was recognized and stoned by a crowd of roughs, who had celebrated the Tory victory in free beer.

The I.L.P. maintained a vigorous outdoor propaganda; to check it, the Parks Committee, whose Chairman had been opposed by an I.L.P. candidate, John

Harker, prohibited the I.L.P. meetings in Boggart Hole Clough, an uncultivated open space. The meetings continued despite the prohibition; Harker was fined. Dr. Pankhurst, defending him, gave notice of appeal. Mrs. Pankhurst and others kept up the meetings and were proceeded against in their turn. The men were fined, and refusing to pay, were soon in jail; the case against her was dismissed, though she clearly stated her intention to repeat her offence as long as she were permitted to be at large. Sunday after Sunday she took the chair at the Clough meetings now of enormous size, her pink straw bonnet a tiny rallying point in the great concourse, grouped on the slopes of that natural amphitheatre. All her old diffidence disappeared, her mellow, effortless tones carrying far beyond the shouts of excited men. She challenged the Court to imprison her, but her case was continually adjourned. Others were proceeded against; they could not be imprisoned because she was not.

The Town Clerk, the Chairman of the Parks Committee and the Lord Mayor himself had gone to see the meetings; they were compelled to appear, obliged to deny the words of their own Counsel. Keir Hardie and the best-known speakers of the I.L.P. got themselves arrested. Great crowds assembled outside the Court to cheer the defence. The City Council passed a new by-law prohibiting all meetings in the Manchester parks except by special authorization of the Parks Committee, making it clear that no I.L.P. meetings would be sanctioned. The Home Secretary compelled the Council to revise the by-law, and give him an undertaking that no reasonable application

would be refused. It was a tremendous victory for Mrs. Pankhurst, the heroine of the struggle.

In 1896, she was over in Antwerp with her husband, to protest against the imprisonment of Ben Tillett for Trade Union activities. In 1897, she read a paper at the Northern Poor Law Conference, claiming greater powers for the Guardians to adopt neglected children. The same year the Doctor won a resounding victory over civic incompetence and corruption, by defeating a bad and costly scheme to convey Manchester sewage into the River Mersey, which the City Council had adopted, though it had lately established its own sewage plant at tremendous expense. Certain City Councillors attempted to buy off his opposition by promising to retain him as Counsel for the Corporation in the Private Bill necessary to get the scheme through Parliament, whereby he would have made upwards of £10,000. Such a bait never for an instant attracted him. He compelled a town's meeting of citizens to decide the issue, and won a vote against the scheme. The Council retorted by declaring a poll, but again the scheme was voted down.

When her first-born was seventeen, Mrs. Pankhurst arranged with her old friend, Noémie, now settled with her husband and children in Geneva, to exchange daughters for a year. In June 1898, she was to take Christabel to her friends. As the Doctor set off for his Chambers that morning of their journey, a sudden great grief at leaving him overwhelmed her. She caught him back from the door, throwing her arms about him with caresses and cries of endearment, unwonted in their passion, gripped by a sudden fear.

Yet she brushed it away—all that was but melancholy superstition.

Eagerly she cast off the sad preoccupations and labours of murky Manchester, and rose with zest to the interests of the journey, the magnificence of the mountains, the wonder of the lake. On the jetty at the Quai de Corsier, she was welcomed by the warm embrace of dear Noémie, grown incredibly stout, but amazingly handsome still. How proudly did Emmeline display her grown-up daughter! How joyously she reacted to the homely French *ménage*, where Noémie, in her spotless white wrappers, bustled capably, scolding her husband and children with maternal tyranny; all tender solicitude towards the friend of her youth. What excursions they made; how the years fell away and left her carefree!

She was suddenly summoned by telegram: "Please come home; I am not well." The Doctor himself had sent it. She came, with the clutch of a mother's yearning at her breast, believing that, of his tenderness, he had masked, in that phrase, some harm to her little son! Ah, what a doleful journey, in breathless haste, seeking always to gain another hour.

In the train between London and Manchester, someone entered the compartment with an evening newspaper. It was open before her, black-bordered. She read the news of her husband's death. . . . Her cry of anguish revealed her identity to the passengers, all moved by her great sorrow.

From the morning at ten o'clock when he died till the small hours of the next day, I waited her tragic homecoming; the two younger children, one barely

twelve, the other less than eight, had fallen asleep in the stunning bereavement, whose full import they were too young to realize. Her brother Herbert, who for years had been divided from her by family jars, her sister Mary, and the nurse, Susannah, now both married, had come to give such consolation as they might.

A great procession representing the many good causes to which he had given generous and able service followed the Doctor to the grave. "Faithful and true and my loving comrade," Walt Whitman's words, she chose for his headstone.

Bravely she braced herself to meet the loss which meant the tearing away of that great comradeship, lived so high-heartedly for nineteen years. The need for action spurred her; she and her children would have nothing to live on now. She resigned from the Chorlton Guardians, resolved to open another "Emerson's," talked herself into the belief that in Manchester it would surely pay, woefully mourned not having opened it sooner, and thereby reduced the load on the shoulders of him who was no more.

The materials for the hopeful project were no more than a few dozen cushion-covers when the Chorlton Guardians, from their great respect and sympathy, unexpectedly offered her a registrarship of births and deaths, which lay in their disposal. She accepted the office, but decided to persevere with "Emerson's." It would be a business for Christabel, she declared. I had a free studentship to the Manchester Municipal School of Art, and presently a scholarship; but Christabel, said her mother, had revealed no special bent, since she had refused to become a dancer; for several years

her mother's cherished dream. In the meantime, she was still to have her year in Switzerland. The house in Victoria Park was now too costly. Moreover, it was unsuitable for the registration office. We moved to 62 Nelson Street, off the Oxford Road, a humbler residence, yet with an air of distinction nevertheless; Mrs. Pankhurst could not endure a commonplace house in a row. Her brother Herbert came to share the expense of it with her, and so ends would be made to meet.

The registrarship brought new contacts with despairing women; mothers of over-numerous families coming, anxious-hearted, to record yet another mouth to fill, deserted wives; saddest of all, the young unmarried mothers, some of them, poor children, no more than thirteen years of age, relieved to discover they might reveal their pitiful stories to a woman registrar of gentle aspect. Sometimes the child's own father was responsible for her plight. Wrathful pity burned within her at sight of so much wretchedness. Already, as a Poor Law Guardian, whose duty it was to institute proceedings against such fathers when mothers and infants became chargeable to the rates, it had been brought home to her that the maintenance orders imposed by the Courts amounted to the merest pittance, usually five shillings a week or less, and were frequently never paid.¹

¹ No complaint was then legally permissible by the unfortunate mother until the payments were thirteen weeks in arrear. A man desirous of saving himself against such an order had only to get another to state in the witness-box that he also had had sexual relations with the girl for her claim against the child's father to be set aside, despite the strongest possible evidence of his paternity.

1898-1900] THE LIFE OF EMMELINE PANKHURST

Though in the first shock and difficulty of her bereavement she almost withdrew from active politics, Keir Hardie and those she knew best among the I.L.P. speakers, found open house with her still. When the Boer War was declared she publicly opposed it, and, with sixteen others, resigned from the Fabian Society because of its refusal to declare against the war. For her opposition to it, and some words of his own, her little son was set upon by the boys of his school, and found by the schoolmaster lying unconscious in the road; a cowardly deed for he was the youngest boy in the school.

When, in the General Election of 1900, a woman told Mrs. Pankhurst that Keir Hardie was in for Merthyr Tydfil, she cried: "I must give you a kiss for that! He is a good man!" She wrote to him: "Parliament will have more interest for us now." Her political activity returned. In the same year she was elected, under I.L.P. auspices, to the Manchester School Board, on which she served till March 31st, 1903, when the care of education was transferred to the Municipal and County Councils. Women were not yet eligible for these bodies, but they could be co-opted to the Education Committees, and on the nomination of the I.L.P. Councillors, she became a member for that of Manchester. Parliament had not yet granted power to the local authorities to feed starving school children; the Manchester women teachers were providing meals for the underfed children in their classes out of their own meagre earnings, and giving the greater part of their own dinner-hour to serve them. She was indignant that these devoted women were paid at a

1898-1900] SOCIALIST AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE

lower rate than men, though they taught all the subjects taken by the men, and in addition, sewing and domestic economy. As a member of the Committee on technical instruction, she observed that training for many skilled occupations was closed to women, not by reason of any unfitness on their part, but because, on account of their inferior status in Society and the labour market, men believed their presence in any occupation would inevitably reduce wages. Notably they were excluded from the Trade School classes for professional cooks!

CHAPTER V

THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

1899-1907

THE Labour Party Emmeline Pankhurst had so ardently desired in the eighteen-nineties had come. The Trade Union Congress of 1899 had accepted Keir Hardie's scheme to run Labour candidates under the auspices of a Labour Representation Committee¹ of affiliated Trade Unions and Socialist organizations, of which the largest and most effective was his own I.L.P. The Socialists thus gained the mass backing they had lacked. The Taff Vale judgement of 1901, which was a terrible reverse to the Unions, swung almost the whole Trade Union movement into line for political action. I.L.P. enthusiasm ran high.

Mrs. Pankhurst shared in the rejoicing. As we have seen, she had formed her political opinions in an atmosphere of reform and liberation. Her impressionable nature was now to be influenced by a narrowly exclusive feminist school, which saw the world of Labour in terms of "beef-steaks and butter for work-

¹ Afterwards here referred to as the Labour Party, though it did not adopt the title till some years later.

1900-3] THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

ing men; tea and bread for working women," refusing to admit that the welfare of the working woman, either as mother or wage-earner, was in any degree involved in raising the status of the working class as a whole. The hitherto dormant political interest of her eldest daughter was suddenly aroused by contact with the North of England Society for Women's Suffrage.¹ When the I.L.P. propagandists came as usual to stay at Nelson Street, Christabel heckled them fiercely. Old friends, like the Bruce Glasiers, were dismayed by her insistence on what they considered a mere barren issue of bourgeois politics. They had broken out of political Liberalism burning with the hope of a Socialist Commonwealth. They did not, like the active feminists, feel the disfranchisement of women as a searing brand of inferiority. Some of the opportunist were actually opposed to votes for women, declaring they would vote Tory, being more reactionary than men. Philip Snowden, later a strong supporter, was then an anti. Mrs. Pankhurst was thrown into a ferment; was it for this that she had devoted nine years of service and sacrifice to the I.L.P.? She bitterly seconded Christabel's reproaches to her that she had allowed the cause of women to be effaced. From that time forward she often told me: "Christabel is not like other women; not like you and me; she will never be led away by her affections!"

As was characteristic of her, once she had re-entered the franchise struggle, it became for her the only cause in the world. Moreover, this, and this only, was the

¹ The successor of the Manchester National Society of Women's Suffrage formed by Dr. Pankhurst and others in 1865.

critical moment to push it forward. Another Reform Act was due. If manhood suffrage went through without women, it would be impossible to get the franchise question reopened for a long period: and the difficulty of getting the vote would be enormously increased. The Labour Party, now becoming a reality, must make the freedom of women "A Party Question."

She resolved to form a new organization to be called the "Women's Social and Political Union," taking as its slogan not "Women's Suffrage," as of yore, but the more vivid battle-cry, "*Votes for Women!*" It is curious to recall that the telling phrase was so tardily coined. On October 10th, 1903, she invited a few obscure women members of the I.L.P. to her home, and with them formed the new Union.

Then Keir Hardie appeared; he cordially welcomed the new movement and approved its tactics; a single-clause Bill to abolish the sex disability, leaving other franchise reforms to be dealt with subsequently; a new organization of women to push forward their own cause. Under his urge, the I.L.P. N.A.C.¹ agreed to support Dr. Pankhurst's original Bill admitting women to the Parliamentary vote on the same terms as men.

The difficulty facing those who desired to make *Votes for Women* popular with Labour people was the complicated and backward state of the electoral law. The poor man could qualify only as a householder; or perhaps as a lodger, if he occupied unfurnished rooms, the rateable value of which was not less than £10

¹ National Administrative Council of the Independent Labour Party.

a year. The man of property could vote, without restriction, wherever he could prove a qualification as householder, freeholder, copy holder, £10 occupier, University graduate, and under other heads beside. If the vote were to be extended to women on the same terms, the working-class mother would not be able to qualify, for her husband, not she, would exercise the single vote open to them as householders. The ill-paid workwoman who was a lodger had seldom sticks to furnish a room even if it were rated high enough to carry a vote. On the other hand, the wives, daughters and mothers of the rich would easily provide themselves with the required qualification. To murmurs that Votes for Women on the existing terms would increase the power of wealth, Keir Hardie replied by inviting the I.L.P. branches to take a census of the women already voting in Local Government elections. Forty branches undertook the arduous task; they recorded that out of 59,920 women voters canvassed, 82.45 per cent. were of the working class. Here, it was claimed, was the evidence needed to silence opponents, who denounced what they termed the "Ladies Bill." The I.L.P. Annual Conference in Cardiff, at Easter 1904, showed its friendship to the cause of women by electing Mrs. Pankhurst to the N.A.C. and instructing it to sponsor the Women's Enfranchisement Bill. Keir Hardie immediately arranged for the measure to be formally introduced by the Labour Members of Parliament.

That autumn I went to London with a National Scholarship to the Royal College of Art, and took up lodgings at 45 Park Walk, Chelsea. In February 1905,

my mother came to stay with me for the opening of the new Parliamentary session. Our mission was to induce some Member of Parliament to sponsor Votes for Women on one of the Friday afternoons set apart for the Second Reading of private Members' Bills, places for which were drawn by ballot. We were alone in this quest; not even the officials of the old National Union¹ were there. Keir Hardie, from the first, had promised us his place, but not another Member acceded to our pleading. Daily from the assembling to the rising of the House, often past midnight, we were there. Keir Hardie drew no place; the first twelve were pledged to other measures, but Bamford Slack, the holder of the thirteenth, agreed to take the Bill.

A thrill of life ran through the whole Suffrage movement, which had sunk into an almost moribund coma of hopelessness. That fact must always be given due emphasis when the history of the movement is reviewed.

The Bill had been set down for May 12th, the best place to be had, but only as Second Order of the day; the opponents could prevent it coming on at all by prolonging discussion on the First Order, a small utility proposition to compel road vehicles to carry a light behind as well as before. Keir Hardie had pulled every string he could to get it withdrawn. Mrs. Pankhurst was almost frenzied at the unimaginative folly

¹ The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, a federation resulting from the original Societies formed independently in various towns. Of this organization, once led by Lydia Becker, Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett was now the leader. It remained non-militant and opposed the militant W.S.P.U.

of men who could hold this "trumpety little measure" against the claimant need of womanhood in bonds.

On the fateful 12th, the Lobbies of Parliament were thronged with women, Suffragists from near and far, Lancashire textile workers, more than four hundred from the Co-operative Women's Guild, confident of success and mustered quite unofficially by an Australian, Nellie Alma Martel, who had run for the Commonwealth Parliament. Spurred to new eagerness by this responsive crowd, Mrs. Pankhurst saw through the "peep-hole," by which visitors may look into the House, uproarious legislators rolling in laughter at the absurdities by which the debate was being prolonged.

The Bill was talked out, of course. The placid representatives of the old National Union at once withdrew, but Mrs. Pankhurst would not mildly accept frustration; a meeting of protest must be held at the door of Parliament. She thrust forward Mrs. Elmy, senior in age and longest worker in the cause; but the police rudely jostled her and all of us down the steps. We gathered at the statue of Richard I, beside the House of Lords. The police inspector intervened. Where could we meet then; where could poor women voice their indignation? Mrs. Pankhurst demanded, with tremulant voice and blazing eyes, passionately feminine, proudly commanding. The police inspector hesitated, argued, led us to Broad Sanctuary by the Abbey Gates. Keir Hardie stepped into the ranks, taking the hand of old Mrs. Elmy. The little unnoticed meeting vainly demanded Government intervention to save the talked-out Bill. Yet a new note

had been struck; the Militant Suffrage movement had begun.

The days of the Tory Government were running out. On October 13th, Sir Edward Grey was coming to the historic Manchester Free Trade Hall to announce the policy of the coming Liberal Government. The W.S.P.U. was to meet him with the question: "Will the Liberal Government give women the vote?" Unless he gave a definite undertaking in the affirmative, which was considered improbable, for he had refused to receive a deputation, a disturbance was to be made, which would cause a sensation throughout the country. Mrs. Pankhurst had to consider her registrarship, but Christabel set out for the meeting with the words: "I shall sleep in prison to-night!" She was accompanied by a new recruit, Annie Kenney, an Oldham cotton operative.

Grey refused to answer the question. The girls were thrown out, and were arrested after a struggle in the hall and an attempt to speak in the street outside. When the turmoil had subsided, Grey said: "As far as I can understand, the trouble arose from a desire to know my opinion on Women's Suffrage. That is a question which I could not deal with here to-night, because it is not, and I do not think it is likely to be, a Party question."

Christabel was ordered imprisonment for a week, Annie Kenney for three days, in lieu of fines which they refused to pay. Mrs. Pankhurst hurried to the cells with proud congratulations, pleading in motherly solicitude: "You have carried it far enough; now I

think you ought to let me pay your fines and take you home." "If you pay my fine I will never go home again," her daughter answered hotly.¹ Mrs. Pankhurst was deeply moved. Keir Hardie telegraphed: "The thing is a dastardly outrage; but do not worry, it will do immense good to the cause. Can I do anything?" He was the only prominent person who uttered a word of support. The Press was unanimous in hostility; Suffragists throughout the country silent; but the big Manchester public gave the prisoners a tremendous ovation. Christabel was threatened with expulsion from Manchester University, and obliged to pledge herself to refrain from making any further disturbance. The rest of us must continue the fight.

The Conservatives resigned on December 4th. Campbell-Bannerman formed a Liberal Government. A General Election was called for the New Year. In town after town, where Cabinet Ministers appeared, we raised our little white banners, uttered our cry: "Will the Liberal Government give women the vote?" were violently ejected, held our meetings outside. Sometimes the people struck us with sticks and umbrellas; they were wild to get the Tories out and thought we were trying to help them. Twenty years of Conservative rule had left a big crop of reforms overdue. But everywhere we had some support. In Manchester the audiences often prevented Winston Churchill speaking because he refused to answer us.

Mrs. Pankhurst was in Merthyr Tydfil working for

¹ *Vide My Own Story* by Emmeline Pankhurst (Eveleigh Nash, 1914).

Keir Hardie, who was speaking for the fifty other nominees of the Labour Party, and only appeared in Merthyr, well-nigh voiceless, the day before the poll. She rejoiced with him in the victory of twenty-nine Labour candidates; Labour was a power to be reckoned with at last!

I was back again at College. Annie Kenney joined me at Park Cottage with two pounds, advanced by Mrs. Pankhurst, "to rouse London." We organized for the opening of Parliament, on February 16th, 1906, a procession of women and a meeting in the Caxton Hall. Keir Hardie found a donor to pay the cost. Alfieri, of the then new *Daily Mirror*, W. T. Stead, and others, kept the movement in the news; already the *Daily Mail* had christened us "Suffragettes."

On the day of the meeting, four hundred poor women from East London marched to the Caxton Hall. Already it was thronged; Suffragists, nobodies, somebodies, were there to see those extraordinary Suffragettes. Emmeline Pankhurst stood before them, appealing, compelling, wearing the dignity of a mother who has known great sorrow; her habitual elegance of dress and manner told with them as women. With scarcely a gesture, phrases of simple eloquence sprang to her lips, her eye flashed lightnings. Her wonderful voice, poignant and mournful, and shot with passion, rose with a new thrill. Deeply she stirred them; many silently pledged their faith to her for life. News came that the King's Speech was read, that it promised to democratize the men's franchise by abolishing plural voting; but to women offered nothing. She swept them out, and on with her to the Commons. The

rain was pouring in torrents; that was the least of it; they were following her into the militant movement, and knew not whither the step might lead. For the first time in memory the great doors of the Strangers' Entrance to Parliament were closed during the session of the House. The Commons police were on guard to prevent the admittance of any woman. The militant and her following stood at the door defiant; Parliament buzzed with interest. At last the Speaker agreed to permit relays of twelve women within the Lobby. Hour after hour, in the rain, they waited their turn to interview legislators who promised nothing! The experience stoked the spark of militant impatience she had lit.

Within the citadel, Keir Hardie, replying to the King's Speech, as leader of the new Labour Party, demanded the removal of the "scandal and disgrace" of treating women no better than the criminal and insane. Had the Party been ready to second him vigorously in that demand, there might have been a different history to write, for the Liberals were then keenly susceptible to the competition of the rising Labour movement. In this, as in much else, however, his colleagues failed to support him. They had fought the election on a programme of immediate demands, for which their constituents expected them to fight. Votes for Women had scarcely figured in that programme. It is true the Trade Union Congress had been pledged to Adult Suffrage for both sexes since its formation, and specifically to Votes for Women since 1884, but the Suffrage had not been made a vital question. Just before Parliament assembled, a resolution to support Votes for Women on the existing terms

was brought before the delegate conference of the Labour Party. It was attacked by opponents demanding Adult Suffrage only, and was carried only by 446,000 votes to 429,000, a narrow margin indeed to arm Keir Hardie in a stubborn fight.

