

BOOK ONE
THE MAKING OF A MILITANT

1

Those men and women are fortunate who are born at a time when a great struggle for human freedom is in progress. It is an added good fortune to have parents who take a personal part in the great movements of their time. I am glad and thankful that this was my case.

One of my earliest recollections is of a great bazaar which was held in my native city of Manchester, the object of the bazaar being to raise money to relieve the poverty of the newly emancipated negro slaves in the United States. My mother took an active part in this effort, and I, as a small child, was entrusted with a lucky bag by means of which I helped to collect money.

Young as I was—I could not have been older than five years—I knew perfectly well the meaning of the words slavery and emancipation. From infancy I had been accustomed to hear pro and con discussions of slavery and the American Civil War. Although the British government finally decided not to recognise the Confederacy, public opinion in England was sharply divided on the questions both of slavery and of secession. Broadly speaking, the propertied classes were pro-slavery, but there were many exceptions to the rule. Most of those who formed the circle of our family friends were opposed to slavery, and my father,

Robert Goulden, was always a most ardent abolitionist. He was prominent enough in the movement to be appointed on a committee to meet and welcome Henry Ward Beecher when he arrived in England for a lecture tour. Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' was so great a favourite with my mother that she used it continually as a source of bedtime stories for our fascinated ears. Those stories, told almost fifty years ago, are as fresh in my mind today as events detailed in the morning's papers. Indeed they are more vivid, because they made a much deeper impression on my consciousness. I can still definitely recall the thrill I experienced every time my mother related the tale of Eliza's race for freedom over the broken ice of the Ohio River, the agonizing pursuit, and the final rescue at the hands of the determined old Quaker. Another thrilling tale was the story of a negro boy's flight from the plantation of his cruel master. The boy had never seen a railroad train, and when, staggering along the unfamiliar railroad track, he heard the roar of an approaching train, the clattering car-wheels seemed to his strained imagination to be repeating over and over again the awful words, 'Catch a nigger—catch a nigger—catch a nigger—' This was a terrible story, and throughout my childhood, whenever I rode in a train, I thought of that poor runaway slave escaping from the pursuing monster.

These stories, with the bazaars and the relief funds and subscriptions of which I heard so much talk, I am sure made a permanent impression on my brain and my character. They awakened in me the two sets of sensations to which all my life I have most readily responded: first, admiration for that spirit of fighting and heroic sacrifice by which alone the soul of civilisation is saved; and next after that,

appreciation of the gentler spirit which is moved to mend and repair the ravages of war.

I do not remember a time when I could not read, nor any time when reading was not a joy and a solace. As far back as my memory runs I loved tales, especially those of a romantic and idealistic character. 'Pilgrim's Progress' was an early favourite, as well as another of Bunyan's visionary romances, which does not seem to be as well known, his 'Holy War.' At nine I discovered the 'Odyssey' and very soon after that another classic which has remained all my life a source of inspiration. This was Carlyle's 'French Revolution,' and I received it with much the same emotion that Keats experienced when he read Chapman's translation of Homer—'. . . like some watcher of the skies, When a new planet swims into his ken.'

I never lost that first impression, and it strongly affected my attitude toward events which were occurring around my childhood. Manchester is a city which has witnessed a great many stirring episodes, especially of a political character. Generally speaking, its citizens have been liberal in their sentiments, defenders of free speech and liberty of opinion. In the late sixties there occurred in Manchester one of those dreadful events that prove an exception to the rule. This was in connection with the Fenian Revolt in Ireland. There was a Fenian riot, and the police arrested the leaders. These men were being taken to the jail in a prison van. On the way the van was stopped and an attempt was made to rescue the prisoners. A man fired a pistol, endeavouring to break the lock of the van door. A policeman fell, mortally wounded, and several men were arrested and were charged with murder. I distinctly remember the riot, which I did not witness, but which I heard vividly described by my older brother. I had

been spending the afternoon with a young playmate, and my brother had come after tea to escort me home. As we walked through the deepening November twilight he talked excitedly of the riot, the fatal pistol shot, and the slain policeman. I could almost see the man bleeding on the ground, while the crowd swayed and groaned around him.

The rest of the story reveals one of those ghastly blunders which justice not infrequently makes. Although the shooting was done without any intent to kill, the men were tried for murder and three of them were found guilty and hanged. Their execution, which greatly excited the citizens of Manchester, was almost the last, if not the last, public execution permitted to take place in the city. At the time I was a boarding-pupil in a school near Manchester, and I spent my week-ends at home. A certain Saturday afternoon stands out in my memory, as on my way home from school I passed the prison where I knew the men had been confined. I saw that a part of the prison wall had been torn away, and in the great gap that remained were evidences of a gallows recently removed. I was transfixed with horror, and over me there swept the sudden conviction that that hanging was a mistake—worse, a crime. It was my awakening to one of the most terrible facts of life—that justice and judgment lie often a world apart.

I relate this incident of my formative years to illustrate the fact that the impressions of childhood often have more to do with character and future conduct than heredity or education. I tell it also to show that my development into an advocate of militancy was largely a sympathetic process. I have not personally suffered from the deprivations, the bitterness and sorrow which bring so many men and women to a realisation of social injustice. My childhood was

protected by love and a comfortable home. Yet, while still a very young child, I began instinctively to feel that there was something lacking, even in my own home, some false conception of family relations, some incomplete ideal.

This vague feeling of mine began to shape itself into conviction about the time my brothers and I were sent to school. The education of the English boy, then as now, was considered a much more serious matter than the education of the English boy's sister. My parents, especially my father, discussed the question of my brothers' education as a matter of real importance. My education and that of my sister were scarcely discussed at all. Of course we went to a carefully selected girls' school, but beyond the facts that the head mistress was a gentlewoman and that all the pupils were girls of my own class, nobody seemed concerned. A girl's education at that time seemed to have for its prime object the art of 'making home attractive'—presumably to migratory male relatives. It used to puzzle me to understand why I was under such a particular obligation to make home attractive to my brothers. We were on excellent terms of friendship, but it was never suggested to them as a duty that they make home attractive to me. Why not? Nobody seemed to know.

The answer to these puzzling questions came to me unexpectedly one night when I lay in my little bed waiting for sleep to overtake me. It was a custom of my father and mother to make the round of our bedrooms every night before going themselves to bed. When they entered my room that night I was still awake, but for some reason I chose to feign slumber. My father bent over me, shielding the candle flame with his big hand. I cannot know exactly what thought was in his mind as he gazed down at me, but

I heard him say, somewhat sadly, 'What a pity she wasn't born a lad.'

My first hot impulse was to sit up in bed and protest that I didn't want to be a boy, but I lay still and heard my parents' footsteps pass on toward the next child's bed. I thought about my father's remark for many days afterward, but I think I never decided that I regretted my sex. However, it was made quite clear that men considered themselves superior to women, and that women apparently acquiesced in that belief.

I found this view of things difficult to reconcile with the fact that both my father and my mother were advocates of equal suffrage. I was very young when the Reform Act of 1866 was passed, but I very well remember the agitation caused by certain circumstances attending it. This Reform Act, known as the Household Franchise Bill, marked the first popular extension of the ballot in England since 1832. Under its terms, householders paying a minimum of ten pounds a year rental were given the Parliamentary vote. While it was still under discussion in the House of Commons, John Stuart Mill moved an amendment to the bill to include women householders as well as men. The amendment was defeated, but in the act as passed the word 'man,' instead of the usual 'male person,' was used. Now, under another act of Parliament it had been decided that the word 'man' always included 'woman' unless otherwise specifically stated. For example, in certain acts containing rate-paying clauses, the masculine noun and pronoun are used throughout, but the provisions apply to women rate-payers as well as to men. So when the Reform Bill with the word 'man' in it became law, many women believed that the right of suffrage had actually been bestowed upon them. A tremendous amount

of discussion ensued, and the matter was finally tested by a large number of women seeking to have their names placed upon the register as voters. In my city of Manchester 3,924 women, out of a total of 4,215 possible women voters, claimed their votes, and their claim was defended in the law courts by eminent lawyers, including my future husband, Dr Pankhurst. Of course the women's claim was settled adversely in the courts, but the agitation resulted in a strengthening of the woman-suffrage agitation all over the country.

I was too young to understand the precise nature of the affair, but I shared in the general excitement. From reading newspapers aloud to my father I had developed a genuine interest in politics, and the Reform Bill presented itself to my young intelligence as something that was going to do the most wonderful good to the country. The first election after the bill became law was naturally a memorable occasion. It is chiefly memorable to me because it was the first one in which I ever participated. My sister and I had just been presented with new winter frocks, green in colour, and made alike, after the custom of proper British families. Every girl child in those days wore a red flannel petticoat, and when we first put on our new frocks I was struck with the fact that we were wearing red and green—the colours of the Liberal Party. Since our father was a Liberal, of course the Liberal Party ought to carry the election, and I conceived a brilliant scheme for helping its progress. With my small sister trotting after me, I walked the better part of a mile to the nearest polling-booth. It happened to be in a rather rough factory district, but we did not notice that. Arrived there, we two children picked up our green skirts to show our scarlet petticoats, and brimful of importance, walked up

and down before the assembled crowds to encourage the Liberal vote. From this eminence we were shortly snatched by outraged authority in the form of a nursery-maid. I believe we were sent to bed into the bargain, but I am not entirely clear on this point.

I was fourteen years old when I went to my first suffrage meeting. Returning from school one day, I met my mother just setting out for the meeting, and I begged her to let me go along. She consented, and without stopping to lay my books down I scampered away in my mother's wake. The speeches interested and excited me, especially the address of the great Miss Lydia Becker, who was the Susan B. Anthony of the English movement, a splendid character and a truly eloquent speaker. She was the secretary of the Manchester committee, and I had learned to admire her as the editor of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, which came to my mother every week. I left the meeting a conscious and confirmed suffragist.

I suppose I had always been an unconscious suffragist. With my temperament and my surroundings I could scarcely have been otherwise. The movement was very much alive in the early seventies, nowhere more so than in Manchester, where it was organised by a group of extraordinary men and women. Among them were Mr and Mrs Jacob Bright, who were always ready to champion the struggling cause. Mr Jacob Bright, a brother of John Bright, was for many years member of Parliament for Manchester, and to the day of his death was an active supporter of woman suffrage. Two especially gifted women, besides Miss Becker, were members of the committee. These were Mrs Alice Cliff Scatcherd and Miss Wolstentholm, now the venerable Mrs Wolstentholm-Elmy. One of the principal founders of the committee was

the man whose wife, in later years, I was destined to become, Dr Richard Marsden Pankhurst.

When I was fifteen years old I went to Paris, where I was entered as a pupil in one of the pioneer institutions in Europe for the higher education of girls. This school, one of the founders of which was Madame Edmond Adam, who was and is still a distinguished literary figure, was situated in a fine old house in the Avenue de Neuilly. It was under the direction of Mlle Marchef-Girard, a woman distinguished in education, and who afterward was appointed government inspector of schools in France. Mlle Marchef-Girard believed that girls' education should be quite as thorough and even more practical than the education boys were receiving at that time. She included chemistry and other sciences in her courses, and in addition to embroidery she had her girls taught bookkeeping. Many other advanced ideas prevailed in this school, and the moral discipline which the pupils received was, to my mind, as valuable as the intellectual training. Mlle Marchef-Girard held that women should be given the highest ideals of honour. Her pupils were kept to the strictest principles of truth-telling and candour. Myself she understood and greatly benefited by an implicit trust which I am sure I could not have betrayed, even had I felt for her less real affection.