There was many an acrid and painful discussion in his rooms in the old Elizabethan house at 14 Nevill's Court, off Fleet Street, wherein he sat, dark-browed and silent, and Mrs. Pankhurst wept and stormed. He was doing all he knew for the cause she loved, but it was not in him to argue or protest. She believed that to force through Votes for Women would buttress his power and that of the Labour movement. She was convinced he could do it if he were determined, and had the strong personal desire that he should do it out of his friendship for her. This strain made the contest more sharply poignant. She was torn between her affection for Hardie and the Socialist movement, her passionate zeal for the women's cause, and the growing influence of Christabel, who desired to cut the W.S.P.U. entirely clear of the Labour Movement; already she believed Votes for Women would be given by the Tories, because, to "dish" the Liberals, they had given Household Suffrage to men in 1867.

The Labour Party decided that any places for Bills drawn by its members should be put at the disposal of the Party, to be allocated by majority vote. Keir Hardie nevertheless promised us that if he should draw a place himself, it would go to our Bill, whatever the majority might have to say. He was unsuccessful, but five places were drawn by other members of the Party. All foresaw that four of them must go to the

repeal of the Taff Vale decision, the right of the unemployed to work, the feeding of destitute school children, and Old Age Pensions, for these were measures foremost in the Party programme. One place remained in doubt. Mrs. Pankhurst demanded it should be given to Votes for Women, but the Party decided for a checkweighing Bill to protect the earnings of workmen. She could not forgive the blow. That the Labour Party won triumphant success¹ in this first session only embittered her disappointment.

Despite all jars, when controversy could be thrust aside, Mrs. Pankhurst was never so happy as in the hours spent with Keir Hardie during his very brief spells of relaxation, walking in St. James's Park or on the Embankment, taking tea of his own making at Nevill's Court. Unswerving in friendship, he raised £300 to give the W.S.P.U. a start in London. Infinitely more important, he introduced her to one whom his discerning eye selected as the ideal honorary treasurer for the W.S.P.U.: Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, a devoted social worker. She and her husband, Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, threw themselves unreservedly into the Suffragette movement; she ardent, eloquent and magnetic, he a great organizer, with tremendous drive and resource. They brought to the Union money and a considerable social circle, and

¹ The Labour Party Bills for the feeding of necessitous school children and to repeal the Taff Vale decision both passed Second Reading; the first was taken over by the Government, and the policy of the second embodied in a Government Bill. The Party secured a grant for unemployment, carried a resolution for Old Age Pensions, and compelled a Government promise to introduce them in a subsequent session.

developed the spectacular side of the propaganda, advertising the cause by kites, boats, poster, umbrella and horseback parades.

Speakers and organizers were engaged. The heckling of Cabinet Ministers increased, great meetings held in all the principal towns. Campbell-Bannerman was asked to receive a deputation. On his refusal, Suffragettes called at his official residence, 10 Downing Street. Denied admittance, they seated themselves on his doorstep, and were removed to Canon Row Police Station. He sent to their cells a promise to receive a deputation shortly, and directed their release. Though the militants were accused of ruining the cause, it was leaping forward throughout the country as never before. Even in Parliament two hundred Members formed themselves into a Women's Suffrage Committee and petitioned the Prime Minister to hear them. He consented to receive them with a joint deputation of all women's societies on May 19th.

Keir Hardie had won a place for a Parliamentary Resolution for Votes for Women, which assumed importance as a means of revealing the opinion of the new Parliament to Campbell-Bannerman, before his reply to the deputation. Mrs. Pankhurst anticipated the Resolution would be talked out like last year's Bill. She came up to London resolved that the insult should not pass without a resounding protest. Behind the heavy brass grille which screened its opponents from the House, the "Ladies' Gallery" of the Commons was filled with her militants. She awaited impatiently an official statement. It was given by Herbert Gladstone; the Cabinet, being divided on the

question, would leave the House free to vote as it chose. This failure to give hope of Government action, and hilarious sallies on the subject of woman and her disabilities, evoked angry retorts from the gallery. The Speaker gave orders for the police to clear it if anything more were heard. Samuel Evans, who had talked out Bamford Slack's Bill, rose to do the same again, turning occasionally to scan the clock with a sardonic smile. Keir Hardie, watch in hand, waited the moment to move the closure. The women in the gallery craned forward, waiting the signal of Mrs. Pankhurst. Suddenly Irene Miller, daughter of a pioneer Suffragist, saw the police entering the gallery; fearing our demonstration would be prevented, she shouted, as they do in Parliament: "Divide! divide!" We all joined in, flags were thrust through the grille. The police jumped over the benches to throw us out. The House was in a turmoil. Blown and dishevelled, we descended to the Lobby. A few women, Members' wives and a Suffragist or two, avoided us scornfully. Members crowded round to scold us, declaring we had destroyed all chance of a favourable reply from the Prime Minister. If Mrs. Pankhurst, facing her opponents disdainfully, felt any qualms, she did not show them. Keir Hardie came forward to defend us, declaring the long ill-treatment of our cause, and the presence of the police in the gallery, sufficient explanation of our action, and overruling the intention of the non-militant Suffragists and their Parliamentary friends to exclude the W.S.P.U. from the deputation to Campbell-Bannerman.

When the representatives of 260,000 organized

women, Suffragists, Co-operators, Temperance Workers, Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists, Trade Unionists, assembled in Downing Street to plead for their vote, Emmeline Pankhurst uttered an unusual note of tragedy:

“ We feel this question so keenly that we are prepared to sacrifice for it life itself, or what is perhaps even harder, the means by which we live ! ”

There was the sharpness of actuality in her words; her business, now almost disregarded, was drifting to its end; her frequent absences from the registrarship were the subject of official rebuke; she might easily lose the position. Her daughters were not yet launched; her delicate son of fifteen was as yet by no means equipped to earn a living. Her old friend Noémie had written a harsh rebuke, telling her to leave politics alone and give her attention to placing her daughters in professions; but she could not settle down to that; she was driven by a desperate heart-hunger for the ideal. Still struggling, still unsatisfied, seeking a goal of beauty for her hard pilgrimage, she had seized on this quest of the vote as the fulfilment of her destiny, ready to die for it as the tigress for her young. At her note of passion, despite its dignity, carefully reared, conventional non-militants tightened their lips in disapproval; this surely was bad form !

Campbell-Bannerman expressed his personal belief in the justice of the cause, but excused himself from action: some of his Cabinet were opposed to it; he could “ only preach the virtue of patience.” “ Patience,” replied Keir Hardie, “ can be carried to

excess! With agreement between the leaders of the two historic Parties,¹ it surely does not pass the wit of statesmen to find ways and means to enfranchise the women of England before this Parliament comes to a close." Alas! the bald head of the Prime Minister shook gloomily in token of dissent.

Asquith, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was named as the chief obstacle to Government action. He was to speak at Northampton. Mrs. Pankhurst went before him to address a great meeting there. The President of the local Women's Liberal Federation assured her the disgraceful violence done to women in other towns would not occur in that enlightened city. She was accorded a front seat among the prominent Liberal ladies. Her plea that her question related to education secured her a momentary hearing, but she was violently ejected as soon as she mentioned the vote. The President of the Women's Liberal Federation and several of her colleagues resigned forthwith and joined the W.S.P.U. A little later, when Asquith spoke in Aberdeen, Mrs. Pankhurst was implored to hold off her stalwarts, on a pledge that he would answer the all-important questions quietly put to him by one woman: Mrs. Black, the President of the local Women's Liberal Federation. When she rose, as had been agreed, she was hustled and howled down, whilst the Chairman, who was privy to the arrangement, declared her out of order. Mrs. Pankhurst, rising to explain the situation, was violently ejected. Such scenes were typical.

¹ Balfour, the Conservative ex-Premier, had also long declared himself in favour.

For ringing Asquith's door-bell in London, and for heckling Cabinet Ministers in Manchester, more Suffragettes were imprisoned, amongst them Mrs. Pankhurst's youngest daughter, Adela, who did not afterwards resume her position as an elementary school teacher, becoming a W.S.P.U. organizer. In June Christabel had graduated LL.B., and left Manchester to become chief organizer of the W.S.P.U. Mrs. Pankhurst closed the dwindling Emerson's, and travelled from election to election. Her sister, Mary Clarke, whose marriage had proved unhappy, acted as deputy registrar, keeping the deserted home meagrely for the boy whose future was the subject of desultory and inconclusive debate.

In October, imposing headquarters were opened for the W.S.P.U. in Clement's Inn, Strand, where the Pethick-Lawrences had a flat. The Inn was at once a rallying-ground for women of all grades and classes, their pent desire for self-expression surging to this movement as a long needed outlet.

When Parliament reopened that autumn, Mrs. Pankhurst again appeared with her militants. She communicated with the Prime Minister, through the Chief Liberal Whip, and received the plain answer that he held out no hope for Votes for Women at any time during the Parliament. Immediately there was a demonstration of protest in the Lobby of the House itself. Woman after woman sprang to a seat and attempted to make a speech. The police hurled themselves upon them; Mrs. Pankhurst was thrown to the ground. Ten women were arrested, including her daughter Adela, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, and

Annie Cobden-Sanderson, daughter of Richard Cobden, the great agitator against the Corn Laws. Next day they were ordered six weeks' imprisonment in the Second Division, on refusal to enter into recognizances not to offend again. I got a fortnight in the Third Division, for attempting a speech of protest on the steps of the Court. The country was thrilled. Parliament began to be concerned about the rigours of Suffragette imprisonment. Within a week we were transferred to what was termed the First Division, though it lacked the more important privileges given to men politicals. The slogan of the militant Suffragettes was always "The Vote this year!" Even the patient, law-abiding Mrs. Fawcett was impressed by the great stir; she addressed a circular letter to the Press, containing a frank admission:

"I feel the action of the prisoners has touched the imagination of the country in a manner quieter methods did not succeed in doing."

The revolt of militant women made itself felt in the Parliamentary by-elections. The W.S.P.U. policy was simple: to urge the electors to vote against Government candidates until the Government agreed to grant the vote. When Cobden's daughter and her fellow prisoners were released, they rushed to a by-election at Huddersfield; huge audiences deserted the candidates to hear them. Though the Liberal poll was reduced, the Labour vote also fell; the Tory alone had gained. Labour organizers were dismayed; all the Suffragettes in the election were Labour women, Mrs. Pankhurst still a member of the I.L.P. Executive; ~~yet they refused~~

to advise the electors to vote Labour, stating that so long as votes were cast against the Government they cared not to whom they went! The resentment displayed itself at the next Labour Party Conference;¹ a motion to support the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was overwhelmingly defeated by 605,000 votes to 268,000 in favour of accepting nothing short of Adult Suffrage. Keir Hardie, with poignant emotion, announced that if the resolution were intended to bind the action of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, he would consider very seriously whether to remain a member of it.

“The Party is largely my own child; I cannot part with it lightly or without pain. . . . If it is necessary for me to separate myself from my life's work, I do so in order to remove the stigma resting upon our wives, mothers and sisters of being accounted unfit for citizenship.”

The Conference was shocked; many delegates would have reversed their votes if they could, but none of the leaders supported him. Ramsay MacDonald and Arthur Henderson were emphatic that after so decisive a vote the Party could no longer sponsor the Women's Enfranchisement Bill! Mrs. Pankhurst was silent; she would not advise Keir Hardie to leave the Party, fearing he would be reduced to powerless isolation. She still hoped he would be able to induce the Party to push Votes for Women as a vital issue. Faced with his threat to resign, the Party Executive decided to leave its members free to choose between Adult Suffrage and Votes for Women on the existing terms.

¹ Belfast, January 1907.

This meant the Party itself would take no action at all. Keir Hardie accepted the solution as the best he could get. He told me that but for his stand, the Party would have instructed its members to oppose the Women's Enfranchisement Bill. I sadly predicted to him that in the end the Suffragettes would be opposing the Labour Party as well as the Liberals. The W.S.P.U. appeared in great force at the I.L.P. Conference, in Derby, that Easter. The resolution defeated at Belfast was brought up; Keir Hardie told the I.L.P. it must choose whether or not it would retain "some of its most valuable women members." If he were a woman and this resolution were lost, he would be ashamed to belong to a Party which had turned its back on him. It was carried by a tremendous majority. An attempt to censure the I.L.P. members of the W.S.P.U. for publicly dissociating themselves from support of Labour candidates was swept aside. Mrs. Pankhurst, with that great emotional appeal which gave her command of popular audiences, averred that till women were enfranchised she would never abandon the independent election policy; rather she would reluctantly surrender her I.L.P. membership, though she pleaded she had been "loyal to Socialism on every other point." A resolution congratulating the Suffragette prisoners¹ was opposed by Ramsay MacDonald and by the defeated Labour candidate of Huddersfield, but Keir Hardie drove it through by 180 votes to 60.

It seemed for the next five years that of all the

¹ Twenty more women had been hustled into jail for demonstrating in and around Westminster before the close of 1906.

Suffragette activities, the anti-Government election policy appealed most to Mrs. Pankhurst. She lauded it as the policy of Charles Stewart Parnell, the great Irish leader; but Parnell's task was easy—he had only to induce the men of his Party to follow his bidding; she had to persuade men to vote against their Party for women's sake. If any woman could appeal thus successfully, certainly it was she. Every newspaper in the country declared that she turned large numbers of votes against the Government.

For the opening of the Parliamentary Session of 1907, on February 13th, the W.S.P.U. advertised a "Women's Parliament," openly appealing for "prison volunteers." The Square was thronged by spectators, the House guarded by an army of police. It is indeed extraordinary to recall that literally thousands of police on horse and foot were, time and again, turned out to repel a few hundred women. The Caxton and Essex Halls were both packed with the militants, who punctuated fiery appeals to womanly valour from the platform by cries of "Rise up, women!" and answering shouts of "Now!" Then, hour after hour, repeatedly we sallied forth. Mounted police, caricatured by the *Daily Chronicle* next day as "London Cossacks," reared their horses over us. Foot police gripped us, rushed us along at arm's length, beating us with clenched fist between the shoulders, bumping us in the back with practised knees. At last fifty-four men and women had been taken to Cannon Row Police Station. The aged Mrs. Despard, General French's sister, Christabel and I were among the prisoners. Our punishment ranged from ten shil-

lings or seven days to thirty shillings or three weeks.

For the first time in the long history of the movement, the Member who drew first place in the ballot, a Liberal, W. H. Dickinson, gave his place for women. The Prime Minister had promised the Suffrage Society of his constituency: "I will with much pleasure give my support to Mr. Dickinson's Bill," but when it came before the House, he decried it as applicable only to "a small minority of well-to-do women." Finally a Liberal, J. D. Rees, talked the measure out, the Speaker having refused to permit the closure. There was no protest from the Ladies' Gallery; it had been closed for the day! Rees was rewarded with a knighthood!

On March 20th, another "Women's Parliament" met in the Caxton Hall and sent processions out to Parliament. Seventy-five women were arrested, one of them a portrait-painter of Rome, another an author of Norway.

The ceaseless contest with colleagues out of sympathy with his policy bore heavily on Keir Hardie. That April he suffered a sudden breakdown. He was removed from his solitary rooms to St. Thomas's Home, but after some weeks there, left for his home in Cumnock still gravely ill. I feared he was dying and wrote so to my mother. She left Manchester immediately, arriving in time only to speak to him for an instant on the station platform. He was deeply moved that she had journeyed thus to greet him, and she to find him broken as an old man, unable to stand without support.

CHAPTER VI

AUTOCRAT OF THE W.S.P.U.

1907-1908

ON March 21st, 1907, Mrs. Pankhurst had resigned her registrarship, given up her home, arranged for her sister Mary to be an organizer of the Union, apprenticed her son to a Glasgow builder engaged in the distressful business of erecting working-class barrack dwellings. The Pethick-Lawrences, ever generous and considerate to colleagues, had arranged for the expenses of her propaganda existence. With all that was left to her packed into a few cases, she travelled as a nomad from meeting to meeting, by-election to by-election, rousing great audiences to tremendous hurricanes of applause, winning the ungrudging appreciation of journalists, the enthusiasm and devotion of men and women. In 1908, the Union contested no fewer than nineteen elections, in each of which she was supported by a band of more than thirty campaigners. From sixteen to twenty meetings were held daily. At Jarrow, where her meetings were the largest within memory, her call for a women's procession on polling day met eager response. Men greeted it with the cry: "We have voted for the women this time!" The Liberal vote fell from 8,047 to 3,474. Labour won the seat.

The non-militants also now tardily appeared in the elections, not to join the militants in attacking the Government, but to support the candidate of any Party they considered most favourable to Women's Suffrage, a question often impossible to decide! This policy caused the resignation of many Liberal dames, who refused to oppose even the most recalcitrant of their own Party, whilst others who thought it weak and futile seceded to the W.S.P.U. Mrs. Pankhurst resented the confusion caused by the rival policy. She wrote me in July from the County Hotel, Jarrow:

“ If only the North Eastern Society¹ had held aloof, and not supported Pete Curran, we should have got a Party declaration before the end of the election, and that would have made our dear J.K.'s² position much easier. They are dying to have our support, for they see the men are with us in this election more than they were at Huddersfield.

“ It won't be long before they, and the Tories too, will be forced to take up the question in a practical way. By the time J.K.² comes back from his holiday, things will be ready for him to take up and win! ”

She had paid a flying visit to Hardie at a Wemyss Bay Hydro, and confidently anticipated his return, but his recovery was still remote and uncertain. He set off on July 12th for a voyage round the world, lasting till April of the following year.

¹ The North Eastern Society for Women's Suffrage—the Society representing the N.U.W.S.S. in that area, interviewed all the candidates in the election and chose Pete Curran for support.

² Keir Hardie.

A storm was brewing in the W.S.P.U. Theresa Billington Grieg, a Manchester elementary school teacher, had been for a few months London organizer of the Union. Her transfer to the provinces on Christabel's arrival had caused some resentment. It was rumoured that she and others intended a coup in opposition to Christabel and the Pethick-Lawrences at the forthcoming delegate conference of the Union. Mrs. Pankhurst, informed of it on her journeys, wrote me of this insurgence. I urged her to ignore it, certain that nothing at all would come of it. At Clement's Inn they had other views. At the request of the Pethick-Lawrences, Mrs. Pankhurst declared the democratic constitution of the Union abolished, and herself its autocratic head. She invited the members either to give her their loyalty, or to withdraw. It was an action she would not have taken on her own initiative, but having accepted the rôle of dictator, she played it resolutely. This refusal of votes in their own organization to women struggling for the rights of citizenship gave numbers and a tangible grievance to the disaffected. Yet the majority held to Mrs. Pankhurst, despite the autocracy, recognizing that the spirit is more than the letter, and the quenchless fire of the pioneer not to be replaced by the most meticulous of committees. The seceders, after an effort to maintain themselves as the original Union, became the Women's Freedom League in the following year.

The W.S.P.U. was now disciplined like an army; unquestioning obedience was demanded. All were required to sign a pledge "not to support the candidate of any political Party until women have the vote."

The prominent members of the Union withdrew from the I.L.P. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence wound up his *Labour Record* and started *Votes for Women*, the official organ of the W.S.P.U., edited by himself and his wife, a valuable means of propaganda. Full reports of Mrs. Pankhurst's speeches were a prominent feature, but she wrote only occasional brief appeals for funds or for militant action. Deprecating even these as "stilted," she declared she felt, with pen in hand, as though "in the dentist's chair." Her autocratic rule was largely a mere name. The day-to-day policy and business of the Union was controlled by Christabel and the Pethick-Lawrences. She declared Christabel its political leader, and invariably insisted on her own readiness to follow her daughter's policy. In this there was both truth and fiction; she liked to say to objectors: "If I can obey, so must you." In truth, she was moulded, and was a follower in many things, and that was increasingly the case at a later stage. Yet, when seized with a strong intuition, she took her way, permitting no interference, with a reckless personal courage Christabel could not match. The financial veto lay with the Pethick-Lawrences. To draw on the Union banking account two signatures were required, one of whom must be, and both of whom might be the Pethick-Lawrences. There was a desk for Mrs. Pankhurst in the honorary secretaries' office,¹ but letters addressed to her were opened and dealt with, her meetings were arranged by an efficient

¹ Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Tuke were now termed the honorary secretaries of the Union. The latter was a new recruit, an army officer's widow, wholly unpolitical, who played a very minor part.

staff. In the huge business of the W.S.P.U. this was inevitable. Christabel was the permanent guest of the Pethick-Lawrences, wholly absorbed in their mutual work and interests; her mother, a bird of passage in some hotel, scarcely saw her save in a crowd. Despite the public cheers, she often felt herself a lonely outsider, and complained of it to me with tears. When the spur of the cause flagged, her life seemed harsh and joyless.

In the early days of 1908, a turbulent by-election was fought in Mid-Devon; meetings were smashed up, speakers pelted with vegetables, eggs, stones, snowballs. Conservative speakers fled from Bovey Tracey to avoid being penned in a cage. At Newton Abbot, a "League of Young Liberals," formed for the election, pushed a policeman through the Suffragette shop window, and injured a child in dragging away the platform. A Liberal majority of 1,289 became a Unionist majority of 559, though the Liberals had hopefully prepared a mock memorial card:

IN FOND AND LOVING MEMORY
OF THE
TARIFF REFORMERS AND SUFFRAGETTES
WHO FELL ASLEEP AT MID-DEVON
ON JANUARY 14TH, 1908

Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Martel remained at Newton Abbot to hear the result, the rest of their party having left. They saw the successful Unionist, escorted from the Market Square by a strong force of police. People urged Mrs. Pankhurst to escape, but she smilingly repudiated the idea. Then a crowd of youths from the

clay-pits, wearing the Liberal colours, came up at a run, shouting: "Those women did it!" To avoid a shower of rotten eggs, she and her companion rushed into a greengrocer's shop, whilst the burly driver of a brewer's dray jumped into the doorway and fought back the mob. Lest the shopkeepers suffer, she insisted on escaping by a lane at the rear, but the crowd came rushing round. A man seized Mrs. Martel and began to beat her. Mrs. Pankhurst snatched the half-fainting woman from the assailant, but as she was thrusting her friend into shelter of the yard, she received a heavy blow on the head and was dragged outside. An angry roar sounded from the mob. A ringleader flung her to the ground. Then all was obliterated till she regained consciousness, feeling the wet mud soaking through her clothes, and saw the crowd in a ring round her with a barrel in the centre. Were they going to put her into it? In ominous silence they stared at her wildly, poor undersized youths, dwarfed in mind and body. "Are there no men here?" she asked with a strange pang of maternal pity. One of them stepped out towards her. Then suddenly there was a clatter of horse's hoofs. The mounted police came galloping round to save her. Her ankle sprained or broken, she was hurried with her companion to the railway station, bundled out of the constituency to avoid further trouble. The inmates of the Conservative Club were besieged till morning. The body of a prominent local Conservative, Major Rendal of the Royal Marines, was found in the mill race with injuries to the head, which suggested foul play. Mrs. Pankhurst realized anew the peril she had escaped.

Despite her injury, she went on to other elections, lying down between meetings, hobbling into motor-cars, suffering intense pain, feverish in her haste to win the vote "this year!" always "this year!" Her fervour communicated itself to others; the silent masses of women were stirred. In South Leeds, the textile mill hands, mothers and wage-workers, crying out in their broad Yorkshire: "Shall us have the vote? We shall!" followed her in a great torchlight procession to Hunslet Moor, where 100,000 people assembled.

When Parliament opened on February 11th, there was another "Women's Parliament." The police solicitor, in asking for the conviction of fifty women, announced that future offenders would be more rigorously dealt with under the Tumultuous Petitions Act of Charles II, which limited to thirteen the number of persons who might present a petition to Parliament, and gave power to fine up to £100, and to imprison up to three months. Mrs. Pankhurst appeared at the Women's Parliament on February 13th, white and worn from hard campaigning and her neglected injury, to take up the challenge. Since her freedom from the registrarship, she had awaited only the appropriate moment for imprisonment. Adoring followers sought to bar her way. "Mrs. Pankhurst must not go!" "We cannot spare our leader!"

She hobbled out with her band of twelve. Flora Drummond, seeing her so lame, called to a stranger happening to drive by in a dog-cart: "Will you take Mrs. Pankhurst to the House of Commons?" He assented readily. She was helped up beside him, the other women mustered behind; but the police ordered

her to dismount. She did so without demur, signing to her companions to obey. Supported by two of them, she was arrested as she reached Parliament Square.

The authorities prosecuted as before, preferring to stigmatize the affair as a vulgar brawl than to carry out the threat of prosecution under the Act of Charles II. Though the deputation had proceeded throughout in a tense silence, it was pretended that they had gone singing, shouting and knocking off policemen's helmets. Her protest was abruptly silenced by the magistrate: "You, like the others, must find sureties in £20 for twelve months' good behaviour, or go to prison for six weeks."

Now, at last, she went that dark journey cooped in a box in the prison van, windowless, springless. The ribald shouts of the inebriated and debased, the sobs of the hopeless and broken-hearted, smote on her sadly, with a pang of compunction for the gently nurtured young Suffragettes, rudely thrust into the company of the underworld. After hours locked up in dark, cold reception cells, she and her companions were let out to strip and be searched in a great room thronged with wardresses and other prisoners. Against that indignity she revolted; this once only, that she should know it all to the full, would she submit to it, but not again! She shuddered at the filthy bath, the shapeless clothing, patched and stained, and daubed with the broad arrow, the heavy old shoes, mismated. Then, staggering painfully down long corridors, she was conducted to her cell and locked in for the night. The bed was a mere plank, raised an inch from the cement floor, the

mattress and pillow, stuffed with a sort of herb, unbelievably hard and lumpy, the covering scanty. She sank upon it for a night of misery, cold, airless, tortured by the throbbing of her injured limb.

She saw her companions in chapel, limped after them round the gloomy, high-walled yard at exercise. Ever restless, ever torn by emotion, at best she touched serenity only in rare oases of those tempest-driven years. The closed solitude of the cell irked her like a wearing illness. She was oppressed by the sense of her widowhood, recalled with dear longing her husband's un-failing tenderness, experienced anew the first sharp poignancy of her ten years' loss, thought of her children, worried over them. Her bodily functions, ever acutely responsive to her spiritual, flagged dismally. The old migraine laid her low. After two days she was removed to hospital. Small comforts were vouchsafed her; but she lost even the sight of her companions. She heard with distress the cries of the sick and the insane. At midnight she was aroused by a woman's moaning; in the neighbouring cell a mother was in travail; she suffered, in heart-wrung sympathy, the agony of that birth, wept for the child, shadowed by its mother's descent into this abyss, bearing through life the stigma, "born in prison." Her Poor Law days had impressed on her the hardship birth in a workhouse carried, but this was worse. Later she learnt the mother had been mercly remanded, pending trial on a baseless charge. Tortured by inactivity, she regretted even the prison tasks now spared her; begged the wardress to give her something to sew, thankfully receiving her jailer's skirt to hem.

On February 28th, whilst she lay in prison, the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, introduced by H. Y. Stanger, passed Second Reading by 271 votes to 92; but was blocked by the Speaker, who only permitted a vote to be taken on condition it should not pass to one of the Standing Committees set up for dealing with Bills, but to the whole House itself, which meant it could go no further unless the Government would provide time; the old story!

The Union had prepared a great Albert Hall meeting as the climax of a week of self-denial. Women had stood in the gutter with collecting boxes, swept crossings, abstained from meat, butter, sugar, anything, everything, to make and save money for the cause. The platform was thronged with women in white. Mrs. Pankhurst suddenly appeared, released a day before the time. The vast hall was a sea of waving arms and fluttering handkerchiefs, a unanimous surge of ecstatic cheers. Blanched by confinement, tense with purpose, she demanded new effort. Women must do "ten times more" than ever they had done! The Governor had asked her whether she had anything to complain of. She had answered:

"Not of you nor of any of the wardresses. Only of this prison and of all men's prisons; we shall raze them to the ground! . . . Looking round on the sweated and decrepit members of my sex, I say that men have had control of these things long enough; no woman with any spark of womanliness in her will consent to allow this state of things to go on any longer. We want to have the power to make

the world a better place for both men and women than it is to-day. . . . The old cry was 'you will never rouse women.' We have done what they thought, and what they hoped was impossible; we women are roused ! ”

CHAPTER VII

ASQUITH PROMISES WOMEN A FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1908-1909

MRS. PANKHURST and her militant colleagues had effectively put the Liberal administration into the public pillory as an anti-Suffrage Government. Liberal stalwarts were being estranged. When Campbell-Bannerman was succeeded by Asquith, whose anti-Suffrage views were notorious, the position became still worse. His accession to the Premiership entailed Cabinet changes necessitating a crop of by-elections, a test of his popularity which went heavily against him. Mrs. Pankhurst and her forces exercised greater influence than ever; the Liberal poll fell seriously. Against Winston Churchill, in Manchester, the W.S.P.U. was able to hold much larger and more numerous meetings than his own, whilst the Liberal women, stung by his recent anti-Suffrage declarations, refused to work for him; he attempted to placate them :

“Trust me, ladies. I am your friend and will be your friend in the Cabinet. I will do my best, as and when occasion offers, because I do think

sincerely that the women have always had a logical case, and they have now got behind them a great popular demand amongst women."

This weathercock promise did not save him. Retiring to Dundee for a safe seat, his first act was to address the Liberal women in honeyed terms:

"No one can be blind to the fact that at the next General Election Women's Suffrage will be a real practical issue; the next Parliament, I think, ought to see the gratification of the women's claim. I do not exclude the possibility of the Suffrage being dealt with in this Parliament."

Two days before Dundee polled, Asquith made an effort to turn the tide by promising Old Age Pensions. That somewhat checked the swing of votes against the Government, but it was not enough. A resolution to strike against election work for the Liberal Party was on the agenda of the annual conference of the Women's Liberal Associations. There was tremendous wire-pulling. The very day of the conference, the newspapers appeared with startling headlines: "PREMIER'S GREAT REFORM BILL! VOTES FOR WOMEN!" Asquith had informed a deputation of sixty Suffragist M.P.s that before the Parliament came to an end, he would introduce a Bill to reform the franchise; Votes for Women would have no place in the Bill, but opportunity would be given to move a Women's Suffrage Amendment, and if it were framed on democratic lines and had behind it "the strong and undoubted support of the women of the country and of

the men electors," it should have a free vote of the House, without any pressure from the Government. At the Liberal Women's conference the strike resolutions went down by enormous majorities. The Liberal Press declared Votes for Women absolutely assured. Yet the militant Suffragettes denounced the whole thing as "a trick!" A week later, a Liberal anti-Suffragist inquired of Asquith whether he considered himself bound by his pledge. He replied: "My Honourable friend has asked me a contingent question in regard to a remote and speculative future." At that cynical utterance, the Press unanimously admitted the militants justified in their distrust. The public shared that opinion; to multitudes Mrs. Pankhurst seemed the embodiment of the nation's motherhood striving magnificently for citizenship, churlishly thwarted and betrayed.

On the Second Reading of Stanger's Bill, Herbert Gladstone had suggested that though divisions in the Cabinet at present precluded action, if the women could demonstrate a really great popular demand for their franchise, reluctance would be overcome; every reform movement, he said, had to go through the period of "academic discussion and pious opinion unaccompanied by effective action."

"Then comes the time when political dynamics are far more important than political argument. You have to move a great inert mass of opinion. . . . Men have learned this lesson and know the necessity for demonstrating the greatness of their movement and for establishing that *force majeure* which actuates

and arms a Government for effective action. That is the task before the supporters of this great movement. Looking back at the great political crises in the 'thirties, the 'sixties, and the 'eighties, it will be found that people did not go about in small crowds . . . they assembled in their tens of thousands all over the country."

The W.S.P.U. took up the challenge by producing a series of great demonstrations throughout the country, and on Midsummer Day in Hyde Park, what was admitted to be the biggest meeting ever known in the British Isles. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence was the main architect of the scheme. The Suffragette colours, purple, white and green, were devised for the occasion by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, and soon were known throughout the world. The resolution adopted by the multitudes around twenty platforms was dispatched by special messenger to Asquith, with a letter inquiring what steps the Government would take in response to the demand of that great meeting. He curtly replied that he had nothing to add to his previous statement.

Mrs. Pankhurst called another Women's Parliament for June 30th and a public meeting in the sacred precincts of Parliament Square, an unheard-of defiance of regulations. Again she marched out with a deputation, which was repulsed at the door of Parliament. Valiant women who had volunteered for prison attempted to deliver speeches, clinging to the railings of Palace Yard and the Abbey Gardens. The police swiftly tore them from their foothold, whilst organized bands of roughs, amongst whom the most active were

undoubtedly the political police, subjected them to every sort of indignity. Enraged by the violence and indecency, Mary Leigh and Edith New broke windows in the Prime Minister's official residence—the first act of wilful damage ever committed by Suffragettes. They sent a message to Mrs. Pankhurst that she should repudiate their action if she disapproved it. She went immediately to the cells to congratulate them.

"I want to be tried for sedition!" was now her cry. Resolved to force the pace, she called her militants to the Caxton Hall again for the reopening of Parliament on October 13th. A yet more provocative handbill was issued: "Men and Women, *help the Suffragettes to RUSH the House of Commons.*" Obviously the authorities could not let it pass. At midday, on the 12th, a summons was served upon Mrs. Pankhurst, Christabel and Flora Drummond to appear at Bow Street that afternoon. Ignoring it, they proceeded to the Queen's Hall, where the Union now held its huge Monday afternoon At Homes. It was packed with an agitated crowd, momentarily expecting their arrest, but Curtis Bennett, the magistrate, merely adjourned the hearing till next morning. Instead of going to court, they sent a message: "We shall not be at the offices at 4 Clement's Inn until six o'clock to-day." Incensed by this breezy disregard of his authority, Curtis Bennett ordered their immediate arrest. The police reported them not to be found, though actually Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel were in a flat of the Pethick-Lawrences at the top of Clement's Inn. They appeared at the appointed hour, and were taken to spend the night in the Bow Street

cells. Mrs. Pankhurst telegraphed to one of her warm admirers, the worthy James Murray, Liberal M.P. for East Aberdeenshire. He rushed to the Savoy Hotel, arranged for comfortable beds to be erected in the cells, prevailed upon the jailers to lend the matron's room. Damask tablecloths were soon spread, with silver, flowers, tall wax candles, gaily coloured fruit; three waiters served an elaborate meal. Mrs. Pankhurst was hugely entertained. The matron and jailers treated her respectfully as a great lady, tenderly pitying her hard lot. Meanwhile, the old struggle went on at Westminster. John Burns, Haldane, Lloyd George with his little daughter, were photographed by the Press observing the scene.

Mrs. Pankhurst was resolved to raise her movement from the squalid atmosphere of the Police Court.¹ Well aware that responsibility is the true condition of leadership, she desired to be recognized as the responsible author of Suffragette militancy and to face whatever penalties might result. She passed over to her daughter the honours of the defence, eager that she should have scope to display her legal knowledge. Christabel rose to the occasion with a vivacity which gladdened her mother's proud heart. She adroitly ridiculed and embarrassed Lloyd George and Herbert Gladstone, who were summoned by subpoena to give

¹ "Trial by Jury" was now the slogan of the Union. The women arrested in Parliament Square on October 13th were all brought up before Curtis Bennett at Bow Street and everyone uttered the same cry: "I demand trial by Jury." The magistrate, infuriated, imposed on the fourth who repeated it the stinging sentence of two months' imprisonment for doing practically nothing. At the fifth he laughed: "I see this has been arranged beforehand."

evidence. The former was confronted with militant speeches from his own past, the latter with his own reference to *force majeure*, and with the historic phrase of his father, William Ewart Gladstone :

“I am sorry to say that if no instructions had ever been addressed in political crises to the people of this country, except to remember to hate violence, to love order, and to exercise patience, the liberties of this country would never have been attained.”

Mrs. Pankhurst's address to the magistrate stirred all present; she closed with determined words :

“I am here to take upon myself now, Sir, as I wish the Prosecution had put upon me, the full responsibility for this agitation. . . . I want you to realize that if you decide to bind us over we shall not sign any undertaking. . . . To prison we must go, because we feel we should be going back to the hopeless condition this movement was in three years ago if we consented to hold our hand. . . . If you had power to send us to prison, not for six months, but for six years, for sixteen years, or for the whole of our lives, the Government must not think they could stop this agitation; it would go on ! ”

Curtis Bennett was obviously moved, but he refused her demand for political status, ordering her three months' imprisonment in the Second Division, in default of being bound over to keep the peace for twelve months, to which of course she would not assent.

On arrival at Holloway, on October 24th, she

informed the Governor that Suffragettes would no longer submit to the conditions of ordinary law-breakers; they would refuse either to be searched or to strip in the presence of wardresses and other prisoners. She would exercise the right of a political prisoner, to speak to her comrades. The Governor agreed to waive the search and permit the changing of clothes to be done in the privacy of the cell. For the rest he referred her to the Home Secretary, to whom she now addressed a petition, claiming for herself and her companions the right of political prisoners to associate with each other, wear their own clothes and provide their own food, receive letters, books, newspapers and visitors, have writing materials and carry on their professional and other affairs. At once she was stricken by her old illness. She was barely able to struggle to her feet when the Governor entered her cell to announce Herbert Gladstone's refusal of her demands. On Sunday, November 1st, in one of her outbursts of wrathful energy, she called to her daughter: "Christabel, stand still till I come to you!" Christabel halted. Trembling, indignant, her mother linked arms, talking in low, excited tones. "I shall listen to everything you say!" cried the wardress on duty, running to Mrs. Pankhurst, who answered tensely: "You are welcome to do that, but I shall insist on my right to speak to my daughter!" The officer blew her whistle; the Suffragettes rushed to their leader with: "Three cheers for Mrs. Pankhurst!" Troops of wardresses hustled them to the cells. In the atmosphere of the prison it was a terrible event. The Governor

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sentenced them to three days' close solitary confinement for "mutiny." He demanded of Mrs. Pankhurst a pledge not to break the silence rule; she replied she would never submit to it: "To forbid a mother to speak to her daughter is infamous!" He ordered that she remain in close solitary confinement until she would give the promise; rather would she have died!

News of this reached us. A procession, headed by women garbed in imitation of the hideous penal dress, circled the prison with songs and cheers. The authorities enhanced their severity; Mrs. Pankhurst was officially dubbed "a dangerous criminal," a wardress stationed outside her cell to prevent all communication. A report, mistaken as it happened, that Christabel was ill had somehow reached her. She applied to the Prison Commissioners to see her daughter, and received the crushing answer that she might renew her application in a month. "My girl might be dead by then!" she raged. Her anguish caused another overwhelming bout of illness, of which time-expired prisoners brought word to me. I sought the powerful aid of C. P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, a sincere democrat, his like rarely matched in the editorial world. He obtained a permit to visit her, and wrung from the Home Secretary permission for Christabel to spend an hour with her each day, and for both to see the newspapers if they desired.¹ When the gates opened for them at last, a carriage drawn by white horses led by girls in the purple, white and green, escorted them at the

¹ These concessions were not extended to the other Suffragettes; on the contrary, they were treated with increased severity.

head of a great procession to a public welcome breakfast.

Disturbances in the House by women who chained themselves to the hated grille of the "Ladies' Gallery," and were hauled out with its dismembered sections, and by men supporters in the "Strangers' Gallery," caused the closing of both galleries for six months. The so-called "Brawling" Act was passed to punish "strangers for disorderly conduct in the House." A vain attempt was made to check Suffragette heckling of Cabinet Ministers by the Public Meeting Act, which imposed penalties for disturbance up to £5 or a month's imprisonment.

Women's Parliaments were held on February 24th and March 30th, 1909. Another was called for June 29th, when an attempt, more spectacular than before, was to be made to insist on the ancient right of Petition. Mrs. Pankhurst was resolved to resort to the hunger-strike in prison, nominally to secure political treatment, actually as a spur to the struggle for the vote itself. A week before, an artist, Marion Wallace Dunlop, visited Parliament and printed on the walls of St. Stephen's Hall an extract from the Bill of Rights of 1569, passed on the accession of William and Mary as a guarantee of British Liberties:

WOMEN'S DEPUTATION

June 29th

BILL OF RIGHTS

"It is the right of the subject to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal."

Ordered a month in prison, she bravely put the hunger-strike to the test. The Governor told her that she would on no account be released, but she was freed after ninety-two hours.

Whilst Keir Hardie urged their admission, and Hugh Law moved the adjournment of other business by way of protest, Mrs. Pankhurst went up to the House with old Mrs. Saul Solomon, widow of a South African Prime Minister, frail little Miss Neligan, aged seventy-six, for nearly thirty years headmistress of Croydon Girls' High School, Mrs. Mansell Moullin, wife of the well-known surgeon, and four others, mostly elderly. The drum and fife band of young Suffragettes played them out of the Caxton Hall to the Marseillaise. They were allowed to reach the Strangers' Entrance. Superintendent Scantlebury there handed Mrs. Pankhurst Asquith's refusal. She replied: "I am firmly resolved to stand here till I am received." Inspector Jarvis ordered her to go. She declared her refusal; he laid hands on her with obvious reluctance, the long buffeting which preceded arrest was about to begin. To save the old ladies from it, she struck the Inspector lightly on the cheek. "I know why you did that," he told her quietly, but the buffeting began. "Must I do it again?" she asked him softly. He assented. She struck him on the other cheek; and he called to his subordinates: "Take them in." Other deputations came up; the old struggle continued. Laurence Housman, the author, raised a cry in the Lobby: "The women of England are clamouring outside!" As a protest against the brutal treatment of women before arrest, the W.S.P.U. had officially

decided to break the windows of Government offices; stones wrapped in appropriate messages and tied with string were knocked against the glass, then dropped inside. "No injury to human life!" was the rule carefully observed.