My roommate in this delightful school was an interesting young girl of my own age, Noemie Rochefort, daughter of that great Republican, Communist, journalist, and swordsman, Henri Rochefort. This was very shortly after the Franco-Prussian War, and memories of the Empire's fall and of the bloody and disastrous Commune were very keen in Paris. Indeed my roommate's illustrious father and many others were then in exile in New Caledonia for participation

in the Commune. My friend Noemie was torn with anxiety for her father. She talked of him constantly, and many were the blood-curdling accounts of daring and of patriotism to which I listened. Henri Rochefort was, in fact, one of the moving spirits of the Republican movement in France, and after his amazing escape in an open boat from New Caledonia, he lived through many years of political adventures of the most lively and picturesque character. His daughter and I remained warm friends long after our school-days ended, and my association with her strengthened all the liberal ideas I had previously acquired.

I was between eighteen and nineteen when I finally returned from school in Paris and took my place in my father's home as a finished young lady. I sympathised with and worked for the woman-suffrage movement, and came to know Dr Pankhurst, whose work for woman suffrage had never ceased. It was Dr Pankhurst who drafted the first enfranchisement bill, known as the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill, and introduced into the House of Commons in 1870 by Mr Jacob Bright. The bill advanced to its second reading by a majority vote of thirty-three, but it was killed in committee by Mr Gladstone's peremptory orders. Dr Pankhurst, as I have already said, with another distinguished barrister, Lord Coleridge, acted as counsel for the Manchester women, who tried in 1868 to be placed on the register as voters. He also drafted the bill giving married women absolute control over their property and earnings, a bill which became law in 1882.

My marriage with Dr Pankhurst took place in 1879.

I think we cannot be too grateful to the group of men and women who, like Dr Pankhurst, in those early days lent the weight of their honoured names to the suffrage movement

in the trials of its struggling youth. These men did not wait until the movement became popular, nor did they hesitate until it was plain that women were roused to the point of revolt. They worked all their lives with those who were organising, educating, and preparing for the revolt which was one day to come. Unquestionably those pioneer men suffered in popularity for their feminist views. Some of them suffered financially, some politically. Yet they never wavered.

My married life lasted through nineteen happy years. Often I have heard the taunt that suffragists are women who have failed to find any normal outlet for their emotions, and are therefore soured and disappointed beings. This is probably not true of any suffragist, and it is most certainly not true of me. My home life and relations have been as nearly ideal as possible in this imperfect world. About a year after my marriage my daughter Christabel was born, and in another eighteen months my second daughter Sylvia came. Two other children followed, and for some years I was rather deeply immersed in my domestic affairs.

I was never so absorbed with home and children, however, that I lost interest in community affairs. Dr Pankhurst did not desire that I should turn myself into a household machine. It was his firm belief that society as well as the family stands in need of women's services. So while my children were still in their cradles I was serving on the executive committee of the Women's Suffrage Society, and also on the executive board of the committee which was working to secure the Married Women's Property Act. This act having passed in 1882, I threw myself into the suffrage work with renewed energy. A new Reform Act, known as the County Franchise Bill, extending the suffrage to farm labourers, was under discussion, and we believed that our

years of educational propaganda work had prepared the country to support us in a demand for a women's suffrage amendment to the bill. For several years we had been holding the most splendid meetings in cities all over the kingdom. The crowds, the enthusiasm, the generous response to appeals for support, all these seemed to justify us in our belief that women's suffrage was near. In fact, in 1884, when the County Franchise Bill came before the country, we had an actual majority in favour of suffrage in the House of Commons.

But a favourable majority in the House of Commons by no means insures the success of any measure. I shall explain this at length when I come to our work of opposing candidates who have avowed themselves suffragists, a course which has greatly puzzled our American friends. The Liberal Party was in power in 1884, and a great memorial was sent to the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable William E. Gladstone, asking that a women's suffrage amendment to the County Franchise Bill be submitted to the free and unbiased consideration of the House. Mr Gladstone curtly refused, declaring that if a women's suffrage amendment should be carried, the Government would disclaim responsibility for the bill. The amendment was submitted nevertheless, but Mr Gladstone would not allow it to be freely discussed, and he ordered Liberal members to vote against it. What we call a whip was sent out against it, a note virtually commanding party members to be on hand at a certain hour to vote against the women's amendment. Undismayed, the women tried to have an independent suffrage bill introduced, but Mr Gladstone so arranged Parliamentary business that the bill never even came up for discussion.

I am not going to write a history of the woman suffrage

movement in England prior to 1903, when the Women's Social and Political Union was organised. That history is full of repetitions of just such stories as the one I have related. Gladstone was an implacable foe of woman suffrage. He believed that women's work and politics lay in service to men's parties. One of the shrewdest acts of Mr Gladstone's career was his disruption of the suffrage organisation in England. He accomplished this by substituting 'something just as good,' that something being Women's Liberal Associations. Beginning in 1881 in Bristol, these associations spread rapidly through the country and, in 1887, became a National Women's Liberal Federation. The promise of the Federation was that by allying themselves with men in party politics, women would soon earn the right to vote. The avidity with which the women swallowed this promise, left off working for themselves, and threw themselves into the men's work was amazing.

The Women's Liberal Federation is an organisation of women who believe in the principles of the Liberal party. (The somewhat older Primrose League is a similar organisation of women who adhere to Conservative party principles.) Neither of these organisations have woman suffrage for their object. They came into existence to uphold party ideas and to work for the election of party candidates.

I am told that women in America have recently allied themselves with political parties, believing, just as we did, that such action would break down opposition to suffrage by showing the men that women possess political ability, and that politics is work for women as well as men. Let them not be deceived. I can assure the American women that our long alliance with the great parties, our devotion to party programmes, our faithful work at elections, never

advanced the suffrage cause one step. The men accepted the services of the women, but they never offered any kind of payment.

As far as I am concerned, I did not delude myself with any false hopes in the matter. I was present when the Women's Liberal Federation came into existence. Mrs Gladstone presided, offering the meeting many consolatory words for the absence of 'our great leader,' Mr Gladstone, who of course had no time to waste on a gathering of women. At Mrs Jacob Bright's request I joined the Federation. At this stage of my development I was a member of the Fabian Society, and I had considerable faith in the permeating powers of its mild socialism. But I was already fairly convinced of the futility of trusting to political parties. Even as a child I had begun to wonder at the *naïve* faith of party members in the promises of their leaders. I well remember my father returning home from political meetings, his face aglow with enthusiasm. 'What happened, father?' I would ask, and he would reply triumphantly, 'Ah! We passed the resolution.'

'Then you'll get your measure through the next session,' I predicted.

'I won't say that,' was the usual reply. 'Things don't always move as quickly as that. But we passed the resolution.'

Well, the suffragists, when they were admitted into the Women's Liberal Federation must have felt that they had passed their resolution. They settled down to work for the party and to prove that they were as capable of voting as the recently enfranchised farm labourers. Of course a few women remained loyal to suffrage. They began again on the old educational lines to work for the cause. Not one woman took counsel with herself as to how and why the agricultural

labourers had won their franchise. They had won it, as a matter of fact, by burning hay-ricks, rioting, and otherwise demonstrating their strength in the only way that English politicians can understand. The threat to march a hundred thousand men to the House of Commons unless the bill was passed played its part also in securing the agricultural labourer his political freedom. But no woman suffragist noticed that. As for myself, I was too young politically to learn the lesson then. I had to go through years of public work before I acquired the experience and the wisdom to know how to wring concessions from the English Government. I had to hold public office. I had to go behind the scenes in the government schools, in the workhouses and other charitable institutions; I had to get a close-hand view of the misery and unhappiness of a man-made world, before I reached the point where I could successfully revolt against it. It was almost immediately after the collapse of the woman suffrage movement in 1884 that I entered upon this new phase of my career.

2

In 1885, a year after the failure of the third women's suffrage bill, my husband, Dr Pankhurst, stood as the Liberal candidate for Parliament in Rotherhithe, a riverside constituency of London. I went through the campaign with him, speaking and canvassing to the best of my ability. Dr Pankhurst was a popular candidate, and unquestionably would have been returned but for the opposition of the Home-Rulers. Parnell was in command, and his settled policy was opposition to all Government candidates. So, in spite of the fact that Dr Pankhurst was a staunch upholder of home rule, the Parnell forces were solidly opposed to him, and he was defeated. I remember expressing considerable indignation, but my husband pointed out to me that Parnell's policy was absolutely right. With his small party he could never hope to win home rule from a hostile majority, but by constant obstruction he could in time wear out the Government, and force it to surrender. That was a valuable political lesson, one that years later I was destined to put into practice.

The following year found us living in London, and, as usual, interesting ourselves with labour matters and other social movements. This year was memorable for a great strike of women working in the Bryant and May match factories. I threw myself into this strike with enthusiasm, working

with the girls and with some women of prominence, among these the celebrated Mrs Annie Besant. The strike was a successful one, the girls winning substantial improvements in their working conditions.

It was a time of tremendous unrest, of labour agitations, of strikes and lockouts. It was a time also when a most stupid reactionary spirit seemed to take possession of the Government and the authorities. The Salvation Army, the Socialists, the trade-unionists—in fact, all bodies holding outdoor meetings—were made special objects of attack. As a protest against this policy a Law and Liberty League was formed in London, and an immense Free Speech meeting was held in Trafalgar Square, John Burns and Cunningham Graham being the principal speakers. I was present at this meeting, which resulted in a bloody riot between the police and the populace. The Trafalgar Square Riot is historic, and to it Mr John Burns owes, in large part, his subsequent rise to political eminence. Both John Burns and Cunningham Graham served prison sentences for the part they played in the riot, but they gained fame, and they did much to establish the right of free speech for English men. English women are still contending for that right.

In 1890 my last child was born in London. I now had a family of five young children, and for a time I was less active in public work. On the retirement of Mrs Annie Besant from the London School Board I had been asked to stand as candidate for the vacancy, but although I should have enjoyed the work, I decided not to accept this invitation. The next year, however, a new suffrage association, the Women's Franchise League, was formed, and I felt it my duty to become affiliated with it. The League was preparing a new suffrage bill, the provisions of which I could not

possibly approve, and I joined with old friends, among whom were Mrs Jacob Bright, Mrs Wolstentholm-Elmy, who was a member of the London School Board, and Mrs Stanton Blatch, then resident in England, in an effort to substitute the original bill drafted by Dr Pankhurst. As a matter of fact, neither of the bills was introduced into Parliament that year. Mr (now Lord) Haldane, who had the measure in charge, introduced one of his own drafting. It was a truly startling bill, royally inclusive in its terms. It not only enfranchised all women, married and unmarried, of the householding classes, but it made them eligible to all offices under the Crown. The bill was never taken seriously by the Government, and indeed it was never intended that it should be, as we were later made to understand. I remember going with Mrs Stanton Blatch to the law courts to see Mr Haldane, and to protest against the introduction of a measure that had not the remotest chance of passing.

‘Ah, that bill,’ said Haldane, ‘is for the future.’

All their woman suffrage bills are intended for the future, a future so remote as to be imperceptible. We were beginning to understand this even in 1891. However, as long as there was a bill, we determined to support it. Accordingly, we canvassed the members, distributed a great deal of literature, and organised and addressed meetings. We not only made speeches ourselves, but we induced friendly members of Parliament to go on our platforms. One of these meetings, held in an East End Radical club, was addressed by Mr Haldane and a young man who accompanied him. This young man, Sir Edward Grey, then in the beginning of his career, made an eloquent plea for woman’s suffrage. That Sir Edward Grey should, later in life, become a bitter foe of woman’s suffrage need astonish no one. I have known

many young Englishmen who began their political life as suffrage speakers and who later became anti-suffragists or traitorous 'friends' of the cause. These young and aspiring statesmen have to attract attention in some fashion, and the espousal of advanced causes, such as labour or women's suffrage, seems an easy way to accomplish that end.

Well, our speeches and our agitation did nothing at all to assist Mr Haldane's impossible bill. It never advanced beyond the first reading.

Our London residence came to an end in 1893. In that year we returned to our Manchester home, and I again took up the work of the Suffrage Society. At my suggestion the members began to organise their first out-of-door meetings, and we continued these until we succeeded in working up a great meeting that filled Free Trade Hall, and overflowed into and crowded a smaller hall near at hand. This marked the beginning of a campaign of propaganda among working people, an object which I had long desired to bring about.

And now began a new and, as I look back on it, an absorbingly interesting stage of my career. I have told how our leaders in the Liberal Party had advised the women to prove their fitness for the Parliamentary franchise by serving in municipal offices, especially the unsalaried offices. A large number of women had availed themselves of this advice, and were serving on Boards of Guardians, on school boards, and in other capacities. My children now being old enough for me to leave them with competent nurses, I was free to join these ranks. A year after my return to Manchester I became a candidate for the Board of Poor Law Guardians. Several weeks before, I had contested unsuccessfully for a place on the school board. This time, however, I was elected, heading the poll by a very large majority.

For the benefit of American readers I shall explain something of the operation of our English Poor Law. The duty of the law is to administer an act of Queen Elizabeth, one of the greatest reforms effected by that wise and humane monarch. When Elizabeth came to the throne she found England, the Merrie England of contemporary poets, in a state of appalling poverty. Hordes of people were literally starving to death, in wretched hovels, in the streets, and at the very gates of the palace. The cause of all this misery was the religious reformation under Henry VIII, and the secession from Rome of the English Church. King Henry, it is known, seized all the Church lands, the abbeys and the convents, and gave them as rewards to those nobles and favourites who had supported his policies. But in taking over the Church's property the Protestant nobles by no means assumed the Church's ancient responsibilities of lodging wayfarers, giving alms, nursing the sick, educating youths, and caring for the young and the superannuated. When the monks and the nuns were turned out of their convents these duties devolved on no one. The result, after the brief reign of Edward VI and the bloody one of Queen Mary, was the social anarchy inherited by Elizabeth.

This great queen and great woman, perceiving that the responsibility for the poor and the helpless rightfully rests on the community, caused an act to be passed creating in the parishes public bodies to deal with local conditions of poverty. The Board of Poor Law Guardians disburses for the poor the money coming from the Poor Rates (taxes), and some additional moneys allowed by the local government board, the president of which is a cabinet minister. Mr John Burns is the present incumbent of the office. The Board of Guardians has control of the institution we call the

workhouse. You have, I believe, almshouses, or poorhouses, but they are not quite so extensive as our workhouses, which are all kinds of institutions in one. We had, in my workhouse, a hospital with nine hundred beds, a school with several hundred children, a farm, and many workshops.

When I came into office I found that the law in our district, Chorlton, was being very harshly administered. The old board had been made up of the kind of men who are known as rate savers. They were guardians, not of the poor but of the rates, and, as I soon discovered, not very astute guardians even of money. For instance, although the inmates were being very poorly fed, a frightful waste of food was apparent. Each inmate was given each day a certain weight of food, and bread formed so much of the ration that hardly anyone consumed all of his portion. In the farm department pigs were kept on purpose to consume this surplus of bread, and as pigs do not thrive on a solid diet of stale bread the animals fetched in the market a much lower price than properly fed farm pigs. I suggested that, instead of giving a solid weight of bread in one lump, the loaf be cut in slices and buttered with margarine, each person being allowed all that he cared to eat. The rest of the board objected, saying that our poor charges were very jealous of their rights, and would suspect in such an innovation an attempt to deprive them of a part of their ration. This was easily overcome by the suggestion that we consult the inmates before we made the change. Of course the poor people consented, and with the bread that we saved we made puddings with milk and currants, to be fed to the old people of the workhouse. These old folks I found sitting on backless forms, or benches. They had no privacy, no possessions, not even a locker. The old women were without pockets in their gowns, so they

were obliged to keep any poor little treasures they had in their bosoms. Soon after I took office we gave the old people comfortable Windsor chairs to sit in, and in a number of ways we managed to make their existence more endurable.

These, after all, were minor benefits. But it does gratify me when I look back and remember what we were able to do for the children of the Manchester workhouse. The first time I went into the place I was horrified to see little girls seven and eight years old on their knees scrubbing the cold stones of the long corridors. These little girls were clad, summer and winter, in thin cotton frocks, low in the neck and short sleeved. At night they wore nothing at all, night dresses being considered too good for paupers. The fact that bronchitis was epidemic among them most of the time had not suggested to the guardians any change in the fashion of their clothes. There was a school for the children, but the teaching was of the poorest order. They were forlorn enough, these poor innocents, when I first met them. In five years' time we had changed the face of the earth for them. We had bought land in the country and had built a cottage system home for the children, and we had established for them a modern school with trained teachers. We had even secured for them a gymnasium and a swimming-bath. I may say that I was on the building committee of the board, the only woman member.

Whatever may be urged against the English Poor Law system, I maintain that under it no stigma of pauperism need be applied to workhouse children. If they are treated like paupers of course they will be paupers, and they will grow up paupers, permanent burdens on society; but if they are regarded merely as children under the guardianship of the state, they assume quite another character. Rich children

are not pauperized by being sent to one or another of the free public schools with which England is blest. Yet a great many of those schools, now exclusively used for the education of upper middle-class boys, were founded by legacies left to educate the poor—girls as well as boys. The English Poor Law, properly administered, ought to give back to the children of the destitute what the upper classes have taken from them, a good education on a self-respecting basis.

The trouble is, as I soon perceived after taking office, the law cannot, in existing circumstances, do all the work, even for children, that it was intended to do. We shall have to have new laws, and it soon became apparent to me that we can never hope to get them until women have the vote. During the time I served on the board, and for years since then, women guardians all over the country have striven in vain to have the law reformed in order to ameliorate conditions which break the hearts of women to see, but which apparently affect men very little. I have spoken of the little girls I found scrubbing the workhouse floors. There were others at the hateful labour who aroused my keenest pity. I found that there were pregnant women in that workhouse, scrubbing floors, doing the hardest kind of work, almost until their babies came into the world. Many of them were unmarried women, very, very young, mere girls. These poor mothers were allowed to stay in the hospital after confinement for a short two weeks. Then they had to make a choice of staying in the workhouse and earning their living by scrubbing and other work, in which case they were separated from their babies; or of taking their discharges. They could stay and be paupers, or they could leave—leave with a two-weeks-old baby in their arms, without hope,

without home, without money, without anywhere to go. What became of those girls, and what became of their hapless infants? That question was at the basis of the women guardians' demand for a reform of one part of the Poor Law.

That section deals with the little children who are boarded out, not by the workhouse, but by the parents, that parent being almost always the mother. It is from that class of workhouse mothers—mostly young servant girls—which thoughtless people say all working girls ought to be; it is from that class more than from any other that cases of illegitimacy come. Those poor little servant girls, who can get out perhaps only in the evening, whose minds are not very cultivated, and who find all the sentiment of their lives in cheap novelettes, fall an easy prey to those who have designs against them. These are the people by whom the babies are mostly put out to nurse, and the mothers have to pay for their keep. Of course the babies are very badly protected. The Poor Law Guardians are supposed to protect them by appointing inspectors to visit the homes where the babies are boarded. But, under the law, if a man who ruins a girl pays down a lump sum of twenty pounds, less than a hundred dollars, the boarding home is immune from inspection. As long as a baby-farmer takes only one child at a time, the twenty pounds being paid, the inspectors cannot inspect the house. Of course the babies die with hideous promptness, often long before the twenty pounds have been spent, and then the baby-farmers are free to solicit another victim. For years, as I have said, women have tried in vain to get that one small reform of the Poor Law, to reach and protect all illegitimate children, and to make it impossible for any rich scoundrel to escape future liability

for his child because of the lump sum he has paid down. Over and over again it has been tried, but it has always failed, because the ones who really care about the thing are mere women.

I thought I had been a suffragist before I became a Poor Law Guardian, but now I began to think about the vote in women's hands not only as a right but as a desperate necessity. These poor, unprotected mothers and their babies I am sure were potent factors in my education as a militant. In fact, all the women I came in contact with in the workhouse contributed to that education. Very soon after I went on the board I saw that the class of old women who came into the workhouse were in many ways superior to the kind of old men who came into the workhouse. One could not help noticing it. They were, to begin with, more industrious. In fact it was quite touching to see their industry and patience. Old women, over sixty and seventy years of age, did most of the work of that place, most of the sewing, most of the things that kept the house clean and which supplied the inmates with clothing. I found that the old men were different. One could not get very much work out of them. They liked to stop in the oakum picking-room, where they were allowed to smoke; but as to real work, very little was done by our old men.

I began to make inquiries about these old women. I found that the majority of them were not women who had been dissolute, who had been criminal, but women who had lead perfectly respectable lives, either as wives and mothers, or as single women earning their own living. A great many were of the domestic-servant class, who had not married, who had lost their employment, and had reached a time of life when it was impossible to get more

employment. It was through no fault of their own, but simply because they had never earned enough to save. The average wage of working women in England is less than two dollars a week. On this pittance it is difficult enough to keep alive, and of course it is impossible to save. Every one who knows anything about conditions under which our working women live knows that few of them can ever hope to put by enough to keep them in old age. Besides, the average working woman has to support others than herself. How can she save?

Some of our old women were married. Many of them, I found, were widows of skilled artisans who had had pensions from their unions, but the pensions had died with the men. These women, who had given up the power to work for themselves, and had devoted themselves to working for their husbands and children, were left penniless. There was nothing for them to do but to go into the workhouse. Many of them were widows of men who had served their country in the army or the navy. The men had had pensions from the government, but the pensions had died with them, and so the women were in the workhouse.

We shall not in future, I hope, find so many respectable old women in English workhouses. We have an old-age pension law now, which allows old women as well as old men the sum of five shillings—\$1.20—a week; hardly enough to live on, but enough to enable the poor to keep their old fathers and mothers out of the workhouse without starving themselves or their children. But when I was a Poor Law Guardian there was simply nothing to do with a woman when her life of toil ceased except make a pauper of her.

I wish I had space to tell you of other tragedies of women

I witnessed while I was on that board. In our out-relief department, which exists chiefly for able-bodied poor and dependent persons, I was brought into contact with widows who were struggling desperately to keep their homes and families together. The law allowed these women relief of a certain very inadequate kind, but for herself and one child it offered no relief except the workhouse. Even if the woman had a baby at her breast she was regarded, under the law, as an able-bodied man. Women, we are told, should stay at home and take care of their children. I used to astound my men colleagues by saying to them: 'When women have the vote they will see that mothers *can* stay at home and care for their children. You men have made it impossible for these mothers to do that.'