One hundred and eight women were charged with obstructing the police. Mrs. Pankhurst was put into the dock with the Hon. Evelina Haverfield, Lord Abinger's daughter, for whom a K.C. had been briefed. Their defence was that they had been wrongfully arrested in the exercise of a constitutional right. Faced for the first time by a determined attempt to fight the case, the police solicitor, Muskett, obtained an adjournment for consideration. The hearing was resumed on June 30th, when Lord Robert Cecil, defending Mrs. Haverfield, cited a wealth of historical precedent for the right of petition. Mrs. Pankhurst was more concerned to make it known that she and her comrades would henceforth refuse to obey the prison rules:

"Just as we have thought it right to defy the police in the streets, so when we get to prison we shall do our best to bring back to the twentieth century the treatment of political prisoners thought right in the days of William Corbett and others of his time."

Old Sir Albert de Rutzen, the magistrate, blinking his eyes with evident distress, had now been persuaded that, though the right of petition undoubtedly existed, the ladies were wrong not to obey the police when told to go away. Nevertheless he gave leave to appeal, and released them in the interim.

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The fourteen who had broken windows were sent to prison forthwith. They rushed to loyal strife for their leader's new policy, refusing to change into the prison clothes, resisting a crowd of wardresses who came to strip them, breaking the cell windows to get air, for the oppressive prison atmosphere was an old grievance. Thrust into underground punishment cells,¹ they maintained the hunger-strike and won their way out.

The meetings of Cabinet Ministers were now closed to women; men were only admitted by ticket. With extraordinary courage and resource, women scaled roofs, let themselves down through skylights, hid under platforms and lay concealed for days, intruded, elegantly gowned, into social functions. They were arrested by the score, defied prison rules, were frog-marched, put in "straight jackets." Adela Pankhurst and other Manchester hunger-strikers were handcuffed day and night. At the Bingley Hall, Birmingham, where Asquith was to "challenge the Lords," Mary Leigh and Charlotte Marsh, a beautiful girl in her twenties, were on a neighbouring roof, tearing up slates with axes and flinging them on to the roof of the hall to disturb the meeting, and into the road below to prevent any attempt to climb up. A fire-hose was played on them; they were struck by heavy missiles; they would not permit themselves to be dislodged. What courage! What devotion! An outcry was raised. Mrs. Pankhurst was urged to stop the destruction of private property. She replied that

¹ Herbert Gladstone meanly had some of them rearrested for their fight in prison and made them suffer it all again.

to do so would be "folly, weakness and wickedness," a betrayal of her "sacred trust."

The Government resolved to stop these rebels from escaping their sentences by the hunger-strike. In September it became known that the Birmingham prisoners were being forcibly fed by the stomach-tube. Eminent medical authorities denounced the practice as injurious to health, dangerous to sanity and life itself. Attacked by Keir Hardie, the Under-Secretary to the Home Office defended the expedient as "hospital treatment." Hardie retorted: "A horrible, beastly outrage!" Members on the Government benches roared with laughter. He wrote to the *Times*.

"Had I not heard it I could not have believed that a body of gentlemen would have found reason for mirth and applause."

Henry Nevinston and H. N. Brailsford resigned their positions as leader writers on the *Daily News*, protesting: "We cannot denounce torture in Russia and support it in Britain, nor can we advocate democratic principles in the name of a Party which confines them to a single sex." Brailsford's wife was arrested and hunger-struck in Newcastle, but the Government preferred to release her as medically unfit for forcible feeding. Lady Constance Lytton had the same experience, but she got herself rearrested in Liverpool as "Jane Warton," a poor seamstress. She was forcibly fed till the authorities discovered her identity. The result was a series of paralytic seizures, ending in death.

CHAPTER VIII

MALICIOUS INCITEMENT

1909-1913

MRS. PANKHURST was preparing to sail for America when her son was suddenly stricken by inflammation of the spinal cord and brought to London completely paralysed from the waist downwards. The Glasgow builder had failed at the end of 1907, and sent the lad "home"; he arrived at my lodgings penniless. His mother, unable now to cope with family affairs, sent him to study at the British Museum and the Chelsea Polytechnic, but appeals to him by all and sundry to do odd jobs for the Union were a disturbing influence. His lecturing to I.L.P. branches on the land question suggested the advisability of practical experience. She placed him on the Essex farm started by the American Henry Georgite soap boiler, Joseph Fels, as part of his Single Tax propaganda. Too delicate for heavy toil under hard conditions, the boy contracted acute inflammation of the bladder. The necessity for an examination under chloroform caused his mother to fear a fatal termination, but as soon as he began to recover, her volatile temperament swung to the opposite pole; he was sent back to the farm with this tragic result. She steeled herself to persevere with her journey, declaring that he would recover as before. Her mission must

come before personal considerations; moreover, the fees to be earned by her lectures would be of utmost value in providing for the boy's needs. She left him to my care.

Her tour was triumphal; from a whirl of reporters and receptions, she went to her first meeting in the great Carnegie Hall. Her opening words: "I am what you call a hooligan!" captured the popular heart. In Boston a motor decorated in the purple, white and green, took her to address a huge audience in Tremont Temple. In Baltimore, professors and students from John Hopkins' University were her stewards. In Canada the enthusiasm was no less; the Mayor of Toronto welcomed her in his official chain. On December 1st she sailed for home. That very day her appeal was dismissed by the Lord Chief Justice; the ancient right of petition was snuffed out! A prison sentence awaited her, but while she was on the ocean her fine was paid.

She returned to learn the news I could not write—her son would never walk again. "He would be better dead!" she cried in despair. A few days later the old bladder trouble returned. Doctor after doctor told us we must abandon hope. She hovered about his bedside; the savour of life, the thrill of the movement, dull as spent ashes. . . .

As we drove the sad way to his burial, she was bowed as I had never seen her.

The Lords had rejected Lloyd George's War-on-Poverty Budget. Asquith called a General Election for January 1910, asking the electors for a mandate to abolish their absolute veto. The Suffragettes answered

denunciations of the Lords with the cry: "Asquith has vetoed our Bill!"¹ The Liberal women were becoming ashamed of their Party. Asquith publicly assured them that his promise of a "fair opportunity" under his intended Reform Bill would hold good in the new Parliament. The Government, he protested, had "no desire to burke the issue." Mrs. Pankhurst indignantly spurned his postponed offer, campaigning against him in forty constituencies. The election left him still in office, but shorn of a hundred seats. The eighty-two Irish Nationalists held the balance of power, the Labour Party having but forty seats.

The Government programme for the session contained only the "Parliament Bill" to deal with the Lords; private Members' Bills were discouraged. Votes for Women had thus no place, but rumour asserted the Government would be glad to let an agreed Bill through. Clement's Inn was working to set up a non-Party Conciliation Committee, presided over by Lord Lytton, with H. N. Brailsford as Secretary. The death of King Edward VII in May caused a truce to political controversy; the Liberal and Conservative leaders were brought together in the House of Lords Conference. Clement's Inn suspended militancy, resorting to monster meetings and processions to create the right atmosphere for the Bill which the Conciliation Committee shortly produced. It was designed to give votes to women householders and occupiers of business premises of not less than £10 rateable value.

¹ When the Lords threw out the Reform Act of 1884, the Suffragists of those days refrained from pressing their own Amendment, lest they be accused of standing for reaction against the people.

Actually it invited attack. Asquith, in promising a free vote on the Amendment to the Reform Bill, had expressly stipulated that it must be drafted on democratic lines. This was ignored; the Liberal and Labour members of the Conciliation Committee, with the best of intentions, had given way to the Conservatives on every point. Nevertheless, Asquith granted July 11th and 12th for the Second Reading; but when the Bill came on, Lloyd George attacked the poor little measure on the ground that it would not enfranchise the working-man's wife, and could not be amended to bring her in. Despite his onslaught, it was carried by the big majority of 299 votes to 189, only to be blocked by Asquith who refused to give further time for it, on the very ground that it was not capable of Amendment. The Conciliation Committee were woefully obliged to recast their measure. They hoped for another chance for it in the autumn session, but members of the Government definitely declared there would be no facilities for any Suffrage Bill that year.

On hearing that, the W.S.P.U. immediately summoned another Caxton Hall "Parliament." Mrs. Pankhurst announced her intention to carry a petition to the Government. Whilst she was mustering her militants in the Caxton Hall, Asquith was announcing the breakdown of the House of Lords Conference; in ten days Parliament would be dissolved. Keir Hardie demanded two hours for a Resolution that the Government must allow time for the Conciliation Bill before the session closed. Asquith promised to reply to him in a few moments,

but left the House without doing so. Mrs. Pankhurst was already at the doors with a distinguished company: Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, pioneer woman doctor, first of the women mayors, Hertha Ayrton, the scientist, Annie Cobden-Sanderson, the Princess Dhuleep Singh, and three old stalwarts up in their seventies. Members of Parliament flocked out to her, escorted her into the House, even to the Prime Minister's room. Unable to discover him, she returned to the Strangers' Entrance and there held audience of the Members. "Is there not a man in the House of Commons who will stand up for us?" she demanded passionately. Stirred by her challenge, Lord Castlereagh moved an Amendment demanding time for the Conciliation Bill, whercon Asquith promised to state next day what his Government would do.

Little detachments of women, with bannerettes: "Asquith has vetoed our Bill," were struggling towards the House through enormous crowds. The police, uniformed and political, tore their flags to shreds, knocked them down, even kicked them as they lay, pinched their breasts, squeezed their ribs, twisted their arms, using them more atrociously than ever. Some were dragged down dark streets and indecently assaulted; two died of their injuries. The day was named "Black Friday."¹ One hundred and fifteen

¹ The Conciliation Committee called for a Parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of the police on that day, and Churchill's instructions to them. When this was refused, the Committee organized an inquiry of its own, and having examined 135 witnesses, addressed a strong protest to the Government, declaring that the police had tortured women by violence and indecency, not even ceasing when they had their victims under arrest.

women and two men were arrested, but only the window-breakers were sent to jail, a gesture of clemency for the election!

The Women's Parliament sat on next day, awaiting Asquith's statement. Again he procrastinated; after the election he would give, not a Government measure, but facilities "for effectively proceeding with a Bill, if so framed as to admit of free Amendment." "I am going to Downing Street!" cried Mrs. Pankhurst. "Come along, all of you!" The police, taken unawares, were swept aside. Asquith and Birrell were mobbed. Mrs. Pankhurst and more than a hundred others were arrested. Again the charges were withdrawn, but many who were released immediately got themselves rearrested for window-smashing.

Mary Clarke had broken a window to secure arrest without the ordeal of violence, which, delicate always, and worn by campaigning, she could not bear. She was released two days before Christmas and joined Mrs. Pankhurst at the home of their brother Herbert. During the festive meal on Christmas Day, Mary quietly left the table. Emmeline found her unconscious; she was dying, her nearest sister, loyal and understanding beyond all others, too frail for this pitiless strife.

I was alone in my studio, working to finish a book before sailing for America. On Boxing Day morning she came to tell me. Stunned by our sorrow, we clung together. She shared my narrow mattress, journeyed with me to Southampton, stayed to the last moment on board, smiled at me wistfully from the quay. Then, overcoming grief, she was away to the

elections; the militant Union was opposing the Government in fifty constituencies.

Asquith got back to power, the position of Parties little changed. The truce to serious militancy had been resumed, in the hope that the revised¹ Conciliation Bill might yet have a chance if a suitable atmosphere could be preserved. The cause was kept to the fore by meetings, processions, refusal to pay taxes, evasion of the Census. When the new Parliament met in January 1911, the Bill had the first three places in the Members' ballot. The Second Reading, on May 5th, went through by 255 votes to a mere 88! The Australian Senate cabled support; 86 Municipal Councils sent petitions. Dublin deputed her Lord Mayor to present her plea for the Bill in person to the House.

Now was the time for Asquith to fulfil his pledge. On May 29th, Lloyd George informed the Commons that no time for the Conciliation Bill could be found that year, 1911, but in 1912, a day would be granted for the Second Reading, and if it were carried, a week for the further stages. Asquith amplified the promise in a letter to Lord Lytton, assuring him :

"The Government are unanimous in the determination to give effect, not only in the letter, but in the spirit, to the promise in regard to facilities, which I made on their behalf before the last General Election."

¹ It now included only women householders, and its title was open to Amendment.

The Liberal *Nation* observed: "From the moment the Prime Minister signed this frank and ungrudging letter, women became, in all but the legal formality, voters and citizens." That was the general opinion. With triumphant rejoicing, the W.S.P.U. organized a so-called "Women's Coronation Procession" to the Albert Hall, with a pageant of 40,000 women, in which Mrs. Fawcett and her Constitutionalists cordially took part. Even the anti-Government election policy was suspended; candidates were asked only whether they would support the Conciliation Bill and oppose any Amendment the Conciliation Committee considered would endanger it.

Emmeline Pankhurst again set sail for America, received as a conquering heroine, finding a newly awakened movement, which had sprung to birth under the alchemy of her movement at home. A "Women's Political Union" had been formed by young Americans who had been to prison in England, and were introducing Suffragette tactics in the States. Girls in her own purple, white and green advertised by poster parades the meetings she entered under arches of flowers and flags. Her old colleague, Harriot Stanton Blatch, announced her as "the woman in all the world who is doing most for the Suffragc." She addressed the National Convention of the great non-militant Women's Suffrage Sociation of America at Louisville, Kentucky.

It was the psychological hour for the Suffrage victory; the hour when the militants must have been accorded all the honours, both of heroism and diplomacy, for it was they who had engineered the

Conciliation Bill. The high hopes crashed. To a deputation organized by the long silent People's Suffrage Federation, Asquith repeated his old promise of a Government Franchise Bill, giving Adult Suffrage to men and an opportunity for a Women's Amendment to be left to the free decision of the House. The only thing new in the pronouncement was that the Bill would be introduced in 1912, the year of his promise for the Conciliation Bill! Mrs. Pankhurst received the statement as the annihilation of the cherished measure, the confirmation of persistent rumours that high-placed anti-Suffragists were still implacable. She cabled: "Protest imperative!" Her colleagues in London were on the war-path. Another militant deputation was announced for November 21st. Asquith surprised everyone by replying with an invitation to a joint deputation on November 17th. He then repeated his pledge to allow a free vote of the House, both on the Conciliation Bill and on an Amendment to the Reform Bill:

"I give you my assurance, on behalf of the Government, that they will accept the decision then come to, and will accept the measure and give facilities to it. That ought to satisfy you."

The non-militants were doubtful; Mrs. Fawcett declared she preferred the Conciliation Bill, Christabel insisted that only a Government measure would suffice. Asquith replied that he was opposed to Votes for Women and would not make his Government responsible for introducing it; but he reiterated his willingness to let the House decide the issue. Mrs.

Pethick-Lawrence plainly told him she considered the whole Reform Bill project "a trick." To the accompaniment of a window-smashing raid on Government buildings of hitherto unexampled extent, the Women's Parliament assembled. Led by Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, 220 women went to jail.

The suspicions of the militants were almost immediately confirmed by Asquith himself; in reply to an Anti-Suffrage Deputation, he declared the enactment of Votes for Women would be "a political mistake of a very disastrous kind," and advocated "militant operations of a constitutional character" to prevent it.

Lloyd George, on the contrary, announced that, "militancy or no militancy," he would sponsor the Amendment he favoured, giving votes to women householders and to wives of men householders, and would campaign for it throughout the country. The W.S.P.U. denounced him as a wrecker, declaring that as a member of the Cabinet, he should either produce a Government measure or resign. His campaign petered out, overwhelmed by ridicule for the exclusion of women from his meetings, in fear of Suffragette interruptions, and by abuse for the scenes of hideous violence which ensued when men supporters of the Suffragettes¹ took up the heckling. He retorted by accusing the W.S.P.U. of wanting the Conciliation Bill to "pack the Register for the Tories," declared exultantly that it had been "torpedoed" to make way for a democratic Amendment. The phrase "tor-

¹ They had formed three organizations; the Men's League, the Men's Political Union, and the Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage.

pedooed" now assailed him wherever he appeared. Brailsford, believing him sincere, strove to bring about an understanding between him and the W.S.P.U. Lloyd George responded by expressing a desire to discuss matters with his old friend, Pethick-Lawrence, at whose wedding he had been a guest; but Christabel would have no such meetings, fearing the magnetic influence of the Welsh Wizard, as men called the Chancellor. She dismissed Brailsford, completely and for ever, declaring him afflicted with Lloyd Georgritis.

The House of Lords controversy ended quietly when Asquith got the King's assent to create Peers, if need be, to carry the measure limiting the veto. The constitutional barrier to it thus removed, Home Rule for Ireland became the main Government measure. Amongst the Irish and Liberal Members the rumour was busily circulated that if Votes for Women were carried in any form, Asquith would resign, and leave the Irish cause in the lurch. The Liberal *Daily Chronicle* gave prominence to an article urging that, out of respect for the Prime Minister, Votes for Women should be rejected, or carried only on condition that it be subjected to a Referendum. Mrs. Fawcett suggested Winston Churchill as the author.

Mrs. Pankhurst returned from America determined upon more serious militancy. "Sedition!" "The Women's Revolution!" were the words upon her lips. The King's Speech announced the Reform Bill. Excitement ran high. The Conciliation Bill had a third place in the Ballot, but, convinced that its doom was already sealed, the W.S.P.U. issued a statement that it had no further interest in any save a Govern-

ment Bill. At a dinner to welcome the November stone-throwers on their release from prison, Mrs. Pankhurst flung down her gage of battle: "The argument of the stone, that time-honoured political weapon, is the argument I am going to use!" She was cheered to the echo. Truly, it was an amazing situation; she was calmly announcing her intention to go out and lead her supporters to destroy private property on a much larger scale, and was claiming moderation for her course:

"We are going to try this time if more stones will do it. I do not think it will ever be necessary for us to arm ourselves as Chinese women have done, but there are women who are prepared to do that, if it should be necessary. In this Union we do not lose our heads. We only go as far as we are obliged to go in order to win."

That same night, February 12th, 1912, another remarkable utterance was made at Bristol by C. E. Hobhouse, a Member of the Government, strongly opposed to Votes for Women:

"In the case of the Suffrage demand, there has not been the kind of popular sentimental uprising which accounted for the burning of Nottingham Castle in 1832, or the breaking down of Hyde Park railings in 1867. There has been no great ebullition of popular feeling."

The words are clearly an allegation that the populace had not been stirred; the W.S.P.U. replied as though

they had been a reproach that women had not committed more serious damage.

Mrs. Pankhurst wrote to Asquith announcing a deputation for March 4th; a handbill bearing her signature called the public to Parliament Square. On Friday, March 1st, whilst the police were actually meeting to devise means to circumvent the destruction she had clearly announced for the 4th, she drove in a taxi to Downing Street, and broke a window in the Prime Minister's official residence. At the same hour, in Piccadilly, Regent Street, Oxford Street, Bond Street, Whitehall, Parliament Square, the Strand, and districts as far away as Chelsea, dozens of well-dressed women suddenly drew out hammers and fell to smashing great shop windows. The damage amounted to many thousand pounds. In anticipation of the 4th, 9,000 police were booked for Parliament Square. Westminster shop-fronts were wired, the National Gallery and British Museum closed for the day. That very morning there was an unexpected outbreak at Knightsbridge, Brompton Road and Kensington High Street. "I hope our demonstration will be enough," said Mrs. Pankhurst in the dock. "If not, I will go further." More than two hundred window-smashers were imprisoned, some convicted summarily, others committed for trial. Holloway, Aylesbury, and Winson Green prison, Birmingham, were taxed to accommodate them.

On the 5th, whilst the trials were proceeding, the police swooped down on Clement's Inn, and arrested the Pethick-Lawrences. Christabel would have been taken also, but she happened to be absent at the time. When she learnt the news, she escaped to Paris,

hired a flat in the Hôtel Cité Bergère, and settled down as "Miss Amy Richards" to edit *Votes for Women*, and control the activities of the W.S.P.U.

In Holloway the entire DX wing was given over to the Suffragettes; the cell doors were unlocked; they could do as they pleased in the pavilion all day. Writers, painters, musicians, used their talents to amuse the rest; a dancer sent for her ballet skirts. Dr. Ethel Smyth, the composer, drilled them into a choir. Recently she had been an anti-Suffragist; now she was a red-hot militant, entirely subjugated by Mrs. Pankhurst, panting with joy and excitement when she could manage to inveigle her idol to her cottage near Woking, delighted to be the one member of the Union who addressed the leader familiarly as "Em." Slow to respond to affectional advances but afflicted by a great spiritual loneliness, Emmeline Pankhurst unbent to the wooing of the volatile musician and the power of her music, addressing her simply as "Dear," a term carrying from her unwonted tenderness.

In the ill-ventilated chill of a sunless cell, Mrs. Pankhurst contracted bronchitis. Her petition for release on bail, to recover her health and prepare her defence for the conspiracy trial, was rejected, though she offered to serve the remainder of her two months' sentence for stone-throwing after the more serious charge had been met.

I returned from America to find London in an uproar; Suffragettes were mobbed in the streets. Yet the W.S.P.U. meetings were thronged; £10,000 was subscribed at the Albert Hall. Shopkeepers held an indignation meeting in the Queen's Hall. Lloyd

George's private secretary, Crawshaw Williams, M.P., wrote to the *Times* demanding the rejection of the Conciliation Bill, "to demonstrate the folly of militant tactics," and circulated a roundrobin among Members of Parliament. The Chief Government Whip gave warning that if the Bill were passed a Cabinet split would result. On March 28th came the Second Reading. John Redmond whipped the Irish to vote against it; only nine defied his order. The Bill was lost by fourteen votes. The W.S.P.U. organ accused Lloyd George of having organized the defeat.

The Police Court hearing of the conspiracy charge opened on March 4th and dragged on intermittently for three weeks. Bail still refused, the defendants were brought to and fro between their cells and the court. On May 15th, they were tried at the Old Bailey by Justice Coleridge. The Prosecutor was the Attorney-General, Sir Rufus Isaacs. Tim Healey, the Irish Nationalist leader, renowned for his satirical wit, assisted the defence. He twitted the Government with having found courage only to prosecute those whose incitements had been addressed to women, leaving unhampered the opponents of the Irish Home Rule Act, who were, even then, ostentatiously arming and drilling for civil war. It was the thesis of the defence, as put by Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, that the conspiracy and incitement in the case were not that of the defendants, but of the Government, which had deliberately deceived and thwarted the women's movement.

Mrs. Pankhurst told the Court that women had been driven step by step to greater militancy by the stubborn opposition of the Government. During her last

imprisonment the Ministers who had incarcerated her were fêting the authors of the recent Turkish Revolution! Need anyone wonder that women had said to themselves: "Perhaps these gentlemen do not understand women's ways? Because we have not done the things men have done, they may think we are not in earnest." Her reply to the charge of conspiracy was unanswerable: "*We are content to abide by the verdict of posterity!*"

The Judge insisted upon a verdict of guilty; the Jury obeyed, and after an hour's absence, brought in a rider:

"We desire unanimously to express the hope that, taking into consideration the undoubtedly pure motives underlying the agitation which has led to this trial, you will be pleased to exercise the utmost leniency."¹

The Judge dismissed it coldly: "If I had observed any contrition or disavowal of the acts you have committed, or any hope that you would avoid repetition of them in future, I should have been very much prevailed upon." He pronounced sentence of nine months' imprisonment, ordering Mr. Pethick-Lawrence and Mrs. Pankhurst to pay the costs, and categorically refusing the First Division.

The three petitioned for political treatment, announcing that they would wait only a week before hunger-

¹ When my book, *The Suffragette Movement* (Lovat Dickson), was published, the foreman of the Jury wrote to me explaining that he had refused to agree to the verdict without this rider, and the delay was due to the difficulty of inducing some reluctant shopkeepers to accept it.

striking.¹ Petitions on their behalf poured in from Members of Parliament, the principals and staff of Oxford, Cambridge and London Universities, from organizations and notabilities all over the world. The Government capitulated; they were transferred to the First Division, but they hunger-struck none the less because the privilege was denied to the other Suffragette prisoners. Word being conveyed by prearranged means, the strike extended to their comrades in all the jails.

The Home Secretary truculently persisted: "Be they leaders or rank and file, forcible feeding will be adopted if they do not take their food!" Sir John Rolleston retorted that a representation of forcible feeding ought to be shown at Madame Tussaud's Waxworks. George Lansbury strode up the gangway, shook his fist in Asquith's face, furiously denouncing: "You will go down to history as the man who tortured innocent women! You ought to be driven from public life!"

Forcible feeding began in the three prisons on June 22nd. Cries of anguish rent the air, as woman after woman was laid low by six or eight wardresses, and the doctors in pairs performed the disgusting operation. Mrs. Pankhurst heard the sounds drawing nearer; at last they reached the next cell. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence had been overwhelmed; it would be her own turn next. Only a prisoner who has suffered it knows the horror of that anticipation: the heart,

¹ During their absence on bail, prison discipline had been tightened. Many prisoners were on hunger-strike, but ceased pending the reply of the Home Secretary.

enfeebled by fasting, palpitating with distress, the shortened breath, the hot and cold shivers down the spine, the trembling of the limbs. She leapt from the bed where she had lain for days; set her back against the wall, determined to resist. . . . The door was flung open, the doctors were on the threshold, behind them a group of wardresses. "Mrs. Pankhurst, I have orders . . ." began the doctor. Desperately, she seized the heavy toilet ewer: "If any of you dare take a step inside this cell, I shall defend myself!" The doctor retreated, muttering that to-morrow morning would do as well. The door closed. She had triumphed! Ringing imperiously, she demanded to be taken to Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, whom she found in a state of collapse. The two were released next day without another attempt to feed them. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence was forcibly fed in Pentonville, but released after five days. The leaders set free, the height of agitation passed, though their followers were retained in torment.

Mrs. Pankhurst slipped away unobserved to Christabel in Paris, to concert more drastic schemes. The Pethick-Lawrences were presently in France for a secret meeting. Their plans were totally opposed to those of Mrs. Pankhurst. They desired that before any further militancy were attempted, the hunger-strike and forcible feeding of the leaders should be used to the full, as a propaganda asset in a great spectacular campaign, whilst trusted friends of the cause explored the possibilities of negotiation. Mrs. Pankhurst was not dismayed by their refusal to accept her policy. On the contrary, she was relieved. The wealth of

Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, once a great asset to the Union, had become a disability in her eyes; the Government must not be allowed to secure compensation for Suffragette damage from that source. Moreover, she was unwilling to face the embarrassment of seeing him rendered penniless. Recognizant of the Lawrences' great services to herself and to the militant Union, she was not, like Christabel, bound to them by close ties of daily affectionate intercourse. In a burst of excitement, she flashed out: "If you do not support Christabel's policy, we shall smash you!" The policy in question, however much her daughter wished it, was desperately her own! The fissure was temporarily bridged. The Pethick-Lawrences accepted her proposal that they should depart till the autumn on a lecturing tour in Canada. Their departure left the Union to her control, as it had never been since its headquarters were moved to London.

The elections, hitherto regarded as essentially Mrs. Pankhurst's field, were left to others now. Her withdrawal coincided with an almost revolutionary change in the election policy of Mrs. Fawcett's non-militants; they, too, were now attacking Government candidates, and supporting the Labour Party, a move which, coming as it did from women hitherto mainly on the Liberal side, was bound to do the Government much damage. Its weakness was that the Labour Party had neither made itself responsible for a Bill nor pledged itself to action of any sort. When the non-militants asked Keir Hardie his opinion, he pointed this out to them, and advised them to keep their funds and maintain an independent policy; but when they turned to

MacDonald and Henderson, essentially Party men, their proffered support, entailing no obligation, was gladly accepted. Never a Socialist, Mrs. Fawcett was thus drawing towards the Labour Party from which Mrs. Pankhurst receded! The Labour Party never worked for Votes for Women with the energy Mrs. Pankhurst desired; Keir Hardie, Snowden and Lansbury were never satisfied that its action in Parliament was fully to be depended upon; yet it steadily advanced to the position of being the only political Party officially supporting Votes for Women on any terms obtainable, and preferably the broadest.

The Pethick-Lawrences had barely set sail when greater militancy began. Traces of attempted arson were discovered in the Home Office. Two Suffragettes, with incendiary material and house-breaking implements, were surprised in the night outside Nuneham House, the residence of Lewis Harcourt, said to be the main Cabinet obstacle to the fulfilment of Asquith's pledge. When Asquith visited Dublin, Mary Leigh dropped a confectioner's toffee hatchet into his carriage, and with Gladys Evans raised spectacular fires in the Theatre Royal, where he was to speak. They were sentenced to five years' penal servitude, but won their freedom by the hunger-strike.

The Reform Bill had been introduced on June 17th. Arthur Henderson announced that if women were not included by Amendment, he would vote against the Bill on Third Reading. F. E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead) asked him if this were the official decision of the Labour Party, but he answered: "I have had no instructions from my leader," and advised a question

to Ramsay MacDonald, by this time Chairman of the Party. MacDonald made no response; when questioned outside Parliament, his replies were ambiguous and accompanied by bitter denunciations of the Suffragettes. In July, the Reform Bill came up for Second Reading. Asquith had hardened his heart; he said callously:

“This Bill does not propose to confer the franchise upon women. . . . The House, at an earlier stage of the Session, rejected with, I think, sufficient decisiveness, the proposal to confer the franchise upon women!”

“We told you so!” retorted Mrs. Pankhurst. The constitutional Suffragists addressed a remonstrance to him; he still insisted his pledge would be honourably kept.

The militants had notice to leave Clement's Inn to make way for the offices of the Public Trustee. Mrs. Pankhurst rented Lincoln's Inn House, a big new building in Kingsway, strong as a fortress. The Pethick-Lawrences were returning from Canada in October. The Government had already put the bailiffs in their country house at Holmwood to recover the costs of the conspiracy trial, Mrs. Pankhurst having no assets which could be seized. The Pethick-Lawrences discussed the future with Mrs. Pankhurst; found their plans still sharply opposed. They had insisted in 1907 that she must be the autocrat; in 1912 she was taking them at their word. She required them to leave the Union. Mrs. Tuke, Annie Kenney, above all Christabel, who had been dearest to them, supported

her. Intensely grieved, they were convinced their view was right, as people always are in such crises of the soul. They insisted Christabel must come to London to debate with them. Now that they were again at their posts, they would have had her stand her trial, believing that course finest and best for the movement and for herself.

She was determined still to evade arrest, but agreed to take the risk of coming by stealth to meet them. It would be difficult to escape capture, for though the secret of her whereabouts had been closely kept till the end of September, it had now been publicly announced that she was in Paris. To cover her movements, Mrs. Pankhurst made one of her many flying visits to France, and booked a first-class passage on the home-bound steamer, whilst Christabel, in disguise, slipped quietly on to the same boat as a second-class passenger. The ruse succeeded. The fugitive reached the meeting-place and got back to Paris unobserved. During the days she was in London the breach with the Pethick-Lawrences had been completed.

Though Christabel was no less resolved on it, Mrs. Pankhurst took the lead, and drove the matter to its conclusion. As ever, she blossomed to her greatest vigour in turmoil which sapped the strength and crushed the spirit of others. She was battling for the "Women's Revolution" she believed must follow the previous "peaceful militancy," for unchallenged command of the militant movement by herself and Christabel, for spiritual possession of her daughter. She had taken upon herself a new and tremendous load of responsibility and care. Henceforth she was

honorary treasurer of the Union; the work of financing the great machine,¹ which had taxed the energy and resource of the Pethick-Lawrences, would now devolve on her—a being already strained well-nigh to the breaking point.

The Pethick-Lawrences accepted her ultimatum with dignity and forbearance. A brief announcement was made:

“At the first reunion of the leaders after the enforced holiday, Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst outlined a new militant policy which Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence found themselves altogether unable to approve. Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst indicated that they were not prepared to modify their intentions, and recommended that Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence should resume control of the paper, *Votes for Women*, and should leave the Women’s Social and Political Union. Rather than make schism in the ranks of the Union, Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence consented to this course. In these circumstances, Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence will not be present at the meeting in the Royal Albert Hall on October 17th.”

The auditor, a personal friend of the Pethick-Lawrences, and some of the staff, went over with *Votes for Women*. Their places were filled; the accounts, and this it is important to state, were still carefully

¹ Her modest personal financial needs she had for some time past been able to supply by the fees from her American tours.

audited. The books were henceforth always kept in duplicate in secret offices, for fear of police raids which were a constant probability. A new official organ, *The Suffragette*, immediately appeared under Christabel's editorship. Mrs. Pankhurst explained the new policy to her followers at a public meeting in the Albert Hall. The Labour and Irish Parties were now to be attacked as part of the majority enabling the Government to remain in power. Secret militancy was to replace the old spectacular demonstrations. Both public and private property were to be attacked. To any who thought the course too strong, she replied :

"It always seems to me that anti-Suffrage Members of the Government who criticize militancy in women are like beasts of prey reproaching the gentler animals who turn in desperate resistance at the point of death. . . . The Suffragettes have been reckless of their own lives alone. It has never been, and never will be, the policy of the Women's Social and Political Union to endanger life. We leave that to the enemy. We leave that to men in their warfare. It is not the method of women! . . . There is something which Governments care for more than human life; the security of property. It is through property we shall strike the enemy! . . . We disregard your laws, gentlemen; we set the liberty, the dignity and the welfare of women above all such considerations. We shall continue this war, and what sacrifice of property or injury to property accrues will be the fault of the Government. . . . Be militant each in your own way. . . . Those

of you who can break windows, break them. Those of you who can still further attack the secret idol of property, so as to make the Government realize that property is as much endangered by Women's Suffrage as it was by the Chartists of old—do so. I incite this meeting to rebellion! I say to the Government: 'You have not dared to take the leaders of Ulster for their incitement to rebellion. Take me, if you dare; but so long as men rebels and voters are at liberty, you will not keep me in prison!'

Great loyalty and great enthusiasm attended her. The severance between the four who had been so closely united could not do other than shock the movement. Yet doubts and regrets were swept aside by the indomitable continuance of militancy, and the bravely endured suffering visited upon its authors. In all parts of the country damage little and great was done; false fire alarms were given, golf greens cut or burnt with acids, pillar-boxes fired with a preparation of phosphorus.

The Pethick-Lawrences generously refrained from criticism. After their home had been sold up, £800 of the conspiracy trial costs still remained unpaid, and the High Court action by the shopkeepers brought damages for a further £2,000. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, on principle maintaining his refusal to pay, and rejecting any suggestion of reimbursement by public subscription, allowed himself to be made a bankrupt, one of the most disinterested acts of the whole militant campaign. The Reform Club shabbily expelled him.

The Suffragette movement was being driven underground. Meetings were more difficult to hold; opposition was more brutal, numbers of capable speakers in prison; W.S.P.U. headquarters declared destructive militancy alone of value; the public, converted as far as it ever could be, must be terrorized into compelling the Government to give the vote. Yet, on the contrary, propaganda was more than ever imperative; only because a wide public supported the militants and their cause was Suffragette destruction embarrassing to the Government. Despite all difficulties and the mood of indifference towards propaganda, I had stirred the autonomous local branches of the W.S.P.U. to organize campaigns throughout the country, and another monster meeting in Hyde Park; but that was not enough. A mass movement, manifesting urgent popular impatience, was both necessary and possible. Vast crowds must be mustered, not merely to watch the exploits of a few hundred brave women, but to vigorous hostile action. I chose the East End, that great reservoir of work and poverty, from which thousands could march to Parliament, as the core of this new movement.

Its beginning coincided with the attack which, stimulated by the W.S.P.U., George Lansbury was making on the official policy of the Labour Party. Keir Hardie, from the time of his re-election to Parliament when the Liberals had come into power, had opposed any change in the franchise which did not admit women. On this ground, unsupported by the rest of his Party, he had voted in every division against the Government Bill to abolish Plural Voting. He

had done the same on the Reform Bill, and had continually urged the Labour Party to adopt this policy officially. Labour Party Opposition could not defeat the Reform Bill, but it would have a great moral effect. Brailsford was pleading that the Party should at least pledge itself to vote against the Third Reading, if women were not included before that stage.

Christabel, to whom Mrs. Pankhurst generally left such shades of policy, declared that neither Keir Hardie's plan nor that of Brailsford were of any use; the Government must be opposed in every division on every question until it would introduce a Government measure for Women's Suffrage. Lansbury adopted the W.S.P.U. plan, not only because he was enthusiastic about Votes for Women, but also because of his rooted objection to the National Health and Unemployment Insurance of Lloyd George. He circularized the branches of the Labour movement, asking them to pass resolutions in support of the W.S.P.U. plan. It meant that the Labour Party must vote against Irish Home Rule and other Government measures it was pledged to support, even the Trade Union Bill which it had forced the Government to accept; also it meant voting for Conservative propositions the Party was pledged to oppose. Lansbury soon forgot that he had ever sponsored the plan. At that time he brought the proposition before the Party in militant style. When it was defeated, he denounced the Party as subservient to the Liberals, and forthwith resigned his Parliamentary seat to stand as an Independent candidate, making Votes for Women and opposition to the

Insurance Acts his foremost planks. Mrs. Pankhurst had advised him not to resign, simply to get resolutions of confidence in him passed at meetings in his constituency. The W.S.P.U. made the candidature its own, and he received the ardent support of all the Suffrage Societies, forty of which, representing actresses, writers, members of churches, etc., had sprung up during the militant agitation. The Trade Union element, which had put him in, were estranged by his failure to consult them before resigning, and unconvinced that he was right about the Insurance Acts. The Liberals, who had previously supported him on Lloyd George's recommendation, voted for the Tory. Lansbury lost the seat, but was compensated by substantial financial support for his *Daily Herald* from rich Suffragists which long outlived that election.

Government Whips caused the defeat, by 314 votes to a mere 41, of Philip Snowden's Amendment to give women votes for the Irish Parliament.¹ Winston Churchill and Lewis Harcourt were canvassing in the House against the Women's Amendments to the Reform Bill with threats of their own and Asquith's resignation. A deputation of working women I had persuaded Mrs. Pankhurst to let us organize was received by Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey on January 25th, 1913, the day before Asquith's promise was to be put to the test. Both Ministers insisted the vote would carry, and that all Cabinet Ministers were pledged loyally to abide by the decision of the House.

¹ Philip Snowden was now an enthusiastic supporter of Votes for Women; he got no credit for having moved the Amendment, being harried as fiercely as ever by the W.S.P.U. militants.

Lloyd George offered to meet the women again "for consultation" after the House had voted.

Four hours later, the Speaker ruled the Amendments out of order, on the ground that not being in the text of the original Reform Bill, they could not be inserted at a later stage. This extraordinary ruling was opposed to all precedents, for women had actually received the Municipal Franchise by an Amendment to a Government Bill! Everyone believed Asquith had arranged the whole thing to satisfy the anti-Suffragists, but he protested himself taken by surprise. The Cabinet, he averred, had particularly considered this very point, and had been advised the Amendments would be in order, because similar Amendments had been moved to the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884. The Speaker is virtually at the orders of the Government to facilitate its business; even if he had suddenly proved truculent, the Government had several methods at command to overcome the technical difficulty he had alleged. To add a trace of dignity to the contemptible situation, Asquith announced that as "a mere matter of common honour and common sense," he would withdraw the Reform Bill.¹ To compensate the women, the Government would give the promised "fair opportunity" to a Bill introduced by a private Member. Lloyd George declared there had been "machinations" against the Amendments which had proved to him that, after all, a private Member's Bill was the best means of getting women the vote. That his own "machinations" had

¹ The next session he introduced another Bill to abolish Plural Voting which was all the Government wanted, but the Lords threw it out.

"torpedoed" the last private Member's Bill was archly recalled by A. J. Balfour, who had cold-shouldered the question when himself in office. So the jolly farce went on! Arthur Henderson urged the Government at least to pledge itself to responsibility for the proposed private Member's Bill when it had passed its Second Reading. Keir Hardie, with burning indignation, denounced the whole proposition as "chaff," scornfully informing Asquith that he had defended him against the charge of bad faith, but could do so no longer. The women, he declared, had no alternative save militancy.

I rushed to the House of Commons and hurled a stone at the picture of Speaker Finch, held in the chair by Members to force him to put through Sir John Elliot's resolution on tonnage and poundage in Cromwell's day. Mrs. Pankhurst declared the Government either "too ignorant of Parliamentary procedure, or too dishonest to be fit to occupy any position of responsibility."

Lloyd George was reminded of his promise to give another interview to the working women's deputation. He would only meet them privately. His offer was rejected; a pity, for it would have been interesting to hear what explanation he would have given. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel believed him undoubtedly a mere trickster. I thought him really disposed to help women to the vote, but reluctant to jeopardize his own position for it. I suspected that in the Cabinet struggle for influence he had been worsted by the anti-Suffragists as well as we.

Mrs. Pankhurst gave word for another march to the

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MALICIOUS INCITEMENT

House. I brought a mob of women from the East End, and was arrested with a crowd of others; we hunger-struck, but Mrs. Pankhurst paid our fines. The Annual Conference of the Labour Party met a few days later. A resolution was forced on the Executive from the floor, instructing Labour Members of Parliament to vote against any Franchise Bill which excluded women. Mrs. Fawcett received it with gratitude, but it did not mollify the W.S.P.U. A Committee of Members of Parliament, derisively termed the "Cabinette," sat in the House of Commons to devise a new Suffrage Bill. No one believed it had a chance of success; so long as the Government opposed it, and the Commons backed the Government, it must fail.