I am convinced that the enfranchised woman will find many ways in which to lessen, at least, the curse of poverty. Women have more practical ideas about relief, and especially of prevention of dire poverty, than men display. I was struck with this whenever I attended the District Conferences and the annual Poor Law Union Meetings. In our discussions the women showed themselves much more capable, much more resourceful, than the men. I remember two papers which I prepared and which caused considerable discussion. One of these was on the Duties of Guardians in Times of Unemployment, in which I pointed out that the government had one reserve of employment for men which could always be used. We have, on our northwest coast, a constant washing away of the fore shore. Every once in a while the question of coast reclamation comes up for discussion, but I had never heard any man suggest coast reclamation as a means of giving the unemployed relief.

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In 1898 I suffered an irreparable loss in the death of my husband. His death occurred suddenly and left me with the heavy responsibility of caring for a family of children, the eldest only seventeen years of age. I resigned my place on the Board of Guardians, and was almost immediately appointed to the salaried office of Registrar of Births and Deaths in Manchester. We have registrars of births, deaths and marriages in England, but since the act establishing the last named contains the words 'male person,' a woman may not be appointed a registrar of marriages. The head of this department of the government is the registrar-general, with offices at Somerset House, London, where all vital statistics are returned and all records filed.

It was my duty as registrar of births and deaths to act as chief census officer of my district; I was obliged to receive all returns of births and deaths, record them, and send my books quarterly to the office of the registrar-general. My district was in a working-class quarter, and on this account I instituted evening office hours twice a week. It was touching to observe how glad the women were to have a woman registrar to go to. They used to tell me their stories, dreadful stories some of them, and all of them pathetic with that patient and uncomplaining pathos of poverty. Even after my experience on the Board of Guardians, I was shocked to be reminded over and over again of the little respect there was in the world for women and children. I have had little girls of thirteen come to my office to register the births of their babies, illegitimate, of course. In many of these cases I found that the child's own father or some near male relative was responsible for her state. There was nothing that could be done in most cases. The age of consent in England is sixteen years, but a man can always claim that

he thought the girl was over sixteen. During my term of office a very young mother of an illegitimate child exposed her baby, and it died. The girl was tried for murder and was sentenced to death. This was afterwards commuted, it is true, but the unhappy child had the horrible experience of the trial and the sentence 'to be hanged by the neck, until you are dead.' The wretch who was, from the point of view of justice, the real murderer of the baby, received no punishment at all.

I needed only one more experience after this one, only one more contact with the life of my time and the position of women, to convince me that if civilisation is to advance at all in the future, it must be through the help of women, women freed of their political shackles, women with full power to work their will in society. In 1900 I was asked to stand as a candidate for the Manchester School Board. The schools were then under the old law, and the school boards were very active bodies. They administered the Elementary Education Act, bought school sites, erected buildings, employed and paid teachers. The school code and the curriculum were framed by the Board of Education, which is part of the central government. Of course this was absurd. A body of men in London could not possibly realise all the needs of boys and girls in remote parts of England. But so it was.

As a member of the school board I very soon found that the teachers, working people of the higher grade, were in exactly the same position as the working people of the lower grades. That is, the men had all the advantage. Teachers had a representative in the school board councils. Of course that representative was a man teacher, and equally of course, he gave preference to the interests of the men teachers. Men

teachers received much higher salaries than the women, although many of the women, in addition to their regular class work, had to teach sewing and domestic science into the bargain. They received no extra pay for their extra work. In spite of this added burden, and in spite of the lower salaries received, I found that the women cared a great deal more about their work, and a great deal more about the children than the men. It was a winter when there was a great deal of poverty and unemployment in Manchester. I found that the women teachers were spending their slender salaries to provide regular dinners for destitute children, and were giving up their time to waiting on them and seeing that they were nourished. They said to me, quite simply: 'You see, the little things are too badly off to study their lessons. We have to feed them before we can teach them.'

Well, instead of seeing that women care more for schools and school children than men do and should therefore have more power in education, the Parliament of 1900 actually passed a law which took education in England entirely out of the hands of women. This law abolished the school board altogether and placed the administration of schools in the hands of the municipalities. Certain corporations had formerly made certain grants to technical education—Manchester had built a magnificent technical college—and now the corporations had full control of both elementary and secondary education.

The law did indeed provide that the corporations should co-opt at least one woman on their education boards. Manchester co-opted four women, and at the strong recommendation of the Labour Party, I was one of the women chosen. At their urgent solicitation I was appointed to the Committee on Technical Instruction, the one woman

admitted to this committee. I learned that the Manchester Technical College, called the second best in Europe, spending thousands of pounds annually for technical training, had practically no provision for training women. Even in classes where they might easily have been admitted, bakery and confectionery classes and the like, the girls were kept out because the men's trades unions objected to their being educated for such skilled work. It was rapidly becoming clear to my mind that men regarded women as a servant class in the community, and that women were going to remain in the servant class until they lifted themselves out of it. I asked myself many times in those days what was to be done. I had joined the Labour Party, thinking that through its councils something vital might come, some such demand for the women's enfranchisement that the politicians could not possibly ignore. Nothing came.

All these years my daughters had been growing up. All their lives they had been interested in women's suffrage. Christabel and Sylvia, as little girls, had cried to be taken to meetings. They had helped in our drawing-room meetings in every way that children can help. As they grew older we used to talk together about the suffrage, and I was sometimes rather frightened by their youthful confidence in the prospect, which they considered certain, of the success of the movement. One day Christabel startled me with the remark: 'How long you women have been trying for the vote. For my part, I mean to get it.'

Was there, I reflected, any difference between trying for the vote and getting it? There is an old French proverb, 'If youth could know; if age could do.' It occurred to me that if the older suffrage workers could in some way join hands with the young, unwearied and resourceful suffragists, the

movement might wake up to new life and new possibilities. After that I and my daughters together sought a way to bring about that union of young and old which would find new methods, blaze new trails. At length we thought we had found a way.

3

In the summer of 1902—I think it was 1902—Susan B. Anthony paid a visit to Manchester, and that visit was one of the contributory causes that led to the founding of our militant suffrage organisation, the Women's Social and Political Union. During Miss Anthony's visit my daughter Christabel, who was very deeply impressed, wrote an article for the Manchester papers on the life and works of the venerable reformer. After her departure Christabel spoke often of her, and always with sorrow and indignation that such a splendid worker for humanity was destined to die without seeing the hopes of her lifetime realised. 'It is unendurable,' declared my daughter, 'to think of another generation of women wasting their lives begging for the vote. We must not lose any more time. We must act.'

By this time the Labour Party, of which I was still a member, had returned Mr Keir Hardie to Parliament, and we decided that the first step in a campaign of action was to make the Labour Party responsible for a new suffrage bill. At a recent annual conference of the party I had moved a resolution calling upon the members to instruct their own member of Parliament to introduce a bill for the enfranchisement of women. The resolution was passed, and we determined to organise a society of women to demand

immediate enfranchisement, not by means of any outworn missionary methods, but through political action.

It was in October, 1903, that I invited a number of women to my house in Nelson street, Manchester, for purposes of organisation. We voted to call our new society the Women's Social and Political Union, partly to emphasise its democracy, and partly to define its object as political rather than propagandist. We resolved to limit our membership exclusively to women, to keep ourselves absolutely free from any party affiliation, and to be satisfied with nothing but action on our question. Deeds, not words, was to be our permanent motto.

To such a pass had the women's suffrage cause come in my country that the old leaders, who had done such fine educational work in the past, were now seemingly content with expressions of sympathy and regret on the part of hypocritical politicians. This fact was thrust upon me anew by an incident that occurred almost at the moment of the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union. In our Parliament no bill has a chance of becoming a law unless it is made a Government measure. Private members are at liberty to introduce measures of their own, but these rarely reach the second reading, or debatable stage. So much time is given to discussion of Government measures that very little time can be given to any private bills. About one day in a week is given over to consideration of private measures, to which, as we say, the Government give facilities; and since there are a limited number of weeks in a session, the members, on the opening days of Parliament, meet and draw lots to determine who shall have a place in the debates. Only these successful men have a chance to speak to their bills, and only those who have drawn early chances have

any prospect of getting much discussion on their measures.

Now, the old suffragists had long since given up hope of obtaining a Government suffrage bill, but they clung to a hope that a private member's bill would some time obtain consideration. Every year, on the opening day of Parliament, the association sent a deputation of women to the House of Commons, to meet so-called friendly members and consider the position of the women's suffrage cause. The ceremony was of a most conventional, not to say farcical character. The ladies made their speeches and the members made theirs. The ladies thanked the friendly members for their sympathy, and the members renewed their assurances that they believed in women's suffrage and would vote for it when they had an opportunity to do so. Then the deputation, a trifle sad but entirely tranquil, took its departure, and the members resumed the real business of life, which was support of their party's policies.

Such a ceremony as this I attended soon after the founding of the W. S. P. U. Sir Charles M'Laren was the friendly member who presided over the gathering, and he did his full duty in the matter of formally endorsing the cause of women's suffrage. He assured the delegation of his deep regret, as well as the regret of numbers of his colleagues, that women so intelligent, so devoted, etc., should remain unenfranchised. Other members did likewise. The ceremonies drew to a close, but I, who had not been asked to speak, determined to add something to the occasion.

'Sir Charles M'Laren,' I began abruptly, 'has told us that numbers of his colleagues desire the success of the women's suffrage cause. Now every one of us knows that at this moment the members of the House of Commons are balloting for a place in the debates. Will Sir Charles M'Laren

tell us if any member is preparing to introduce a bill for women's suffrage? Will he tell us what he and the other members will pledge themselves to *do* for the reform they so warmly endorse?'

Of course, the embarrassed Sir Charles was not prepared to tell us anything of the kind, and the deputation departed in confusion and wrath. I was told that I was an interloper, an impertinent intruder. Who asked me to say anything? And what right had I to step in and ruin the good impression they had made? No one could tell how many friendly members I had alienated by my unfortunate remarks.

I went back to Manchester and with renewed energy continued the work of organising for the W. S. P. U.

In the spring of 1904 I went to the annual conference of the Independent Labour Party, determined if possible to induce the members to prepare a suffrage bill to be laid before Parliament in the approaching session. Although I was a member of the National Administrative Council and presumably a person holding some influence in the party, I knew that my plan would be bitterly opposed by a strong minority, who held that the Labour Party should direct all its efforts toward securing universal adult suffrage for both men and women. Theoretically, of course, a Labour party could not be satisfied with anything less than universal adult suffrage, but it was clear that no such sweeping reform could be effected at that time, unless indeed the Government made it one of their measures. Besides, while a large majority of members of the House of Commons were pledged to support a bill giving women equal franchise rights with men, it was doubtful whether a majority could be relied upon to support a bill giving adult suffrage, even to men.

Such a bill, even if it were a Government measure, would probably be difficult of passage.

After considerable discussion, the National Council decided to adopt the original Women's Enfranchisement Bill, drafted by Dr Pankhurst, and advanced in 1870 to its second reading in the House of Commons. The Council's decision was approved by an overwhelming majority of the conference.

The new session of Parliament, so eagerly looked forward to, met on February 13, 1905. I went down from Manchester, and with my daughter Sylvia, then a student at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, spent eight days in the Strangers' Lobby of the House of Commons, working for the suffrage bill. We interviewed every one of the members who had pledged themselves to support a suffrage bill when it should be introduced, but we found not one single member who would agree that his chance in the ballot, if he drew such a chance, should be given to introducing the bill. Every man had some other measure he was anxious to further. Mr Keir Hardie had previously given us his pledge, but his name, as we had feared, was not drawn in the ballot. We next set out to interview all the men whose names had been drawn, and we finally induced Mr Bamford Slack, who held the fourteenth place, to introduce our bill. The fourteenth place was not a good one, but it served, and the second reading of our bill was set down for Friday, May 12th, the second order of the day.

This being the first suffrage bill in eight years, a thrill of excitement animated not only our ranks but all the old suffrage societies. Meetings were held, and a large number of petitions circulated. When the day came for consideration on our bill, the Strangers' Lobby could not hold the enormous gathering of women of all classes, rich and poor,

who flocked to the House of Commons. It was pitiful to see the look of hope and joy that shone on the faces of many of these women. We knew that our poor little measure had the very slightest chance of being passed. The bill that occupied the first order of the day was one providing that carts travelling along public roads at night should carry a light behind as well as before. We had tried to induce the promoters of this unimportant little measure to withdraw it in the interests of our bill, but they refused. We had tried also to persuade the Conservative Government to give our bill facilities for full discussion, but they also refused. So, as we fully anticipated, the promoters of the Roadway Lighting Bill were allowed to 'talk out' our bill. They did this by spinning out the debate with silly stories and foolish jokes. The members listened to the insulting performance with laughter and applause.

When news of what was happening reached the women who waited in the Strangers' Lobby, a feeling of wild excitement and indignation took possession of the throng. Seeing their temper, I felt that the moment had come for a demonstration such as no old-fashioned suffragist had ever attempted. I called upon the women to follow me outside for a meeting of protest against the government. We swarmed out into the open, and Mrs Wolstenholm-Elmy, one of the oldest suffrage workers in England, began to speak. Instantly the police rushed into the crowd of women, pushing them about and ordering them to disperse. We moved on as far as the great statue of Richard Coeur de Lion that guards the entrance to the House of Lords, but again the police intervened. Finally the police agreed to let us hold a meeting in Broad Sanctuary, very near the gates of Westminster Abbey. Here we made speeches and adopted a resolution

condemning the Government's action in allowing a small minority to talk out our bill. This was the first militant act of the W. S. P. U. It caused comment and even some alarm, but the police contented themselves with taking our names.

The ensuing summer was spent in outdoor work. By this time the Women's Social and Political Union had acquired some valuable accessions, and money began to come to us. Among our new members was one who was destined to play an important rôle in the unfolding drama of the militant movement. At the close of one of our meetings at Oldham a young girl introduced herself to me as Annie Kenney, a mill-worker, and a strong suffrage sympathiser. She wanted to know more of our society and its objects, and I invited her and her sister Jenny, a Board School teacher, to tea the next day. They came and joined our Union, a step that definitely changed the whole course of Miss Kenney's life, and gave us one of our most distinguished leaders and organisers. With her help we began to carry our propaganda to an entirely new public.

In Lancashire there is an institution known as the Wakes, a sort of travelling fair where they have merry-go-rounds, Aunt-Sallies, and other festive games, side-shows of various kinds, and booths where all kinds of things are sold. Every little village has its Wakes-week during the summer and autumn, and it is the custom for the inhabitants of the villages to spend the Sunday before the opening of the Wakes walking among the booths in anticipation of tomorrow's joys. On these occasions the Salvation Army, temperance orators, venders of quack medicines, pedlars, and others, take advantage of the ready-made audience to advance their propaganda. At Annie Kenney's suggestion we went from one village to the other, following the Wakes

and making suffrage speeches. We soon rivalled in popularity the Salvation Army, and even the tooth-drawers and patent-medicine peddlars.

The Women's Social and Political Union had been in existence two years before any opportunity was presented for work on a national scale. The autumn of 1905 brought a political situation which seemed to us to promise bright hopes for women's enfranchisement. The life of the old Parliament, dominated for nearly twenty years by the Conservative Party, was drawing to an end, and the country was on the eve of a general election in which the Liberals hoped to be returned to power. Quite naturally the Liberal candidates went to the country with fervid promises of reform in every possible direction. They appealed to the voters to return them, as advocates and upholders of true democracy, and they promised that there should be a Government united in favour of people's rights against the powers of a privileged aristocracy.

Now repeated experiences had taught us that the only way to attain women's suffrage was to commit a Government to it. In other words, pledges of support from candidates were plainly useless. They were not worth having. The only object worth trying for was pledges from responsible leaders that the new Government would make women's suffrage a part of the official programme. We determined to address ourselves to those men who were likely to be in the Liberal Cabinet, demanding to know whether their reforms were going to include justice to women.

We laid our plans to begin this work at a great meeting to be held in Free Trade Hall, Manchester, with Sir Edward Grey as the principal speaker. We intended to get seats in the gallery, directly facing the platform and we made for

the occasion a large banner with the words: 'Will the Liberal Party Give Votes for Women?' We were to let this banner down over the gallery rails at the moment when our speaker rose to put the question to Sir Edward Grey. At the last moment, however, we had to alter the plan because it was impossible to get the gallery seats we wanted. There was no way in which we could use our large banner, so, late in the afternoon on the day of the meeting, we cut out and made a small banner with the three-word inscription: 'Votes for Women.' Thus, quite accidentally, there came into existence the present slogan of the suffrage movement around the world.

Annie Kenney and my daughter Christabel were charged with the mission of questioning Sir Edward Grey. They sat quietly through the meeting, at the close of which questions were invited. Several questions were asked by men and were courteously answered. Then Annie Kenney arose and asked: 'If the Liberal Party is returned to power, will they take steps to give votes for women?' At the same time Christabel held aloft the little banner that every one in the hall might understand the nature of the question. Sir Edward Grey returned no answer to Annie's question, and the men sitting near her forced her rudely into her seat, while a steward of the meeting pressed his hat over her face. A babel of shouts, cries and catcalls sounded from all over the hall.

As soon as order was restored Christabel stood up and repeated the question: 'Will the Liberal Government, if returned, give votes to women?' Again Sir Edward Grey ignored the question, and again a perfect tumult of shouts and angry cries arose. Mr William Peacock, chief constable of Manchester, left the platform and came down to the women, asking them to write their question, which he

promised to hand to the speaker. They wrote: 'Will the Liberal Government give votes to working-women? Signed, on behalf of the Women's Social and Political Union, Annie Kenney, member of the Oldham committee of the card- and blowing-room operatives.' They added a line to say that, as one of 96,000 organised women textile-workers, Annie Kenney earnestly desired an answer to the question.

Mr Peacock kept his word and handed the question to Sir Edward Grey, who read it, smiled, and passed it to the others on the platform. They also read it with smiles, but no answer to the question was made. Only one lady who was sitting on the platform tried to say something, but the chairman interrupted by asking Lord Durham to move a vote of thanks to the speaker. Mr Winston Churchill seconded the motion, Sir Edward Grey replied briefly, and the meeting began to break up. Annie Kenney stood up in her chair and cried out over the noise of shuffling feet and murmurs of conversation: 'Will the Liberal Government give votes to women?' Then the audience became a mob. They howled, they shouted and roared, shaking their fists fiercely at the woman who dared to intrude her question into a man's meeting. Hands were lifted to drag her out of her chair, but Christabel threw one arm about her as she stood, and with the other arm warded off the mob, who struck and scratched at her until her sleeve was red with blood. Still the girls held together and shouted over and over: 'The question! The question! Answer the question!'

Six men, stewards of the meeting, seized Christabel and dragged her down the aisle, past the platform, other men following with Annie Kenney, both girls still calling for an answer to their question. On the platform the Liberal leaders sat silent and unmoved while this disgraceful scene was

taking place, and the mob were shouting and shrieking from the floor.

Flung into the streets, the two girls staggered to their feet and began to address the crowds, and to tell them what had taken place in a Liberal meeting. Within five minutes they were arrested on a charge of obstruction and, in Christabel's case, of assaulting the police. Both were summonsed to appear next morning in a police court, where, after a trial which was a mere farce, Annie Kenney was sentenced to pay a fine of five shillings, with an alternative of three days in prison, and Christabel Pankhurst was given a fine of ten shillings or a jail sentence of one week.

Both girls promptly chose the prison sentence. As soon as they left the court-room I hurried around to the room where they were waiting, and I said to my daughter: 'You have done everything you could be expected to do in this matter. I think you should let me pay your fines and take you home.' Without waiting for Annie Kenney to speak, my daughter exclaimed: 'Mother, if you pay my fine I will never go home.' Before going to the meeting she had said, 'We will get our question answered or sleep in prison tonight.' I now knew her courage remained unshaken.

Of course the affair created a tremendous sensation, not only in Manchester, where my husband had been so well known and where I had so long held public office, but all over England. The comments of the press were almost unanimously bitter. Ignoring the perfectly well-established fact that men in every political meeting ask questions and demand answers of the speakers, the newspapers treated the action of the two girls as something quite unprecedented and outrageous. They generally agreed that great leniency had been shown them. Fines and jail-sentences were too

good for such unsexed creatures. 'The discipline of the nursery' would have been far more appropriate. One Birmingham paper declared that 'if any argument were required against giving ladies political status and power it had been furnished in Manchester.' Newspapers which had heretofore ignored the whole subject now hinted that while they had formerly been in favour of women's suffrage, they could no longer countenance it. The Manchester incident, it was said, had set the cause back, perhaps irrevocably.

This is how it set the cause back. Scores of people wrote to the newspapers expressing sympathy with the women. The wife of Sir Edward Grey told her friends that she considered them quite justified in the means they had taken. It was stated that Winston Churchill, nervous about his own candidacy in Manchester, visited Strangeways Gaol, where the two girls were imprisoned, and vainly begged the governor to allow him to pay their fines. On October 20, when the prisoners were released, they were given an immense demonstration in Free-Trade Hall, the very hall from which they had been ejected the week before. The Women's Social and Political Union received a large number of new members. Above all, the question of women's suffrage became at once a live topic of comment from one end of Great Britain to the other.

We determined that from that time on the little 'Votes For Women' banners should appear wherever a prospective member of the Liberal Government rose to speak, and that there should be no more peace until the women's question was answered. We clearly perceived that the new Government, calling themselves Liberal, were reactionary so far as women were concerned, that they were hostile to women's suffrage,

and would have to be fought until they were conquered, or else driven from office.

We did not begin to fight, however, until we had given the new Government every chance to give us the pledge we wanted. Early in December the Conservative Government had gone out, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal leader, had formed a new Cabinet. On December 21 a great meeting was held in Royal Albert Hall, London, where Sir Henry, surrounded by his cabinet, made his first utterance as Prime Minister. Previous to the meeting we wrote to Sir Henry and asked him, in the name of the Women's Social and Political Union, whether the Liberal Government would give women the vote. We added that our representatives would be present at the meeting, and we hoped that the Prime Minister would publicly answer the question. Otherwise we should be obliged publicly to protest against his silence.

Of course Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman returned no reply, nor did his speech contain any allusion to women's suffrage. So, at the conclusion, Annie Kenney, whom we had smuggled into the hall in disguise, whipped out her little white calico banner, and called out in her clear, sweet voice: 'Will the Liberal Government give women the vote?'

At the same moment Theresa Billington let drop from a seat directly above the platform a huge banner with the words: 'Will the Liberal Government give justice to working-women?' Just for a moment there was a gasping silence, the people waiting to see what the Cabinet Ministers would do. They did nothing. Then, in the midst of uproar and conflicting shouts, the women were seized and flung out of the hall.