CHAPTER IX

THREE YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE

1913-1914

Mrs. PANKHURST called her followers to "guerrilla warfare." "One thing we regard as sacred: human life. With that exception, we are justified in using all methods resorted to in time of war."¹ Railway stations, sports pavilions and refreshment-houses, great mansions, wherever they could be found empty, were burnt to the ground; pictures were hacked in the public galleries, a jewel-case smashed in the Tower, windows broken in the Archbishop's Palace.

After the deputation to Lloyd George, W.S.P.U. headquarters dropped the East End movement I had initiated.² I federated the branches there for strength and kept on. During a turbulent procession down Bow Road, the eldest son and daughter of George Lansbury, I and several others were arrested. Three of us did the hunger-strike, not for political treatment,

¹ Speech at the London Pavilion.

² We called our organization there at that time the East London Federation of the W.S.P.U.

but to get back to the fight. We refrained from water as well as food to quicken the pace. Mrs. Pankhurst was brought into Holloway whilst we were there; shut off even from contact with the other prisoners, I did not know it. Emily Wilding Davidson, one of the most reckless militants, had bombed a house being built for Lloyd George at Walton-on-the-Hill. She had got away clear, leaving Suffragette literature. Mrs. Pankhurst, at a public meeting in Cardiff, exulted in the deed: "We have blown up the Chancellor's house!" She was arrested on February 24th, brought up at Epsom Police Court, and committed for trial at the Summer Assizes in June. Bail was offered if she would agree to be law-abiding in the interim. She declared she would not refrain from militancy beyond the Winter Assizes, then in session. The indignant magistrate ordered her removal to Holloway. She retorted: "I shall be a dying person when I come to be tried!" She hunger-struck for twenty-four hours; then the authorities capitulated, offering trial at the Central Criminal Court in April.

She was free when I was let out. I had been forcibly fed for five weeks, and only secured release by walking up and down my cell for twenty-eight hours, staggering, falling and fainting, a horrible ordeal I shudder even now to recall. She was shocked when she saw me, emaciated in the extreme, with eyes horribly bloodshot, like cups of blood. She and Keir Hardie met by my bedside, united in their concern for me. Her old friendship for him flamed up once more, despite the hideous cartoon in that week's *Suffragette*, depicting him as a cringing, ape-like creature,

smoking a cigar labelled "Liberalo Patrona," clinging to the arm of the Prime Minister and raising his hat to a Suffragette who turned from him with an air of horror. It had been ordered by Christabel in Paris. I did not see it for years after, or I should have taxed my mother with the injustice of it; of all human beings, such an aspersion applied least to him.

My account of forcible feeding created a sensation; the *Daily Mail* called it "unbearable torment," Bernard Shaw "a denial of the life everlasting." The danger of the process was driven home by the accidental pouring of food into the lungs of a young Suffragette, who was rushed out of prison with pleuro-pneumonia. Lord Robert Cecil suggested the deportation of Suffragettes, as a more decent alternative, but McKenna dolefully protested they would hunger-strike on the boat. Forty or fifty women, he declared, would be proud to die for the cause. On the plea of avoiding the stomach-pump, he introduced the Prisoners' Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act, aptly termed the "Cat and Mouse" Act. This ingenious expedient gave power to release hunger-strikers on licence for a brief period, and to rearrest them if, as always happened, they failed to return when the licence expired. During their release the currency of the sentence was suspended, in order that they might be compelled to serve every day of it. McKenna refused to abandon the power also to forcibly feed.

The measure was not yet law when Mrs. Pankhurst's trial came on. She called no evidence; merely addressed the Court. She recited the wrongs under which women suffered, and in particular the evidence, brought to her that very morning, of "a regulated

traffic" in London, "not only in women of full age, but in little children," and passionately declared:

"Over one thousand women have gone to prison in the course of this agitation and have come out weakened in body but not in spirit. I have come to stand my trial from the bedside of one of my daughters who has . . . submitted herself for more than five weeks to the horrible ordeal of feeding by force. She has . . . lost two stone in weight. She is so weak that she cannot get out of bed. I say to you, gentlemen, that is the kind of punishment you will inflict upon me, or any other woman who may be brought before you. I ask you if you are prepared to send an incalculable number of women to prison . . . because that is what is going to happen. . . . We are, rightly or wrongly, convinced that this is the only way in which we can win power to alter what for us are intolerable conditions. . . . If you convict me, gentlemen, whether the sentence be long or short, I shall not submit to it. I shall join the women already in Holloway on the hunger-strike. I shall come out of prison, dead or alive, at the earliest possible moment and enter the fight again. . . . Have you the right, as human beings, to condemn another human being to death—for that is what it amounts to? . . . You have not the right in human justice, nor by the constitution of this country, if justly interpreted, for you are not my peers. You know, every one of you, that I should not be standing here if I had the right which you possess. . . . I

the time, and to report any change of address to the police. She tore the document to pieces, furiously exclaiming: "I have no intention of obeying this infamous law. You release me knowing that I shall never voluntarily return to any of your prisons!"

She was taken in a cab by two wardresses to the nursing-home in Pembridge Gardens where Harry died. Its proprietors, Sisters Pine and Townsend, had become ardent Suffragettes. Detectives from the political branch of Scotland Yard stood sentinel outside to prevent her escape. Crowds gathered. The tranquillity essential to the nursing-home was destroyed. Lest it lose clients, Sister Pine, thereafter always her devoted attendant during those periods out of prison, accompanied her to the home of Hertha Ayrton, the scientist, in Norfolk Square. Her licence was immediately revoked. Detectives appeared to rearrest her. Under her convict's licence they could compel an entry. With them came Dr. Smalley, of the Home Office. Sallow and emaciated as a famine victim, her eyes flaming, she fiercely refused his examination. He retired, certifying her unfit to return to prison.

The authorities were meanwhile attempting to damp down militant propaganda. Several of the organizers were put in jail. Lansbury was summoned for his Albert Hall speech; an old statute of Edward III was employed as a convenient instrument for compelling him either to find sureties of £1,000 not to offend again, or go to prison for three months.

On April 15th, the Home Secretary instructed the police to prevent W.S.P.U. meetings in Hyde Park and other open spaces. The result was not the stoppage

of the meetings, but a great stimulus to the waning interest of the militants in public propaganda—a substantial gain to the cause. By hook or by crook, the meetings were continued. Bands of men who enjoyed the sport of women-baiting, led by organizers paid for the work by the anti-Suffragists, charged the Suffragette speakers. Supporters of the women rallied to their defence. Free fights ensued. The police rushed in to disperse the gathering multitude.

On April 30th, Lincoln's Inn House was raided, Annie Kenney and four others arrested. Bodkin, in prosecuting, announced that anyone printing W.S.P.U. literature, speaking in favour of the Union, or contributing to its funds, would be "in a very awkward position if discovered."¹ All the copy of the *Suffragette* was seized, except Christabel's leading article, which happened to arrive late from Paris. Mrs. Pankhurst immediately arranged with Lansbury for his Victoria Printing House to get out a new issue. Lansbury's manager, G. S. Drew, was promptly arrested and tried for conspiracy; released on finding sureties of £2,000 not to print anything more for the W.S.P.U., he subsequently got two months' jail for breaking his pledge. Thus men threw all to the winds under the glamour of a woman's courage! The paper was chased about from printer to printer.

On May 5th and 6th, the Second Reading of the dolorous "Cabinette" Bill was defeated by 266 votes to 219. As the militants had predicted, the Conservatives pledged to support Women's Suffrage

¹ On a clamour being raised in Parliament, McKenna disowned this comprehensive threat.

absented themselves, finding the measure too broad, whilst many Liberals and almost all the Irish voted it down, on the plea that Asquith would dissolve Parliament if it were carried.

Mrs. Pankhurst had moved to Dr. Ethel Smyth's cottage at Woking, the detectives following; wet or fine, they remained on guard. She chafed bitterly in the musician's small nest, doomed to rearrest at the first sign of recovery. At last she resolved, come what might, to attempt a reappearance at the W.S.P.U. Monday afternoon At Home, now held each week in the London Pavilion. On May 26th, the Union car was sent from London to carry her thither, but the "cats" confronted her as she emerged. Frail Dr. Flora Murray, devoted Sister Pine, the garrulous musician, stood helpless in face of two burly men! The "cats" drove their prisoner to Bow Street. The magistrate recommitted her to prison, a formality afterwards dispensed with, for the "Cat and Mouse" Act was given retrospective action in her case, and under it the "mice" were simply rushed back to jail as soon as caught. After another grim fast, she was released on May 30th, with a bare seven days' leave, to a flat in Westminster Mansions. I saw her there, worn and haggard, yet less exhausted than I had feared; nay, appearing exhilarated by the fight. She spoke of my father, which was rare with her, telling me she had dreamed of him in prison, and seen "his kind face looking down" on her.

On Derby Day, Emily Davidson rushed on the course at Tattenham Corner, stopped the King's horse, and was mortally injured. She had deliberately given

her life, believing, as she had written, that "one big tragedy would save many others." On June 14th, an impressive funeral procession was held. A carriage was prepared for Mrs. Pankhurst to join the cortège, but again she was rearrested. I was distressed beyond measure to see her taken away by a couple of men, though a multitude, gathered for the procession, would have prevented it. This "Cat and Mouse" business was proceeding too much as the Government wished it; I was determined the Act should become the biggest asset in the militant campaign.

On June 29th, our East London Federation had a procession to Trafalgar Square. I called on the people to go to Downing Street and demonstrate against the Prime Minister. There was a tussle with the police and five arrests. I was summoned under the old Act of Edward III to appear at Bow Street on July 3rd. I ignored the summons, a warrant for my arrest was issued, but slightly disguised, I reached a meeting at Bromley Public Hall in the Bow Road. The people prevented the police from getting into the hall, but a strong force mustered outside to seize me. Though the crowd fought bravely, I was captured. After a night in the cells, I was brought up at Bow Street. Eager to get to grips with the "Cat and Mouse" Act, I gladly accepted three months' jail. I had arranged another meeting for the following Monday, and meant to be out for it. I abstained from food and water, and on Friday, to reduce myself more speedily to collapse, I struck also against sleep and, stumbled and staggered about the cell as continuously as I could. My feet burned horribly, recalling the proverbial hot plough-

shares. The ordeal seemed even more terrible than before. The thirst strike, far more serious than that of hunger, causes poisons to gather in the system, the functions of the body are in abeyance; refusal of sleep denies the natural means of recovery; one is tortured by agonizing pains and sensations of overwhelming sickness. I had fainted and was lying on the floor when the order of release came on Sunday, July 13th. Wardresses took me to the little home of two poor shoemakers in the East End, where I had arranged to stay. The women of the street were so ardent in their championship that the detectives retreated from the doorstep and kept watch from the windows of the two nearest public-houses! In vain they tried to hire a room in one of the houses opposite. I was at my meeting next night, despite the protests of Dr. Flora Murray, who had all the mice under her care.

Our fight of the previous week had caused a stir. Mrs. Pankhurst gleefully heard Norah Smyth's account of it. Henceforth we were chasing each other in and out of prison, as though it had been a race between us, until she had served forty-two days in ten imprisonments, and I, in nine imprisonments, had served sixty-five days. That Monday afternoon, July 14th, she managed to creep into the Pavilion meeting. The packed audience of women, amazed at her appearance, was convulsed with delight and fear. Annie Kenney, also a "mouse" on time-expired licence, was seized as she came out, but Mrs. Pankhurst escaped in the tumult to her own flat. Two days later she received there a number of Scottish Town Councillors and Bailies, who had come up

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to London to protest against the "Cat and Mouse" Act. On Thursday, a veiled woman emerged from her flat, surrounded by ardent supporters. The police snatched her from them only to find they had been tricked. Their prisoner had meanwhile slipped away to Mrs. Ayrton's. On July 21st, she again succeeded in entering the Pavilion, but was seized before she could reach the platform. Her cry: "Women, they are arresting me!" caused a rush from the hall, and a struggle in which five persons were arrested. Refusing to enter the gates of the jail, she was carried forcibly within.

On July 24th, she was again released on licence. She had been only three days inside, but this time she had refrained from water,¹ and on the last day, had walked the cell until exhausted. Now fifty-five, she had less recuperative power than I to face that agony, and had contracted jaundice, from which, during those periods in and out of prison, she never fully recovered.

An enormous crowd of sympathizers, aided by the strategem of turning the fire hose on the detectives, had rescued me after a meeting in Bromley Public Hall. On Sunday, July 27th, we had a march from the East End to Trafalgar Square. I got there in disguise. Masses of men and women, vaster by far than I had ever seen in the streets of London, surged as one in determined solidarity. Around me was a strange low growling sound, the deep-drawn breaths of angry people, as the police, in great numbers, charged us, but were swept aside. Detectives in civilian dress strove to force their way amongst us. Mounted men charged us;

¹ The date is fixed in the columns of the *Suffragette*.

the people rushed fearless among the horses. Police reinforcements came; still we fought on. The crowd had a taxi ready for my escape; I would not take it: "No, I am going with you to Downing Street!" At last I was seized and dragged into Cannon Row Police Station, and saw Downing Street, as we passed it, literally filled by a mass of mounted men. Thirteen women and eleven men prisoners were in the charge room. London was stirred; this crowd had given a strong account of itself.

Next day, Mrs. Pankhurst, still on licence, was carried on a stretcher to the Pavilion meeting, auctioned her latest "Cat and Mouse" licence for £100, and declared with a hopeful heart: "The fight is nearly over; the end is near at hand—a few months more and the spirit of the crowd that followed Sylvia Pankhurst down Whitehall . . . will have found expression which the Government will no longer be able to deny!"

In June, George Lansbury's insurgent group had defied the official Labour Party by running an Independent Socialist at a by-election in Leicester; the Labour leaders had decided not to fight. The W.S.P.U had supported this candidature, with much pageantry, in the hope of securing a rival movement to flay the official Labour leaders for their lack of vigour in the women's cause; but when the Independent failed to defeat the Liberal, Christabel declared the policy of running Labour candidates "too sectional." She demanded that Labour vote Conservative in the elections until women were enfranchised. Lansbury would not agree to this. On Monday, July 28th, his appeal to the Divisional Court was rejected. He hunger-

struck and was released on licence. The W.S.P.U. ignored his case. Such curt dismissals of those who were suffering for their support of W.S.P.U. policy created estrangements. Christabel's insistence that the vote would come from the Conservatives, the majority of whom opposed it at every opportunity, was unconvincing; but Mrs. Pankhurst's great struggle, and the bravery of the militants, won the admiration of the world; in face of that courage, fine points of policy did not count.

The Government did not relish spectacular arrests just then, when the International Medical Congress was meeting. Mrs. Pankhurst was permitted to deliver a speech to the Congress unmolested, and came down to see me in the East End, where I was bedridden from my last imprisonment. She was full of zest in the fight, eager for the next round, thrilled by "the sportiness of it." When Parliament rose in August, she left for Paris. In September I got away in disguise to Scandinavia. The women's societies organized great meetings for me in Christiania (Oslo), Gothenburg, Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Svendborg. I learned thereby the admiration the Suffragette movement was evoking in other countries. The following Easter, when I again escaped in disguise and spoke in Budapest, Vienna and Brussels, I met even higher enthusiasm. The Berlin police prohibited my meeting.

In October, Mrs. Pankhurst sailed from France for the United States, where she was apprehended as an undesirable alien and confined on Ellis Island. Nevertheless, she was treated as a distinguished visitor; the rooms of the Commissioner of Immigration were turned

over to her, and she was escorted to view the island. After many high courtesies, she was informed that, as a person guilty of moral turpitude, she might not set foot in the United States. She threatened to hunger-strike. Harriot Stanton Blatch and Jane Addams appealed to President Wilson, who withdrew the ban. Her popularity greater than ever, people literally fought to enter her thronged meetings.

In England secret militancy had not slackened. Forcible feeding was re-started; young, unknown women were held under its daily torture for periods extending into months before being released on a brief "Cat and Mouse" licence.

Great hopes for the Suffrage flamed up in Ulster. Carson announced the Unionist's intention to set up a rebel Government, the W.S.P.U. demanded Votes for Women under it, the Ulster Unionist Council replied that a women's franchise was in the draft articles of the Provisional Government. Christabel lauded the concession: "The W.S.P.U. will henceforth oppose the Government and the Nationalist Party with more vigour than ever!" Even Mrs. Fawcett's non-militants openly rejoiced.

Civil War was in the air. The private armies of the Unionists of Northern Ireland and of the Nationalists of the South, the Labour Volunteers of Connolly and Larkin, were the talk of the day. Even in this country the Conservative papers published with approval news of the Ulster forces. Taking up the prevailing slogans, I appealed to "anyone who has been in the army and knows anything about drilling" to train for us a "People's Army," to resist the on-

slaughters of the police. Lincoln's Inn House announced that a Women's Bodyguard was being prepared to protect Mrs. Pankhurst on her return from America. It proved a plucky band of women armed with Indian clubs.

She was to land at Plymouth; the W.S.P.U. chartered a special tug to escort her from the White Star liner, *Majestic*. The authorities retorted with highly spectacular arrangements; the harbour was cleared of craft, the liner halted, two gun-boats hovered in view. A police launch advanced to take her into custody before the W.S.P.U. tug could arrive. A steam-boat cut across; two women cried: "The cats are here, Mrs. Pankhurst! They're close on you——!" The police swarmed on deck with five men from Scotland Yard and a wardress from Holloway. She was taken on the police boat to Bull Point Fort, and thence by two motor-cars across Dartmoor to Exeter prison. The local doctor, to whom attendance at the prison was merely incidental to a large general practice, was deeply concerned by her condition and expressed his admiration for her courage. Dr. Smalley came down from the Home Office; she spurned him with one of her storms. Her militants outside meanwhile set fire to an acre and a half of Plymouth timber. She was detained till after the great meeting arranged to welcome her in the Empress Theatre, Earl's Court, where £10,500 poured into the W.S.P.U. exchequer.

Then she set off for Paris, conveyed in an ambulance to the station, and by a carrying chair from train to boat. Little old Dr. Ede, an ardent militant who had herself been imprisoned and forcibly fed, attended her.

She returned all too soon, to be back whilst her licence still held; but to her dismay the two familiar detectives thrust their way into her carriage at Dover Town to re-arrest her, on the pretext that she had infringed the terms of her licence by failure to give twenty-four hours' notice before quitting the country! At Victoria Station, they dragged her from the carriage so violently that she screamed with pain, flung her full length on the platform, then threw her half conscious into a motor and drove her back to prison.

That Sunday, at Westminster Abbey, women rose and chanted during the service: "God save Emmeline Pankhurst; help us, with Thy love and strength, to guard her; spare those who suffer for conscience sake."

Refusing the doctor's request to examine her, with the cry, "You only want to satisfy yourself that I am not quite ready to die!" she lay two nights on the concrete floor of her cell, then ceaselessly tramped its narrow confines, from early morning till nine at night, when the Governor came to tell her she would be freed next day.

When 1914 dawned she had escaped to Paris. She took a drive with her brother Herbert and Sister Pine in a swift car, and gave the detective following on his motor-bicycle the slip in the heart of London; then off like the wind to the coast, and on to the boat for Ostend, fearing every moment the clutching hand on her shoulder, gasping with glad relief to gain freedom on foreign soil again.

I knew that opposition to the East London Federation within the W.S.P.U. was demanding its expulsion. I had received many summonses to interview

Christabel in Paris. I got across disguised, with Norah Smyth, our Federation's honorary financial secretary. I was miserably ill and momentarily expecting capture till we landed overseas. I found my mother white and emaciated, and obviously distressed; for, when all was said, we both were "mice" making the same hard fight for the same cause. The gist of Christabel's charge was that ours was a working women's movement, too democratic, too independent; it might secure funds which would otherwise go to Lincoln's Inn House; differences between my policy and hers would cause confusion. Mrs. Pankhurst would have liked a compromise, but Christabel would have it there must be "a clean cut." The severance was, of course, a nine days' wonder, as such things always are. It grieved me very greatly at the time, but it left our Federation free to go its own way, and to have a weekly organ of its own, *The Women's Dreadnought*. Our members elected to call themselves the East London Federation of the Suffragettes, and later the Workers' Suffrage Federation.

Again evading the detectives, Mrs. Pankhurst slipped back to England. Halls well-nigh unobtainable, she was reduced to speaking from balconies in the homes of devoted militants. After such a meeting at the Brackenbury's in Campden Hill Square, Kensington, her bodyguard resorted again to the strategy of the veiled lady, bursting out with clubs whirling around the decoy, who courageously sustained the part, while the real Mrs. Pankhurst escaped as before. At the Schutze's in Glebe Place, Chelsea, whilst her outer guard shared the doorsteps with the "cats," she and

the inner guard crept downstairs at midnight with infinite precautions lest the men outside might hear any sound, and waited for hours at the door for a signal which did not come. Next night, whilst the bulk of the bodyguard fought at the front door, she escaped by the area into a car suddenly driven up, a brave girl beating off with her clubs the detective who would have seized the fleeing fugitive.

She escaped to Scotland by motor, lay hidden in a Scots manse, and on March 9th walked into the St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, like any member of the audience. A Scots "Women's Bodyguard" stood by to protect her. The platform was draped with barbed-wire hidden by ivy. Flower-pots were in readiness as missiles, buckets of water at hand to deluge assailants. The police burst in to take her; a girl kept them at bay with blank-shots from a revolver. The police visited their anger upon Mrs. Pankhurst by striking her on the head and flinging her on the floor of a taxi, whilst they occupied the seats. Fasting, she was kept the night in the police-station cells and taken back to Holloway next day, where the matron and wardresses, long since subjugated by her courage and suffering, were anxious to smooth the hard path for her, and distressed by her refusal to lie anywhere save on the hard concrete floor in a particularly becoming velvet gown. The blows which the police had been seen to strike her raised a storm of protest in Glasgow. There were deputations to the Glasgow Magistrates, the City Council and the Secretary for Scotland in London.

In March, the hope of aid from Ulster Unionists crashed to the ground. The promise to women had

been merely a device to maintain unity in a critical hour; when the exclusion of Ulster from Nationalist Ireland was assured, the W.S.P.U. demanded that the Women's Franchise promised under the rebel provisional Government should be made a condition of any arrangement made. Carson replied with the old, old story; his colleagues differed upon this question; he would not cause division among them by bringing it in. The W.S.P.U. retorted with unprecedented destruction; great mansions descended in flames, and in conformity with Irish law, the public authorities had to bear the cost. The county of Antrim alone had to find £92,000 damages for various claimants, 3d. in the pound on the rates.

For May 21st, Mrs. Pankhurst announced a deputation to the King, to urge upon him women's claim to enfranchisement and to complain that his Ministers had used women treacherously, and had sought to repress by torture their "revolt against the deprivation of citizen rights."

Her request refused, her militants nevertheless attempted to reach Buckingham Palace. Under the old order to repulse them with as few arrests as possible, they were kicked and beaten, whilst crowds of well-dressed young men displayed their loyalty by woman-baiting. The majority patiently submitted themselves to ill-treatment as of old, but the "Women's Body-guard" whirled their Indian clubs and threw red and green powder upon their assailants, evoking still more furious assaults. Mrs. Pankhurst passed unrecognized almost to the gates of the Palace. Then a big police inspector seized her in a great bear's hug which caused

her excruciating agony and was followed by pain and sickness in her prison cell. She was held for five days, the ordeal of the hunger and thirst strike grown more terrible by the sapping of her physical reserves. At times she feared to die before the victory, craving with fevered impatience to intensify the struggle. She heard the cries under forcible feeding of the girls who carried out the destruction she advocated. "That was worse than all!" Into her proud heart stole the cold hand of remorse and abounding grief. "It is all very well for me; I have the limelight—but these!" She challenged the Government to forcibly feed her; during a period of release even procured a medical certificate that her heart was without defect.

All the expressions of loyalty in which Christabel had been prolific went overboard; the King, attending His Majesty's Theatre, was assailed by the cry: "You Russian Tsar!" A debutante at Court begged: "For God's sake, your Majesty, stop forcible feeding!" Pictures were slashed at the Royal Academy show, public galleries and museums were closed, wire screens affixed to protect the windows of public buildings. Suffragette "mice" appeared at the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury demanding sanctuary, and on the doorstep of Sir Edward Carson for shelter with a "fellow militant."

On the morning of the deputation to the King, a flat had been raided in Maida Vale, a Suffragette arsenal—flints, hammers, gunpowder, fuses were discovered. Lincoln's Inn House was occupied by the police. Seven women and girls were arrested. They were brought up at Bow Street with the sixty-eight people

arrested before Buckingham Palace. Indescribable confusion reigned; bags of flour and other missiles were hurled, the prisoners shouted and struggled incessantly, and some even took off their shoes and flung them at the magistrate. Refusal to be tried was now the official policy of the W.S.P.U. Two young organizers were indicted for conspiracy. Refused bail, they hunger-struck and were forcibly fed, being brought to court each day in a pitiable state of collapse. One of them hoped to secure release by vomiting all the food pumped into her. The clerk of Arthur Marshall, the W.S.P.U. solicitor, tried to smuggle an emetic to her during a professional visit, but was caught in the act. The incident was peculiarly unfortunate, for the W.S.P.U. was at the time charging the prison authorities with administering bromide during forcible feeding, in order to break down mental resistance and destroy morale. The Home Secretary now retorted that the women were drugging themselves. Thenceforward Mrs. Pankhurst was stripped and searched at every rearrest, an indignity which deeply wounded her.

The position of the young unknown militants was becoming desperate. From Perth prison came horrible news; forcible feeding carried out there by the staff of the adjoining Criminal Lunatic Asylum, bowel feeding combined with special tortures, to punish resistance.

I desperately desired to speed the pace. It now seemed clear to me that to undo the deadlock two things were necessary: to deliver the women's movement from reliance on the traditional demand for a restricted franchise, which in process of time had

become acceptable only to the Conservatives, and was rejected by the Government in power and the majority in Parliament; to employ the hunger-strike more concretely as an implement in the struggle for the vote. I arranged for the election of a deputation to Asquith at several great East End public meetings, throwing it open for the audiences to decide the franchise to be demanded. As I anticipated, the demand was a vote for every woman over twenty-one years. Asquith refused to receive the deputation. I announced it would nevertheless proceed to the House of Commons, accompanied by a procession of supporters, and that I would hunger-strike, in prison or out, until he would concede an interview. He repeated his refusal. Our members wept at my decision, but mustered loyally for the march on the evening of June 10th. Too weak after a recent hunger-strike, to walk, I was carried on a stretcher. The police, in ambush at a narrow part of the road, broke through and captured me. Masses of people pressed on to the House. The deputation failed to get face to face with Asquith, but fear of a riot permitted a meeting on the sacred ground of Parliament Square.

Next day, the hunger-strike was debated in the Commons. Again McKenna was urged to let the hunger-strikers die. He replied that for every woman who died, scores would come forward to earn the crown of martyrdom. "When there were twenty, thirty or more deaths in prison, you would have a violent reaction of public opinion. . . . I am bound to say for myself that I could never take a hand in carrying out that policy." He admitted that he had many

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THREE YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE

times had Suffragette prisoners medically examined with a view to getting them certified insane, but the doctors had refused to lend themselves to the deed.¹ His one hope was to proceed against the W.S.P.U. subscribers by civil action. If they could individually be made responsible for the whole of the damage, the insurance companies would proceed against them, and if the revenue of the militants were cut off, he believed "the power of Mrs. Pankhurst would be at an end."

I was meanwhile in prison, anticipating a stubborn tussle with Asquith. I looked death in the face, deciding to take the risk. I was released on June 18th, and was driven immediately to the House of Commons, where I lay on the steps of the little door near the Strangers' Entrance to continue my strike. The police were about to remove me, when Keir Hardie came out with Asquith's promise to receive our deputation in two days' time. That he had given way after repeated refusal was unprecedented; we believed it augured early success for the old cause. Replying to the deputation, he virtually abandoned his long opposition: "If the change has to come, we must face it boldly, and make it thorough-going and democratic." Everyone agreed his reply meant the beginning of the end. I was anxious to press the matter further. I got Lansbury to arrange an interview for me with Lloyd George. We saw him together at 10 Downing Street. He offered to refuse to join the Liberal Government after the coming election, except on condition that a Reform Bill should be introduced, in which (to meet the

¹ *Vide* Official Parliamentary Report, June 11th, 1914.

Speaker's ruling) a clause giving the vote to women on broad general lines should be included from the start, and left to a free vote of the House.¹ He would begin campaigning for the clause immediately, and would himself introduce a private Member's Bill on the same lines to have two strings to the bow. He would stake his political reputation on the enactment of Votes for Women in the next session of Parliament, and would resign if it were defeated. He would give written guarantees to do all this which it would be "political dishonour" to repudiate. He stipulated, however, that militancy must be suspended; otherwise he would be unable "to swing the Liberal Party machine into line." This offer was, of course, of very great importance and worthy of most careful consideration. To my annoyance, Lansbury told H. D. Harben, who forestalled my own explanation by rushing off at once to Paris to tell Christabel. She immediately issued a statement to the Press repudiating all negotiations, declaring that militancy would continue till Votes for Women had received the Royal Assent. "No militant will trust in a single promise that the Government may make." I sent a message that I was coming to see her. She telegraphed to Norah Smyth: "Tell your friend not to come!" Nevertheless, I still intended to carry on negotiations. I had a conference with Keir Hardie, persuaded him that the day of limited Bills was over, and that the next move must be a vigorous campaign for a Reform Bill giving womanhood Suffrage, which the Labour Party must make a foremost plank. A

¹ The procedure by which women eventually were enfranchised under his Premiership.

pronouncement from his pen to this effect appeared in the *Labour Leader* forthwith. I took the women who had interviewed Asquith to urge the same view on the Labour Party Executive.

Coercion was still maintained. The police still occupied Lincoln's Inn House. The W.S.P.U. resorted to offices in Tothill Street, Westminster. On June 9th these also were seized; the Union took refuge with the Brackenburys in Campden Hill Square. Three days later the police occupied this haven, but vacated Lincoln's Inn House. Mrs. Pankhurst announced her intention to return there on July 8th, challenging the Government to rearrest and forcibly feed her. Her old slogan had been: "*They must do us justice, or do us violence!*" It was now: "*They must give us freedom, or give us death!*" She was rearrested and held for three days; then released on a licence of only four days, that her presence at a great meeting in the Holland Park Skating Rink, on July 16th, might be prevented. Determined to be there, she set out in an ambulance; the police commandeered it and drove her back to jail, whilst her friends at the meeting subscribed £16,350. That was their answer to McKenna's threat to prosecute W.S.P.U. subscribers! Two days later she was released from her tenth imprisonment.

On July 20th met the Buckingham Palace Conference called by the King to avert Irish Civil War. Women were arrested at the Palace gates with a letter from Mrs. Pankhurst demanding that since the Sovereign had called a conference of militant men, he should no longer plead inability to receive militant women.

CHAPTER X

WAR

1914-1918

THE Great War, sweeping all before it, came as a stunning blow. From the quiet promenade at St. Malo, where she was resting, Emmeline Pankhurst followed the people to hear the Mayor read the declaration of hostilities between France and Germany, witnessed the grief of the old folk who remembered the war of 1870. *What fearful conflict raged in her breast! Her past reached out to her appealing memories; her own words rang in her ears: "War is not women's way! To the women of this Union human life is sacred!"* Opposing all that was her old enthusiasm for France and prejudice against Germany, implanted in her Paris schooldays.

Her companion, the voluble musician, hitherto a devotee of Germany, as the possessor of "an ancient and very genuine musical civilization," was already a jingo, abusing the hated Liberals for their tardiness in declaring war. She made her impression on the storm-tossed brain of the militant leader, than whom

none knew better the abuse and ostracism which would fall on any who dared to stand for Peace. To take that stern way would rouse still fiercer opposition against the Suffrage cause, the W.S.P.U. and her own influence, which appeared to her all indissolubly bound together for her generation. And then dear France, . . .

That week's issue of the *Suffragette* held still to the old cause; its leading article an appealing cry against the death-dealing militancy of men: "Women of the W.S.P.U., we must protect our Union through everything . . . for the sake of the human race . . . women must be free!" Next week the paper failed to appear. There had been urgent negotiations for the release of the Suffragette prisoners. McKenna had refused it, except under the pledge none of them would give, "not to commit further crimes and outrages," but within four days they were liberated unconditionally, without, as he told the Commons, solicitation on their part. Mrs. Pankhurst issued to the Press a statement, coldly aloof from the great Emergency, announcing the suspension of W.S.P.U. activities, since the greater violence of the war would render women's militancy "less effective," and peaceful propaganda "is, as we know, futile." Money and energy would thus be saved, and "an opportunity provided to recuperate after the tremendous strain and suffering of the last two years."

She was herself so gravely debilitated that only in September—it seemed an age in that hectic time—did she return to the platform. She then declared her support for the war policy of the Allies. Meanwhile, in common with other women's organizations, we

in the East End had braced ourselves to cope with the great needs of the time; panic prices and profiteering, homes without means, through the shutting down of factories, the calling up of men, tardy, chaotic payment, or non-payment of separation allowances and pensions. We built up mother and infant clinics, day nurseries, milk centres, cost-price restaurants, work-rooms for the unemployed, committees for counsel and aid for wives and mothers of men at the Front, to help the sufferers, to demonstrate what the Community might do—efforts which left some permanent impress.

In the spring of 1915 came an appeal, sponsored by Dutch Suffragists and the well-known English Pacifist, Emily Hobhouse, for an International Congress¹ of Women at the Hague, issued in the brave, vain hope of bringing to a war-rent world the consolatory spirit of motherhood. It clove in twain the feminist movement of the world. In this country the old National Union was split. Mrs. Fawcett brusquely rejected it; her principal lieutenants seceded to assist in promoting the Congress. We in the East End supported it; my name went forward as a delegate. Adela in Australia, and the Women's Party there, in which she was an active worker, adhered to the Congress. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel brought the W.S.P.U. to life again to oppose it. Mrs. Pankhurst announced her return to the platform to stimulate war enthusiasm and to

¹ It was proposed that the Congress should urge the belligerent Governments to call a truce to define peace terms; and should demand that international disputes be submitted to arbitration, that no territory be transferred without the consent of its population, also the political enfranchisement of women, and the inclusion of women delegates at the Conference of Powers to follow the war.

recruit men for the Army. I wrote to her, expressing my sorrow at her decision. She answered curtly: "I am ashamed to know where you and Adela stand!"¹

The *Suffragette* reappeared on April 16th, with the slogan: "It is a thousand times more the duty of the militant Suffragettes to fight the Kaiser for the sake of liberty than it was to fight anti-Suffrage Governments." Launched with an appeal to national unity by Mrs. Pankhurst, it soon became one of the most virulent exponents of the measures² demanded by the war extremists, Lloyd George, Carson and Northcliffe, and of their bitter opposition to the Asquith Government. Most outspoken of all in this campaign, it was many times raided by the police and military authorities, dwindling to a single hand-duplicated sheet, and many weeks failing to appear at all. When old Suffrage friends protested against Christabel's ruthlessness, Mrs. Pankhurst replied: "I don't want her different or liable to her mother's human weaknesses." Though their antipathy and distrust of Asquith was intensified, their opinion of Lloyd George was entirely changed; they regarded him with the utmost confidence and

¹ Adela, in the Women's Party of Australia, was opposing the war. When the nation was in the throes of the contest over Conscription, Mrs. Pankhurst publicly condemned us both for our opposition to it; so keenly she felt her politics, and we also!

² The extension of the war to bring all neutral nations into the conflict on the side of the Allies, and especially to attack Germany through the Balkans; unified control of the war under an Allied War Council in Paris and a supreme General of all the Allied forces; an intensified blockade of the enemy, and even of the neutral nations; expulsion from the public services of all persons of enemy origin or connections, whether naturalized or not, and conscription of men and women alike for national service, both military and industrial.

enthusiasm, and worked eagerly for him to become Prime Minister.

Though Mrs. Pankhurst devoted herself to the cause of winning the war with characteristic whole-heartedness, the propaganda of hate and bloodshed was alien to her inner spirit. Her effort to start a great institution for the care of illegitimate children was the expression of a longing to make something beautiful blossom amid this darkness; but the war enthusiasts who now supported the W.S.P.U. were largely indifferent or hostile to the project; it ended in the adoption by herself of four baby girls, with the hope of eventual assistance from others, which proved mainly illusory.

The hosts who had supported the W.S.P.U. in pre-war days were dispersed. Though some were proud that their Union should outpace all others in merciless war policy, others were disappointed; they had expected from Mrs. Pankhurst and the Union something essentially of womanhood; if not the maintenance of the militant struggle despite the war, if not the exalted standing out for Peace above the battle, at least the safeguarding of women's interests and essential human needs, at least the gentler task of assuagement.

In support of its demand for the conscription of women and other extremist war policies, the Union organized a great procession of women in June 1915; the cost of it could not be met from generous gifts of supporters, like the tremendous demonstrations before the war; Lloyd George, who was at the Ministry of Munitions, provided £3,000 of Government funds and the use of the official war service registers.

On Mrs. Pankhurst the burden of maintaining the

1915-6]

WAR

Union, of which she was still honorary treasurer, and the cost of the "war babies" which fell to her personal share, bore heavily. The great Lincoln's Inn House was let, as a necessary war economy, and the Union moved to Great Portland Street, where it was obliged to hold its meetings, for other halls were refused. Early in 1916 she set off for another American lecture tour; the major portion of her time was to be devoted to war propaganda and the proceeds to propaganda funds; but certain free days were to be reserved for lectures on social hygiene, her earnings therefrom to be held for her personal account, in order that she might have means at her disposal to support the "babies." This part of her project was mainly unfulfilled, for, as she wrote to Dr. Ethel Smyth: "Somehow, when I came to do it, I couldn't go in for personal money-making in war-time, so I stick to considering the lilies as usual." The decision was characteristic. Henceforth her life was increasingly shadowed by financial stress. In her great militant struggle the present had been all, the future unregarded; death for the cause, glorious if painful, seemed her inevitable lot. Now life stretched out indefinitely before her, the question of how to provide for the babies and her old age lurked ready to lay its leaden grip on her heart whenever energy or spirit flagged. In the autumn of 1916, she found it possible to make a home for herself with Sister Pine and the babies at 50 Clarendon Road, Holland Park, and for three years was able to maintain it, but never without strain. She had turned from the power of the spirit to the power of the sword, and had gained no security by the exchange.

The Suffrage cause was advancing despite the war. Though the W.S.P.U. and the National Union had dropped it absolutely for the time being, upwards of forty other societies still kept it to the fore, whilst the extensive work and service of women brought home to average people the injustice of debarring them from citizenship. When the vast changes of residence, due to mobilization and war work, rendered obsolete the old Parliamentary registers, Carson and Northcliffe raised the cry: "Votes for the Fighting Men." We who had remained active for the Suffrage, emphatically raised the women's claim.

To allay controversy Asquith obviated a war-time election by an Act to prolong the legal term of Parliament, and set up a Parliamentary Conference, under the Chairmanship of the Speaker, to devise means of dealing with the franchise acceptable to all Parties. He uttered a remarkable declaration of conversion to Votes for Women, stating that if the franchise were to be based on State service, the claim of women that during the war their service to the country had been as effective as that of any class of the community could not be denied. Moreover, when war came to an end, and the process of industrial reconstruction had to be set on foot, the women would have the right to be heard on many questions directly affecting their interests, and possibly meaning for them large displacement of labour: "I say quite frankly that I cannot deny that claim." Mrs. Pankhurst's reaction to the situation was yet more remarkable; Asquith had not long spoken when Commander Bellairs, an old opponent of Women's Franchise, announced that he had

been authorized by Mrs. Pankhurst, on behalf of the Women's Social and Political Union, from which he had always differed in the past, to repudiate the statement of the Prime Minister, to express the utmost anxiety that the soldiers and sailors should vote, and to say: "They will not allow themselves to be used to prevent soldiers and sailors from being given the vote."¹ Mrs. Pankhurst followed up this declaration under her own signature in the *Britannia* of August 18th, 1916:

" . . . Before the war, Mr. Asquith used the question of more votes for men to 'dish' the women who want votes. Now he reverses the process, and uses the women to 'dish' the men who are heroically sacrificing themselves in defence of the Nation. . . . We indignantly resent the Prime Minister's attempt to exploit, for his own political purposes, the women's cause, of which he has been, and still is, the determined enemy."

Lloyd George became Premier in December 1916. In January 1917, Women's Franchise passed the legislature of Manitoba with great rejoicing; other Canadian provinces quickly followed, and in the same month, New York, the hardest and most recalcitrant of the United States. In March, the Speakers' Conference presented its Report. It was unanimous in proposing votes for all men at twenty-one years. The old unlimited plural voting it proposed to abolish, but to allow one further vote for those who could show a second qualification as occupiers of land or premises of

¹ Official Report, 14th August, 1916.