This was the beginning of a campaign the like of which

was never known in England, or, for that matter, in any other country. If we had been strong enough we should have opposed the election of every Liberal candidate, but being limited both in funds and in members we concentrated on one member of the Government, Mr Winston Churchill. Not that we had any animus against Mr Churchill. We chose him simply because he was the only important candidate standing for constituencies within reach of our headquarters. We attended every meeting addressed by Mr Churchill. We heckled him unmercifully; we spoiled his best points by flinging back such obvious retorts that the crowds roared with laughter. We lifted out little white banners from unexpected corners of the hall, exactly at the moment when an interruption was least desired. Sometimes our banners were torn from our hands and trodden under foot. Sometimes, again, the crowds were with us, and we actually broke up the meeting. We did not succeed in defeating Mr Churchill, but he was returned by a very small majority, the smallest of any of the Manchester Liberal candidates.

We did not confine our efforts to heckling Mr Churchill. Throughout the campaign we kept up the work of questioning Cabinet Ministers at meetings all over England and Scotland. At Sun Hall, Liverpool, addressed by the Prime Minister, nine women in succession asked the important question, and were thrown out of the hall; this in the face of the fact that Sir Campbell-Bannerman was an avowed suffragist. But we were not questioning him as to his private opinions on the suffrage; we were asking him what his Government were willing to do about suffrage. We questioned Mr Asquith in Sheffield, Mr Lloyd-George in Altrincham, Cheshire, the Prime Minister again in Glasgow, and we interrupted a great many other meetings as well. Always we

were violently thrown out and insulted. Often we were painfully bruised and hurt.

What good did it do? We have often been asked that question, even by the women our actions spurred into an activity they had never before thought themselves capable of. For one thing, our heckling campaign made women's suffrage a matter of news—it had never been that before. Now the newspapers were full of us. For another thing, we woke up the old suffrage associations. During the general election various groups of non-militant suffragists came back to life and organised a gigantic manifesto in favour of action from the Liberal Government. Among others, the manifesto was signed by the Women's Co-operative Guild with nearly 21,000 members; the Women's Liberal Federation, with 76,000 members; the Scottish Women's Liberal Federation, with 15,000 members; the North-of-England Weavers' Association, with 100,000 members; the British Women's Temperance Association, with nearly 110,000 members; and the Independent Labour Party with 20,000 members. Surely it was something to have inspired all this activity.

We decided that the next step must be to carry the fight to London, and Annie Kenney was chosen to be organiser there. With only two pounds, less than ten dollars, in her pocket the intrepid girl set forth on her mission. In about a fortnight I left my official work as registrar in the hands of a deputy and went down to London to see what had been accomplished. To my astonishment I found that Annie, working with my daughter Sylvia, had organised a procession of women and a demonstration to be held on the opening day of Parliament. The confident young things had actually engaged Caxton Hall, Westminster; they had had printed a large number of handbills to announce the meeting, and

they were busily engaged in working up the demonstration. Mrs Drummond, who had joined the Union shortly after the imprisonment of Annie Kenney and Christabel, sent word from Manchester that she was coming to help us. She had to borrow the money for her railroad-fare, but she came, and, as ever before and since, her help was invaluable.

How we worked, distributing handbills, chalking announcements of the meeting on pavements, calling on every person we knew and on a great many more we knew only by name, canvassing from door to door!

At length the opening day of Parliament arrived. On February 19, 1906, occurred the first suffrage procession in London. I think there were between three and four hundred women in that procession, poor working-women from the East End, for the most part, leading the way in which numberless women of every rank were afterward to follow. My eyes were misty with tears as I saw them, standing in line, holding the simple banners which my daughter Sylvia had decorated, waiting for the word of command. Of course our procession attracted a large crowd of intensely amused spectators. The police, however, made no attempt to disperse our ranks, but merely ordered us to furl our banners. There was no reason why we should not have carried banners but the fact that we were women, and therefore could be bullied. So, bannerless, the procession entered Caxton Hall. To my amazement it was filled with women, most of whom I had never seen at any suffrage gathering before.

Our meeting was most enthusiastic, and while Annie Kenney was speaking, to frequent applause, the news came to me that the King's speech (which is not the King's at all, but the formally announced Government programme for the session) had been read, and that there was in it no

mention of the women's suffrage question. As Annie took her seat I arose and made this announcement, and I moved a resolution that the meeting should at once proceed to the House of Commons to urge the members to introduce a suffrage measure. The resolution was carried, and we rushed out in a body and hurried toward the Strangers' Entrance. It was pouring rain and bitterly cold, yet no one turned back, even when we learned at the entrance that for the first time in memory the doors of the House of Commons were barred to women. We sent in our cards to members who were personal friends, and some of them came out and urged our admittance. The police, however, were obdurate. They had their orders. The Liberal government, advocates of the people's rights, had given orders that women should no longer set foot in their stronghold.

Pressure from members proved too great, and the government relented to the extent of allowing twenty women at a time to enter the lobby. Through all the rain and cold those hundreds of women waited for hours their turn to enter. Some never got in, and for those of us who did there was small satisfaction. Not a member could be persuaded to take up our cause.

Out of the disappointment and dejection of that experience I yet reaped a richer harvest of happiness than I had ever known before. Those women had followed me to the House of Commons. They had defied the police. They were awake at last. They were prepared to do something that women had never done before—fight for themselves. Women had always fought for men, and for their children. Now they were ready to fight for their own human rights. Our militant movement was established.

To account for the phenomenal growth of the Women's Social and Political Union after it was established in London, to explain why it made such an instant appeal to women hitherto indifferent, I shall have to point out exactly wherein our society differs from all other suffrage associations. In the first place, our members are absolutely single minded; they concentrate all their forces on one object, political equality with men. No member of the W. S. P. U. divides her attention between suffrage and other social reforms. We hold that both reason and justice dictate that women shall have a share in reforming the evils that afflict society, especially those evils bearing directly on women themselves. Therefore, we demand, before any other legislation whatever, the elementary justice of votes for women.

There is not the slightest doubt that the women of Great Britain would have been enfranchised years ago had all the suffragists adopted this simple principle. They never did, and even today many English women refuse to adopt it. They are party members first and suffragists afterward; or they are suffragists part of the time and social theorists the rest of the time. We further differ from other suffrage associations, or from others existing in 1906, in that we clearly perceived

the political situation that solidly interposed between us and our enfranchisement.

For seven years we had had a majority in the House of Commons pledged to vote favourably on a suffrage bill. The year before, they had voted favourably on one, yet that bill did not become law. Why? Because even an overwhelming majority of private members are powerless to enact law in the face of a hostile Government of eleven cabinet ministers. The private member of Parliament was once possessed of individual power and responsibility, but Parliamentary usage and a changed conception of statesmanship have gradually lessened the functions of members. At the present time their powers, for all practical purposes, are limited to helping to enact such measures as the Government introduces or, in rare instances, private measures approved by the Government. It is true that the House can revolt, can, by voting a lack of confidence in the Government, force them to resign. But that almost never happens, and it is less likely now than formerly to happen. Figureheads don't revolt.

This, then, was our situation: the Government all-powerful and consistently hostile; the rank and file of legislators impotent; the country apathetic; the women divided in their interests. The Women's Social and Political Union was established to meet this situation, and to overcome it. Moreover we had a policy which, if persisted in long enough, could not possibly fail to overcome it. Do you wonder that we gained new members at every meeting we held?

There was little formality about joining the Union. Any woman could become a member by paying a shilling, but at the same time she was required to sign a declaration of loyal adherence to our policy and a pledge not to work for

any political party until the women's vote was won. This is still our inflexible custom. Moreover, if at any time a member, or a group of members, loses faith in our policy; if any one begins to suggest that some other policy ought to be substituted, or if she tries to confuse the issue by adding other policies, she ceases at once to be a member. Autocratic? Quite so. But, you may object, a suffrage organisation ought to be democratic. Well the members of the W. S. P. U. do not agree with you. We do not believe in the effectiveness of the ordinary suffrage organisation. The W. S. P. U. is not hampered by a complexity of rules. We have no constitution and by-laws; nothing to be amended or tinkered with or quarrelled over at an annual meeting. In fact, we have no annual meeting, no business sessions, no elections of officers. The W. S. P. U. is simply a suffrage army in the field. It is purely a volunteer army, and no one is obliged to remain in it. Indeed we don't want anybody to remain in it who does not ardently believe in the policy of the army.

The foundation of our policy is opposition to a Government who refuse votes to women. To support by word or deed a Government hostile to woman suffrage is simply to invite them to go on being hostile. We oppose the Liberal Party because it is in power. We would oppose a Unionist government if it were in power and were opposed to woman suffrage. We say to women that as long as they remain in the ranks of the Liberal Party they give their tacit approval to the Government's anti-suffrage policy. We say to members of Parliament that as long as they support any of the Government's policies they give their tacit approval to the anti-suffrage policy. We call upon all sincere suffragists to leave the Liberal Party until women are given votes on equal terms with men. We call upon all voters to vote against

Liberal candidates until the Liberal Government does justice to women.

We did not invent this policy. It was most successfully pursued by Mr Parnell in his Home Rule struggle more than thirty-five years ago. Any one who is old enough to remember the stirring days of Parnell may recall how, in 1885, the Home Rulers, by persistently voting against the Government in the House of Commons, forced the resignation of Mr Gladstone and his Cabinet. In the general election which followed, the Liberal Party was again returned to power, but by the slender majority of eighty-four, the Home Rulers having fought every Liberal candidate, even those, who, like my husband, were enthusiastic believers in Home Rule. In order to control the House and keep his leadership, Mr Gladstone was obliged to bring in a Government Home Rule Bill. The downfall, through private intrigue, and the subsequent death of Parnell prevented the bill from becoming law. For many years afterward the Irish Nationalists had no leader strong enough to carry on Parnell's anti-government policy, but within late years it was resumed by Mr James Redmond, with the result that the Commons passed a Home Rule Bill.

The contention of the old-fashioned suffragists, and of the politicians as well, has always been that an educated public opinion will ultimately give votes to women without any great force being exerted in behalf of the reform. We agree that public opinion must be educated, but we contend that even an educated public opinion is useless unless it is vigorously utilised. The keenest weapon is powerless unless it is courageously wielded. In the year 1906 there was an immensely large public opinion in favour of woman suffrage. But what good did that do the cause? We called upon the

public for a great deal more than sympathy. We called upon it to demand of the Government to yield to public opinion and give women votes. And we declared that we would wage war, not only on all anti-suffrage forces, but on all neutral and non-active forces. Every man with a vote was considered a foe to woman suffrage unless he was prepared to be actively a friend.

Not that we believed that the campaign of education ought to be given up. On the contrary, we knew that education must go on, and in much more vigorous fashion than ever before. The first thing we did was to enter upon a sensational campaign to arouse the public to the importance of woman suffrage, and to interest it in our plans for forcing the Government's hands. I think we can claim that our success in this regard was instant, and that it has proved permanent. From the very first, in those early London days, when we were few in numbers and very poor in purse, we made the public aware of the woman suffrage movement as it had never been before. We adopted Salvation Army methods and went out into the highways and the byways after converts. We threw away all our conventional notions of what was 'ladylike' and 'good form,' and we applied to our methods the one test question, Will it help? Just as the Booths and their followers took religion to the street crowds in such fashion that the church people were horrified, so we took suffrage to the general public in a manner that amazed and scandalised the other suffragists.

We had a lot of suffrage literature printed, and day by day our members went forth and held street meetings. Selecting a favourable spot, with a chair for a rostrum, one of us would ring a bell until people began to stop to see what was going to happen. What happened, of course, was a lively suffrage

speech, and the distribution of literature. Soon after our campaign had started, the sound of the bell was a signal for a crowd to spring up as if by magic. All over the neighbourhood you heard the cry: 'Here are the Suffragettes! Come on!' We covered London in this way; we never lacked an audience, and best of all, an audience to which the woman-suffrage doctrine was new. We were increasing our favourable public as well as waking it up. Besides these street meetings, we held many hall and drawing-room meetings, and we got a great deal of press publicity, which was something never accorded the older suffrage methods.

Our plans included the introduction of a Government suffrage bill at the earliest possible moment, and in the spring of 1906 we sent a deputation of about thirty of our members to interview the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The Prime Minister, it was stated, was not at home; so in a few days we sent another deputation. This time the servant agreed to carry our request to the Prime Minister. The women waited patiently on the doorstep of the official residence, No. 10 Downing Street, for nearly an hour. Then the door opened and two men appeared. One of the men addressed the leader of the deputation, roughly ordering her and the others to leave. 'We have sent a message to the Prime Minister,' she replied, 'and we are waiting for the answer.' 'There will be no answer,' was the stern rejoinder, and the door closed.

'Yes, there will be an answer,' exclaimed the leader, and she seized the door-knocker and banged it sharply. Instantly the men reappeared, and one of them called to a policeman standing near, 'Take this woman in charge.' The order was obeyed, and the peaceful deputation saw its leader taken off to Canon Row Station.

Instantly the women protested vigorously. Annie Kenney began to address the crowd that had gathered, and Mrs Drummond actually forced her way past the doorkeeper into the sacred residence of the Prime Minister of the British Empire! Her arrest and Annie's followed. The three women were detained at the police station for about an hour, long enough, the Prime Minister probably thought, to frighten them thoroughly and teach them not to do such dreadful things again. Then he sent them word that he had decided not to prosecute them, but would, on the contrary, receive a deputation from the W. S. P. U., and, if they cared to attend, from other suffrage societies as well.

All the suffrage organisations at once began making preparations for the great event. At the same time two hundred members of Parliament sent a petition to the Prime Minister, asking him to receive their committee that they might urge upon him the necessity of a Government measure for woman suffrage. Sir Henry fixed May 19th as the day on which he would receive a joint deputation from Parliament and from the women's suffrage organisations.

The W. S. P. U. determined to make the occasion as public as possible, and began preparations for a procession and a demonstration. When the day came we assembled at the foot of the beautiful monument to the warrior-queen, Boadicea, that guards the entrance to Westminster Bridge, and from there we marched to the Foreign Office. At the meeting eight women spoke in behalf of an immediate suffrage measure, and Mr Keir Hardie presented the argument for the suffrage members of Parliament. I spoke for the W. S. P. U., and I tried to make the Prime Minister see that no business could be more pressing than ours. I told him that the group of women organised in our Union felt so

strongly the necessity for women enfranchisement that they were prepared to sacrifice for it everything they possessed, their means of livelihood, their very lives, if necessary. I begged him to make such a sacrifice needless by doing us justice now.

What answer do you think Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman made us? He assured us of his sympathy with our cause, his belief in its justice, and his confidence in our fitness to vote. And then he told us to have patience and wait; he could do nothing for us because some of his Cabinet were opposed to us. After a few more words the usual vote of thanks was moved, and the deputation was dismissed. I had not expected anything better, but it wrung my heart to see the bitter disappointment of the W. S. P. U. women who had waited in the street to hear from the leaders the result of the deputation. We held a great meeting of protest that afternoon, and determined to carry on our agitation with increased vigor.

Now that it had been made plain that the Government were resolved not to bring in a suffrage bill, there was nothing to do but to continue our policy of waking up the country, not only by public speeches and demonstrations, but by a constant heckling of Cabinet Ministers. Since the memorable occasion when Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney were thrown out of Sir Edward Grey's meeting in Manchester, and afterward imprisoned for the crime of asking a courteous question, we had not lost an opportunity of addressing the same question to every Cabinet Minister we could manage to encounter. For this we have been unmercifully criticised, and in a large number of cases most brutally handled.

In almost every one of my American meetings I was

asked the question, 'What good do you expect to accomplish by interrupting meetings?' Is it possible that the time-honoured, almost sacred English privilege of interrupting is unknown in America? I cannot imagine a political meeting from which 'the Voice' was entirely absent. In England it is invariably present. It is considered the inalienable right of the opposition to heckle the speaker and to hurl questions at him which are calculated to spoil his arguments. For instance, when Liberals attend a Conservative gathering they go prepared to shatter by witticisms and pointed questions all the best effects of the Conservative orators. The next day you will read in Liberal newspapers headlines like these: 'The Voice in Fine Form,' 'Short Shrift for Tory Twaddle,' 'Awkward Answers from the Enemy's Platform.' In the body of the article you will learn that 'Lord X found that the Liberals at his meeting were more than a match for him,' that 'there was continued interruption during Sir So-and-so's speech,' that 'Lord M fared badly last night in his encounter with the Voice,' or that 'Captain Z had the greatest difficulty in making himself heard.'

In accordance with this custom we heckle Cabinet Ministers. Mr Winston Churchill, for example, is speaking. 'One great question,' he exclaims, 'remains to be settled.'

'And that is woman suffrage,' shouts a voice from the gallery.

Mr Churchill struggles on with his speech: 'The men have been complaining of me—'

'The women have been complaining of you, too, Mr Churchill,' comes back promptly from the back of the hall.

'In the circumstances what can we do but—'

'Give votes to women.'

Our object, of course, is to keep woman suffrage in the

foreground of interest and to insist on every possible occasion that no other reform advocated is of such immediate importance.

From the first the women's interruptions have been resented with unreasoning anger. I remember hearing Mr Lloyd-George saying once of a man who interrupted him:

'Let him remain. I like interruptions. They show that people holding different opinions to mine are present, giving me a chance to convert them.' But when suffragists interrupt Mr Lloyd-George he says something polite like this: 'Pay no attention to those cats mewling.'

Some of the ministers are more well bred in their expressions, but all are disdainful and resentful. All see with approval the brutal ejection of the women by the Liberal stewards.

At one meeting where Mr Lloyd-George was speaking, we interrupted with a question, and he claimed the sympathy of the audience on the score that he was a friend to woman suffrage. 'Then why don't you do something to give votes to women?' was the obvious retort. But Mr Lloyd-George evaded this by the counter query: 'Why don't they go for their enemies? Why don't they go for their greatest enemy?' Instantly, all over the hall, voices shouted, 'Asquith! Asquith!' For even at that early day it was known that the then Chancellor of the Exchequer was a stern foe of women's independence.

In the summer of 1906, together with other members of the W. S. P. U., I went to Northampton, where Mr Asquith was holding a large meeting in behalf of the Government's education bills. We organised a number of outdoor meetings, and of course prepared to attend Mr Asquith's meeting. In conversation with the president of the local Women's Liberal

Association, I mentioned the fact that we expected to be put out, and she indignantly declared that such a thing could not happen in Northampton, where the women had done so much for the Liberal Party. I told her that I hoped she would be at the meeting.

I had not intended to go myself, my plans being to hold a meeting of my own outside the door. But our members, before Mr Asquith began to speak, attempted to question him, and were thrown out with violence. So then, turning my meeting over to them, I slipped quietly into the hall and sat down in the front row of a division set apart for wives and women friends of the Liberal leaders. I sat there in silence, hearing men interrupt the speaker and get answers to their questions. At the close of the speech I stood up and, addressing the chairman, said: 'I should like to ask Mr Asquith a question about education.' The chairman turned inquiringly to Mr Asquith, who frowningly shook his head. But without waiting for the chairman to say a word, I continued: 'Mr Asquith has said that the parents of children have a right to be consulted in the matter of their children's education, especially upon such questions as the kind of religious instruction they should receive. Women are parents. Does not Mr Asquith think that women should have the right to control their children's education, as men do, through the vote?' At this point the stewards seized me by the arms and shoulders and rushed me, or rather dragged me, for I soon lost my footing, to the door and threw me out of the building.

The effect on the president of the Northampton Women's Liberal Association was most salutary. She resigned her office and became a member of the W. S. P. U. Perhaps her action was influenced further by the press reports of the incident.

Mr Asquith was reported as saying, after my ejection, that it was difficult to enter into the minds of people who thought they could serve a cause which professed to appeal to the reason of the electors of the country by disturbing public meetings. Apparently he could enter into the minds of the men who disturbed public meetings.

To our custom of public heckling of the responsible members of the hostile Government we added the practice of sending deputations to them for the purpose of presenting orderly arguments in favour of our cause. After Mr Asquith had shown himself so uninformed as to the objects of the suffragists, we decided to ask him to receive a deputation from the W. S. P. U. To our polite letter Mr Asquith returned a cold refusal to be interviewed on any subject not connected with his particular office. Whereupon we wrote again, reminding Mr Asquith that as a member of the Government he was concerned with all questions likely to be dealt with by Parliament. We said that we urgently desired to put our question before him, and that we would send a deputation to his house hoping that he would feel it his duty to receive us.

Our first deputation was told that Mr Asquith was not at home. He had, in fact, escaped from the house through the back door, and had sped away in a fast motor-car. Two days later we sent a larger deputation, of about thirty women, to his house in Cavendish Square. To be accurate, the deputation got as near the house as the entrance to Cavendish Square; there the women met a strong force of police, who told them that they would not be permitted to go farther.

Many of the women were carrying little 'Votes for Women' banners, and these the police tore from them, in some cases with blows and insults. Seeing this, the leader

of the deputation cried out: 'We will go forward. You have no right to strike women like that.' The reply, from a policeman near her, was a blow in the face. She screamed with pain and indignation, whereupon the man grasped her by the throat and choked her against the park railings until she was blue in the face. The young woman struggled and fought back, and for this she was arrested on a charge of assaulting the police. Three other women were arrested, one because, in spite of the police, she succeeded in ringing Mr Asquith's doorbell and another because she protested against the laughter of some ladies who watched the affair from a drawing-room window. She was a poor working-woman, and it seemed to her a terrible thing that rich and protected women should ridicule a cause that to her was so profoundly serious. The fourth woman was taken in charge, because after she had been pushed off the pavement, she dared to step back. Charged with disorderly conduct, these women were sentenced to six weeks in the Second Division. They were given the option of a fine, it is true, but the payment of a fine would have been an acknowledgment of guilt, which made such a course impossible. The leader of the deputation was given a two months' sentence, with the option of a fine of ten pounds. She, too, refused to pay, and was sent to prison; but some unknown friend paid the fine secretly, and she was released before the expiration of her sentence.

About the time these things were happening in London, similar violence was offered our women in Manchester, where John Burns, Lloyd-George, and Winston Churchill, all three Cabinet Ministers, were addressing a great Liberal demonstration. The women were there, as usual, to ask government support for our measure. There, too, they were

thrown out of the meeting, and three of them were sent to prison.

There are people in England, plenty of them, who will tell you that the Suffragettes were sent to prison for destroying property. The fact is that hundreds of women were arrested for exactly such offences as I have described before it ever occurred to any of us to destroy property. We were determined, at the beginning of our movement, that we would make ourselves heard, that we would force the Government to take up our question and answer it by action in Parliament. Perhaps you will see some parallel to our case in the stand taken in Massachusetts by the early Abolitionists, Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison. They, too, had to fight bitterly, to face insult and arrest, because they insisted on being heard. And they were heard; and so, in time, were we.