£10 annual value, and one also as University graduates. On the question of women the Conference was not unanimous, but the majority had recommended giving the vote to women occupiers of land or premises of not less than £5 annual value, also to wives of men occupying land or premises of the same value, with a second vote for women University graduates. Thus a property barrier was proposed for women which would not apply to men, and all the daughters, lodgers and servants in other people's houses would be debarred, though men of the same sort would vote. To reduce the number of women voters still further, no woman was to exercise the franchise till thirty or thirty-five years; the Conference was undecided which age to fix. Despite these handicaps, the terms would enfranchise eight times as many women as the Conciliation Bill, for which so much heroic sacrifice was made in militant days. The proposal to give a vote to the wife on her husband's qualification was, of course, the pre-war demand of Lloyd George, for which he had been denounced as a wrecker. The terms had been submitted before publication to Mrs. Fawcett and others, who were desperately afraid of asking too much, and would gladly have accepted less; indeed they had not seriously considered getting more than the Conciliation Bill. I declared women should and could have had equal franchise if they would make a strong demand for it.

It was Asquith who moved the Parliamentary resolution requesting Lloyd George's Government to legislate on the lines of the Speakers' Conference Report.

The House having assented, Lloyd George called

the Suffrage organizations to meet him in the official residence at 10 Downing Street, before which so many militant contests had been fought. Mrs. Pankhurst, in her deep desire to get the citizenship of women safely on to the Statute Book, which flamed out despite her preoccupation with the war, cast aside all quibbling.

“Give such a Government measure to the House of Commons to vote upon as you feel to be just and practicable in the war circumstances . . . whatever you think can be passed . . . we are ready to accept. . . . In this room where so many women have come, one cannot help feeling that the spirits might be among us of those who died without seeing the result of their labour and sacrifice. It will be a wonderful thing if in war-time—just as in Canada—just as in Russia—it should come to women in the heart of the British Empire!”

The Reform Bill was introduced on May 15th. On June 19th, the women's clauses were reached. Old Sir Frederick Banbury's motion to delete them altogether was beaten by 385 votes to 55. Peto's Amendment to enfranchise women at twenty-one years got only 25 votes. The Conference terms, with the age barrier at thirty years, were carried by the sweeping majority of 214 votes to 17. Save for the House of Lords, Women's Franchise was now secure!

Leaving the Reform Bill to its slow progress, Mrs. Pankhurst journeyed to Russia that summer. All the Allied Governments and Parliaments had welcomed the Russian Revolution when it burst forth in March,

hoping, by a show of friendliness, to constrain this amazing phenomenon within moderate limits; above all, to keep Russia in the war. From her youth the struggle for Russian freedom had held her. She had known Stepniak, Tchaykovsky, Kropotkin, and other prominent Russian exiles. The visit to her home in Manchester of two Russian women, a mother and daughter, workers in the Revolutionary movement, telling of their hard and perilous life under the autocracy, had been the final spur which drove her to Suffragette militancy. Rejoicing in the overthrow of the Tsar, she failed, like so many others, to discern the commencement of a vast economic upheaval. She accepted the version, officially circulated here, that the long struggle for representative Parliamentary Government had been brought to a climax and conclusion simply by desire to overthrow German influences about the Throne, and to secure an efficient prosecution of the war. When, on the contrary, the Russian War Front collapsed, and the Soviets, growing in power, demanded an immediate general peace, on the basis of "no annexations, no indemnities, and the right of all peoples to decide their own destiny," she saw these events only as a reverse to Allied war strategy.

To-day it is strange to recall that George Lansbury persuaded Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden to join with him in the Leeds Conference to set up Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in Britain. This was an attempt to wrest the leadership of the Labour Party from Henderson, Clynes and other pre-war Trade Union leaders. MacDonald was deputed to carry to Russia the Leeds welcome to the Soviet peace overture.

Mrs. Pankhurst was one of the succession of people who journeyed thither, under the auspices of the British Government, in the vain effort to bring Russia back into the war. She happened to sail on the very boat by which MacDonald was to travel, and was highly rejoiced when, on the orders of that old reprobate, Havelock Wilson, the autocrat of the Seamen's Union, the crew refused to sail till the future Prime Minister ignominiously disembarked. Her cordial detestation of MacDonald arose, not alone from his alleged Pacifism; she had old scores against him for his bitterly expressed disdain of the Suffragettes. Kersensky was little more to her taste; but she threw all her energy into such assistance as a foreigner, knowing not a word of Russian, could give to his efforts to restart the Russian offensive. She saw the ill-starred companies of women, fitly named the "Battalions of Death," paraded for the Front under their peasant leader. The Soviets swept into power during her stay; but the November Revolution seemed to her only a disastrous madness of illiterate masses deluded by the "machinations of German agents." Clearly realizing that there was no further hope of Russia's assistance in the war,¹ she returned to denounce Committee control of army or of industry as disastrous, whether at home or abroad. In this she was out-distanced and spurred by Christabel, who, now that the victory of the vote was approaching, had returned to live in England. *Britannia* was enlarged. The Women's Social and Political Union became the "Women's Party."

Nineteen eighteen saw the enactment of women's

¹ Speech at Merthyr, December 1917.

citizenship. With public, Government, Commons and Press supporting it, opposition in the Lords melted like mist before the rising sun. The Party leaders were now even more anxious to get the question settled and done with than they had till lately been to shelve it; Mrs. Pankhurst and the militant movement had achieved that change; not a man of them but shrank from a recommencement of the militant struggle. Even Lord Curzon told his followers that though still an irreconcilable anti-Suffragist, he would not lead them into a contest from which they could not emerge "with credit." The Women's Clause was carried on January 8th by 134 votes to 71; save for the formalities, women had won their citizenship at last.

Three days later, Lloyd George invited Mrs. Pankhurst to breakfast with him to talk over the victory. She ardently discussed her schemes for turning the new-won citizenship to account. First the immediate food problem must be tackled; war prices were making the lives of poor mothers a nightmare; there must be compulsory rationing, and public cost-price restaurants to reduce the household tasks of women working outside the home in place of men.

The Reform Bill received the Royal Assent on February 6th, 1918. Mrs. Pankhurst reappeared in the great Albert Hall, with Christabel and their war-time colleagues. Women were urged to rally to the Suffragette leaders who had raised the cause of their enfranchisement from obscurity to triumph. Under the ægis of the Women's Party new conquests were promised, but the hosts who had supported the Suffrage fight failed to respond. The demands for women

were in line with the general policy of advanced feminists for generations past: emancipation from unskilled drudgery in the home, opportunity to qualify in the higher spheres of human activity, and to enjoy leisure and recreation on equal terms with men; to this end co-operative housekeeping and the mechanization of domestic work, to liberate mothers from the condition in which their work is never done. The reorganization and rationalization of industry was urged, in order to provide plenty and leisure for all, the working day to be reduced to not more than six hours, and the women taken into the factories in such great numbers for war work retained there, as well as the men returning from the Front. The Party did not concentrate sufficiently on the questions specifically applying to women to combine women of various political sympathies, as had been done for the vote. Both the manner in which it was presented by the Women's Party, and the conditions of the time, tended to over-shadow the women's side of the programme, and caused the Party to be regarded by advanced women as a phalanx of the Tories. The demand for at least a share in the control of industry by the workers and their representatives was then a popular and burning question. Already, in 1917, the Government had been induced to appoint the Whitley Committee, which had reported in favour of joint Industrial Councils of Employers and Employed. The Women's Party denounced all such projects. Advanced women were thus apt to hold aloof from the Women's Party, the more so as it vehemently attacked the entire Labour movement. In assenting to the war-time suspension

of Trade Union conditions, the Labour leaders had secured from the Government an undertaking that these conditions should be restored when peace came, and that the men who had gone to the Front should be reinstated. The Women's Party denounced the bargain as a victimization of the women war-workers, and a retrograde step for all concerned, but the Labour movement in general clung to this bird in the hand, rather than surrender everything gained by a century of Trade Union effort for aspirations towards a re-organized industry effected by forces they could not control. Whilst the Women's Party was thus in conflict with the Labour movement, its propaganda was anything but acceptable to Conservative employers, who were presently to be at grips with the most revolutionary minded workers in the struggle for the six-hour day it advocated!

Mrs. Pankhurst had drifted far from the political sympathies she held when the militant movement began. In the exclusive patriotism of war-time, to which, once she had taken the plunge, her impressionable sympathies responded, the internationalism she had imbibed in early life slipped from her. As in her Socialist days, she still hoped for a society of happiness, animated by the spirit of mutual aid, in which abundant production, scientifically organized, would, in her own words, afford "a share of all that is best in life for everyone." How far this was eventually to be carried out by private enterprise controlled by the Government and expert committees, as in war-time; how far by the community itself through its elected bodies; or by what other means, she was probably prepared to leave for

the future to determine. Though she had taken to attacking the Labour Party and the Socialists, it is certain that, however she may have termed it to herself, some sort of Socialism was always at the back of her mind; for her experience of what she had been able to do as Poor Law Guardian and member of an Education Authority, and the dreams she had cherished of what might be done under public auspices, were never forgotten. She looked to Lloyd George as the man who could lead the nation along the path of her desire in a national non-Party effort, overcoming sectionalism and reluctance as he had done in war-time! He was promising a great programme of social reform, a reconstructed Britain, fit for the prowess of its heroes. She believed in his earnestness and his power; he had given British women their citizenship; women would help him to high achievement for the public weal. To her the glowing images of a resplendent future, in which his oratory was so fertile, were not the mere base currency of Party warfare, but hopes intensely dear. In her concentration on the idea of victory, the great output of the munition factories had seemed to her magnificent; the drab and dismal life of the munition-worker, either unseen, or sublimated in her eyes as part of the glorious effort and sacrifice of a people united in a great contest for Right and Liberty. During her struggle for the vote, she had ignored economic questions. They seemed to her now capable of very easy and simple solution, by patriotism and goodwill.

In June 1918, she sailed for America. *Britannia* advertised that she went, on behalf of the Women's

Party, to urge Japanese military intervention in Russia, with the object of compelling the Germans to reinforce their Eastern Front, and thus relieve the British and French Fronts on the West. A few weeks later began the invasion of Russia by all the Allied Powers, not merely to counter the Germans, as she had desired, but in the vain effort to overthrow the Soviets and to impede the rapidly developing economic changes. So unpopular with the mass of people in all the Allied countries was the intervention that it had to be abandoned after fruitless expenditure of life and treasure. Immersed in other activities, I did not know, till after her death, when I read it in the files of *Britannia*, that she had advocated armed intervention in Russia. To me it appears a tragic anti-climax that one who had devoted herself so valiantly to the cause of freedom, should have been led, by eagerness for an Allied victory, to advocate this attack, which, whatever might be its intention, could not do other than thwart and jeopardize the development of a people with whose long struggle for liberty she had sympathized from youth upward. Yet no candid account of her life can fail to state the fact.

CHAPTER XI

CLOSING YEARS

1918-1928

IN pre-war days, the majority of Suffragists believed that even when the vote had been obtained, the right of women to sit in Parliament would be denied for many a long year. As it turned out, a Government measure giving them the right of election followed almost immediately after the vote, and they were actually made eligible for election at twenty-one years, though they could not vote until thirty! Parliamentary Government everywhere had received a shock from the revolutions in Russia, Austria, Hungary and Germany. Those in authority hoped that the enthusiasm of women for their new citizenship would buttress the Parliamentary institution. The Act reached the Statute Book on November 21st, 1918, only ten days after the Armistice, and within three weeks of the long-delayed General Election.

Mrs. Pankhurst fondly believed her daughter would be the first to enter the long-forbidden citadel. In that great modesty she never lost, she put her daughter first

for honour, though she had preceded her in sacrifice. Christabel stood for Smethwick as candidate of the Women's Party. Lloyd George, as "the man who won the war," was calling for a non-Party vote for his Coalition Government, and issuing a letter of approval, the so-called "coupon" to the candidates in all Parties he regarded as supporters he could depend on. Mrs. Pankhurst demanded this recognition for her daughter. The strenuous support both had given him throughout the war should have won his ungrudging aid, but, impatient of compromise, neither mother nor daughter were fitted to be placid political henchmen; they were both far too individual and impetuous in their opinions for that! Alone of all the women candidates, she received the "coupon," but too tardily to help her much. Fighting an isolated contest, she was defeated, as were all the other women candidates, save only the Countess Markievicz in Dublin, who, as a Sinn Féiner, was pledged not to take her seat. Of all the Parties, only the Irish revolutionaries were willing then to trust a favourable seat to any woman candidate.

With the defeat in Smethwick died the Women's Party. Under this overwhelming disappointment, the heavy burden of financing it could be borne no longer. Christabel retired absolutely from political life. Even Mrs. Pankhurst's own hold on politics was deeply shaken. She had struggled for the Suffrage without a thought of self, but she considered there should have been a great rally of women to this candidature of the militants who had won the vote. Moreover, she reflected that though *Britannia*, under her daughter's editorship, had been persecuted during the

war, the policies it advocated so fiercely had each in turn been adopted before the victory was achieved.

The liabilities left by the Women's Party and the maintenance of the "war babies" bore heavily upon her. The glory of women's enthusiasm, which surrounded her in the Suffragette struggle, had paled. The high excitement of war was followed by a revulsion of feeling against all that, and a widespread apathy towards public questions. Even the most profuse in expressions of love and adulation had turned to other excitements. From the comfortable eminence of an assured unearned income, the preoccupations of a woman who scarcely knows how to feed and clothe her dependents are apt to appear tedious, if not undignified. Even a being of passion and impulse whose heroism has vitally transformed the conditions of her time, if pressed for cash, may come to be regarded with not altogether good-natured contempt by the professional women whose field of success she has materially helped to create.

In September she sailed for Canada and the United States, the only continent where it seemed possible for her to earn a sustenance. Though often she longed to return, she was obliged to remain continuously at work there. In December 1919, a testimonial fund was started by old Suffragette friends in England. The response was small; less than £3,000 was raised. Of that, more than half was spent by the organizers of the fund in buying and furnishing a country house in England; a mistaken kindness, for lacking the means to maintain it, she had to let, and finally, to sell it.

In the summer of 1920, she was able to have the

"war babies" sent out to her from England, and presently settled with them and Sister Pine in Toronto, where Christabel also joined her. Mrs. Pankhurst had been appointed lecturer on "Social Hygiene" to the Canadian Government. Venereal disease had ravaged the Canadian soldiers of the great war; they had spread infection amongst the civilian population. The question was a burning one amongst women; there was imperative need for co-operation in curative and preventive measures by the sufferers and by the people at large. This was just such an emergency in which Mrs. Pankhurst's courage and quality, her power to pierce to the heart of highly contentious subjects without offence, nay, with the warm enthusiasm of all hearers, were invaluable. Much also required to be done for mothers overburdened by excessively heavy work on lonely farms, where trained assistance for the confinement was often lacking. They had to be roused to take more care of themselves, their families induced to give them greater consideration, the authorities to provide amenities.

As ever responsive to new impressions, she grew enthusiastic for Canada and the Canadians, had dreams of a great commonwealth providing for all a splendid abundance. She hoped in a few years to earn enough to free herself from the necessity of working continuously, in season and out; to buy a little house and an acre or two of land in Victoria, where, in tranquil happiness, pottering about with household matters among her "babies," writing or lecturing only when the spirit stirred her, she could pass serenely through old age. Now, in her sixty-seventh year, her

powers of voice and expression were unimpaired, but the hard strain of constant travel and continual speaking told. In the spring of 1924, severe bronchitis compelled her to obtain six months' leave of absence. She went with her little family to Bermuda, where she revelled in eventless tranquillity, sun-bathing with the "babies," teaching them to swim in the warm sea.

Her resources dwindling, she reluctantly decided to part with two of the "babies"; they were sent to England, and with the aid of her associates there, adopted as daughters of prosperous people. Of the four children, but one, Mary, now remained to her, Christabel having adopted her favourite, Betty, some years before.

Till her own political orientation had reached the opposite pole, Emmeline Pankhurst had followed, hither and thither, the political policies of her eldest daughter. When Christabel ceased to interest herself in public affairs, she had gone on alone, working still in the spirit native to her, for the welfare of women and the race. Christabel was now looking for the solution of this world's problems by cataclysmic supernatural means; from this last phase of her daughter, Mrs. Pankhurst held aloof.

In 1925, convinced she could no more endure the rigours of the Canadian climate, she relinquished her post, sailed for France, put part of the small means remaining to her into a project to make an income for Christabel and their old W.S.P.U. colleague, Mrs. Tuke, by "English Tea-rooms" on the Riviera. She entered upon the venture with her usual confidence, but it was soon evident that it would be no easy gold

mine. Christabel hated it, and liquidated the whole business when bronchial symptoms, induced by the bleak November winds, compelled her mother to leave the coast.

Mrs. Pankhurst was again in London at the house of one of her younger sisters who, the wife of an Austrian, had been exiled throughout the war—a strange reunion. Ignoring repudiation and estrangement, I hastened to her; with a pang of grief, I saw she had grown old. Yet in speech she would light again with the remembered fire; behind those frail and withered lineaments I could discern the beautiful woman of her prime. In the emotion of meeting, the old affection overwhelmed us. Then, as the first rush of joy and sadness passed, a gulf remained.

A group of her old militants organized a banquet to welcome her. Conservatives amongst them induced her to accept an invitation to become an official Parliamentary candidate of the Conservative Party. The constituency assigned to her, Whitechapel and St. George's, part of the big East London foreign Jewish quarter, was one in which no Conservative had a hope of success—unless perhaps it might be some miraculous personality like herself; heavy odds for a delicate old woman!

That she should have turned for the realization of her hopes to the Conservative Party, the least receptive to such ideals as hers, seemed to many who admired her utterly amazing, infinitely sad. She, however, believed that supporters for her dream of a community consciously organizing for the general well-being were to be found in every Party and every class. The heroic

devotion and sacrifice of her militants had given her faith in her power to probe through prejudice and reluctance to the better self in every breast. The Labour Party and Lloyd George had disappointed her; the struggle to build a Women's Party had proved too hard; in her perennial hopefulness, she turned to the Party she had not yet tested.

While still on the Riviera, she had been invited by a recently formed society of women to organize for the winning of the final Act of equal franchise, the "Flapper Vote," as it was called. She had rejected the offer, unwilling to accept such employment, and stating her opinion that it was for the young women to secure their own franchise, now that she and her colleagues had broken down the sex barrier. On her return to England, she spoke for it only at one great joint Albert Hall meeting, but did her part in securing a personal promise for its enactment from Baldwin, the Conservative Prime Minister.

Her Conservative candidature brought no respite from her own material struggle, but the added burden of raising finance for political and social work in her constituency. Yet, inspired by the thought that from a seat in Parliament she could rouse women to make great use of their long-sought citizenship, an effort her toil and sacrifice for the "war babies" till now had prevented, she rose to the spur of need, formed a committee of her old Suffragette colleagues, and was active on the platform in Whitechapel and throughout the country.

Early in 1928, she resolved to settle in her constituency, an heroic step, for she was in need of the

most solicitous care. It entailed parting with little Mary. The child's prospects and need of education had given her many an anxious hour, but the wrench cut deeply. She had barely recovered from a crushing attack of her old illness when she left her sister's home and established herself, that April, in her little lodging. Proudly and graciously, with that hard-held composure she knew so well to preserve, she took leave of the prosperous friend who had driven her thither in his car.

When she was there alone, how the old memories scourged her, and the solitude she had never been able to endure! Scattered were the nearest who had loved her and made a queen of her. The sorrowful squalor of the East End, hopeless in its immensity, lay round her; she had chosen it, as of old she had chosen the prison cell, but it wore on her none the less. The cramped room smote her; in all her struggles she had clung to beauty and spaciousness, refusing to pinch and spare, demanding in her dwelling something at least of architectural distinction, not a mere "house in a row." She flung her arms wide, with the old, impetuous cry: "I hate small rooms!" She had invested the prospect of living down there amongst these women it was her chosen work to help with a romantic glamour, but now she felt suddenly homeless—a mere lodger. The sense of being needed and necessary fell away from her. The war was won, the vote was won. The Royal Assent to the last Act in securing complete political equality had been set. There was a loosening of her grasp on life, but she spurred herself to another effort: "Five years more," again she would "rouse women. . . !" She was gripped by the old malady

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which always, in the solitude of prison, had overwhelmed her. She sank with it, rallied, and sank again. . . .

On May 31st, Christabel and her sister removed her to a Hampstead nursing-home. Physician after physician was called without avail. She failed into unconsciousness, and died on June 14th, 1928, a month before the completion of her seventieth year.

On the night of June 17th, a little company of her militants kept watch beside her in St. John's, Smith Square, Westminster. A procession of the faithful followed her next day to Brompton Cemetery. Crowds who remembered her in the heroic days of militancy gathered about her grave. Friends, parted for years, there re-encountered, in the spell of the old comradeship and the old glories. Again upon the waves of memory we saw the slender shape, gracefully proportioned, tense with energy, the pale, clear face, with those appealing eyes, and heard again the stirring, passionate, mournful music of her voice.

On March 6th, 1930, her effigy in the Victoria Tower Gardens, close to the scene of many a valiant exploit, was unveiled.¹ Her likeness hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, painted in life by Georgina Brackenbury, one of the loved militants she lauded: "O my splendid ones!"

¹ The statue is by H. G. Walker, A.R.A., with a pedestal by Sir Herbert Baker. It was unveiled by the Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister of the time.

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