I think we began to be noticed in earnest after our first success in opposing a Liberal candidate. This was in a by-election held at Cockermonth in August, 1906. I shall have to explain that a by-election is a local election to fill a vacancy in Parliament caused by a death or a resignation. The verdict of a by-election is considered as either an indorsement or a censure of the manner in which the Government have fulfilled their pre-election pledges. So we went to Cockermonth and told the voters how the Liberal Party had fulfilled its pledges of democracy and lived up to its avowed belief in the rights of all the people. We told them of the arrests in London and Manchester, of the shameful treatment of women in Liberal meetings, and we asked them to censure the Government who had answered so brutally our demand for a vote. We told them that the only rebuke that the politicians would notice was a lost seat

in Parliament, and that on that ground we asked them to defeat the Liberal candidate.

How we were ridiculed! With what scorn the newspapers declared that 'those wild women' could never turn a single vote. Yet when the election was over it was found that the Liberal candidate had lost the seat, which, at the general election a little more than a year before, had been won by a majority of 655. This time the Unionist candidate was returned by a majority of 609. Tremendously elated, we hurried our forces off to another by-election.

Now the ridicule was turned to stormy abuse. Mind you, the Liberal Government still refused to notice the women's question; they declared through the Liberal press that the defeat at Cockermouth was insignificant, and that anyhow it wasn't caused by the Suffragettes; yet the Liberal leaders were furiously angry with the W. S. P. U. Many of our members had been Liberals, and it was considered by the men that these women were little better than traitors. They were very foolish and ill-advised, into the bargain, the Liberals said, because the vote, if won at all, must be gained from the Liberal Party; and how did the women suppose the Liberal Party would ever give the vote to open and avowed enemies? This sage argument was used also by the women Liberals and the constitutional suffragists. They advised us that the proper way was to work for the party. We retorted that we had done that unsuccessfully for too many years already, and persisted with the opposite method of persuasion.

Throughout the summer and autumn we devoted ourselves to the by-election work, sometimes actually defeating the Liberal candidate, sometimes reducing the Liberal majority, and always raising a tremendous sensation

and gaining hundreds of new members to the Union. In almost every neighbourhood we visited we left the nucleus of a local union, so that before the year was out we had branches all over England and many in Scotland and Wales. I especially remember a by-election in Wales at which Mr Samuel Evans, who had accepted an officership under the Crown, had to stand for re-election. Unfortunately no candidate had been brought out against him. So there was nothing for my companions and me to do but make his campaign as lively as possible. Mr—now Sir Samuel—Evans was the man who had incensed women by talking out a suffrage resolution introduced into the House by Keir Hardie. So we went to two of his meetings and literally talked him out, breaking up the gatherings amid the laughter and cheers of delighted crowds.

On October 23rd Parliament met for its autumn session, and we led a deputation to the House of Commons in another effort to induce the Government to take action on woman suffrage. In accordance with orders given the police, only twenty of us were admitted to the Strangers' Lobby. We sent in for the chief Liberal whip, and asked him to take a message to the Prime Minister, the message being the usual request to grant women the vote that session. We also asked the Prime Minister if he intended to include the registration of qualified women voters in the provisions of the plural voting bill, then under consideration. The Liberal whip came back with the reply that nothing could be done for women that session.

'Does the Prime Minister,' I asked, 'hold out any hope for the women for any session during this Parliament, or at any future time?' The Prime Minister, you will remember, called himself a suffragist.

The Liberal whip replied, 'No, Mrs Pankhurst, the Prime Minister does not.'

What would a deputation of unenfranchised men have done in these circumstances—men who knew themselves to be qualified to exercise the franchise, who desperately needed the protection of the franchise, and who had a majority of legislators in favour of giving them the franchise? I hope they would have done at least as much as we did, which was to start a meeting of protest on the spot. The newspapers described our action as creating a disgraceful scene in the lobby of the House of Commons, but I think that history will otherwise describe it. One of the women sprang up on a settee and began to address the crowd. In less than a minute she was pulled down, but instantly another woman took her place; and after she had been dragged down, still another sprang to her place, and following her another and another, until the order came to clear the lobby, and we were all forced outside.

In the *mêlée* I was thrown to the floor and painfully hurt. The women, thinking me seriously injured, crowded around me and refused to move until I was able to regain myself. This angered the police, who were still more incensed when they found that the demonstration was continued outside. Eleven women were arrested, including Mrs Pethick Lawrence, our treasurer, Mrs Cobden Sanderson, Annie Kenney and three more of our organisers; and they were all sent to Holloway for two months. But the strength of our movement was proved by the number of volunteers who immediately came forward to carry on the work. Mrs Tuke, now Hon. Secretary of the W. S. P. U., joined the Union at this time. It had not occurred to the authorities that their action would have this effect. They thought to

crush the Union at a blow, but they gave it the greatest impetus it had yet received. The leaders of the older suffrage organisations for the time forgot their disapproval of our methods, and joined with women writers, physicians, actresses, artists, and other prominent women in denouncing the affair as barbarous.

One more thing the authorities failed to take into account. The condition of English prisons was known to be very bad, but when two of our women were made so ill in Holloway that they had to be released within a few days, the politicians began to tremble for their prestige. Questions were asked in Parliament concerning the advisability of treating the Suffragettes not as common criminals but as political offenders with the right to confinement in the First Division. Mr Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary, replied to these questions that he had no power to interfere with the magistrates' decisions, and could do nothing in the matter of the Suffragettes' punishment. I shall ask you to remember this statement of Mr Herbert Gladstone's, as later we were able to prove it a deliberate falsehood—although really the falsehood proved itself when the women, by Government order, were released from prison when they had served just half their sentences. The reason for this was that an important by-election was being held in the north of England, and we had distributed broadcast throughout the constituency handbills telling the electors that nine women, including the daughter of Richard Cobden, were being held as common criminals by the Liberal Government who were asking for their votes.

I took a group of the released prisoners to Huddersfield, and they told prison stories to such effect that the Liberal majority was reduced by 540 votes. As usual the Liberal

leaders denied that our work had anything to do with the slender majority by which the party retained the seat, but among our souvenirs is a handbill, one of thousands given out from Liberal headquarters:

MEN OF HUDDERSFIELD
DON'T BE MISLED
BY SOCIALISTS, SUFFRAGETTES
OR TORIES
VOTE FOR SHERWELL

Meanwhile, other demonstrations had taken place before the House of Commons, and at Christmas time twenty-one Suffragettes were in Holloway Prison, though they had committed no crime. The Government professed themselves unmoved, and members of Parliament spoke with sneers of the 'self-made martyrs.' However, a considerable group of members, strongly moved by the passion and unquenchable ardor of this new order of suffragists, met during the last week of the year and formed a committee whose object it was to press upon the government the necessity of giving the franchise to women during that Parliament. The committee resolved that its members would work to educate a wider public opinion on the question, and especially to advocate suffrage when addressing meetings in their constituencies, to take Parliamentary action on every possible occasion, and to induce as many members of Parliament as possible to ballot for the introduction of a suffrage bill or motion next session.

Our first year in London had borne wonderful fruits. We had grown from a mere handful of women, a 'family party'

the newspapers had derisively called us, to a strong organisation with branches all over the country, permanent headquarters in Clement's Inn, Strand; we had found good financial backing, and above all, we had created a suffrage committee in the House of Commons.

BOOK TWO
FOUR YEARS OF PEACEFUL
MILITANCY

1

The campaign of 1907 began with a Women's Parliament, called together on February 13th in Caxton Hall, to consider the provisions of the King's speech, which had been read in the national Parliament on the opening day of the session, February 12th. The King's speech, as I have explained, is the official announcement of the Government's programme for the session. When our Women's Parliament met at three o'clock on the afternoon of the thirteenth we knew that the Government meant to do nothing for women during the session ahead.

I presided over the women's meeting, which was marked with a fervency and a determination of spirit at that time altogether unprecedented. A resolution expressing indignation that woman suffrage should have been omitted from the King's speech, and calling upon the House of Commons to give immediate facilities to such a measure, was moved and carried. A motion to send the resolution from the hall to the Prime Minister was also carried. The slogan, 'Rise up, women,' was cried from the platform, the answering shout coming back as from one woman, 'Now!' With copies of the resolution in their hands, the chosen deputation hurried forth into the February dusk, ready for Parliament or prison, as the fates decreed.

Fate did not leave them very long in doubt. The Government, it appeared, had decided that not again should their sacred halls of Parliament be desecrated by women asking for the vote, and orders had been given that would henceforth prevent women from reaching even the outer precincts of the House of Commons. So when our deputation of women arrived in the neighbourhood of Westminster Abbey they found themselves opposed by a solid line of police, who, at a sharp order from their chief, began to stride through and through the ranks of the procession, trying to turn the women back. Bravely the women rallied and pressed forward a little farther. Suddenly a body of mounted police came riding up at a smart trot, and for the next five hours or more, a struggle, quite indescribable for brutality and ruthlessness, went on.

The horsemen rode directly into the procession, scattering the women right and left. But still the women would not turn back. Again and again they returned, only to fly again and again from the merciless hoofs. Some of the women left the streets for the pavements, but even there the horsemen pursued them, pressing them so close to walls and railings that they were obliged to retreat temporarily to avoid being crushed. Other strategists took refuge in doorways, but they were dragged out by the foot police and were thrown directly in front of the horses. Still the women fought to reach the House of Commons with their resolution. They fought until their clothes were torn, their bodies bruised, and the last ounce of their strength exhausted. Fifteen of them did actually fight their way through those hundreds on hundreds of police, foot and mounted, as far as the Strangers' Lobby of the House. Here they attempted to hold a meeting, and were arrested. Outside, many more

women were taken into custody. It was ten o'clock before the last arrest was made, and the square cleared of the crowds. After that the mounted men continued to guard the approaches to the House of Commons until the House rose at midnight.

The next morning fifty-seven women and two men were arraigned, two and three at a time, in Westminster police court. Christabel Pankhurst was the first to be placed in the dock. She tried to explain to the magistrate that the deputation of the day before was a perfectly peaceful attempt to present a resolution, which, sooner or later, would be presented and acted upon. She assured him that the deputation was but the beginning of a campaign that would not cease until the Government yielded to the women's demand. 'There can be no going back for us,' she declared, 'and more will happen if we do not get justice.'

The magistrate, Mr Curtis Bennett, who was destined later to try women for that 'more,' rebuked my daughter sternly, telling her that the Government had nothing to do with causing the disorders of the day before, that the women were entirely responsible for what had occurred, and finally, that these disgraceful scenes in the street must cease—just as King Canute told the ocean that it must roll out instead of in. 'The scenes can be stopped in only one way,' replied the prisoner. His sole reply to that was, 'Twenty shillings or fourteen days.' Christabel chose the prison sentence, and so did all the other prisoners. Mrs Despard, who headed the deputation, and Sylvia Pankhurst, who was with her, were given three weeks in prison.

Of course the raid, as it was called, gave the Women's Social and Political Union an enormous amount of publicity, on the whole, favourable publicity. The newspapers were

almost unanimous in condemning the Government for sending mounted troops out against unarmed women. Angry questions were asked in Parliament, and our ranks once more increased in size and ardour. The old-fashioned suffragists, men as well as women, cried out that we had alienated all our friends in Parliament; but this proved to be untrue. Indeed, it was found that a Liberal member, Mr Dickinson, had won the first place in the ballot, and had announced that he intended to use it to introduce a women's suffrage bill. More than this, the prime minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, promised to give the bill his support. For a time, a very short time, it is true, we felt that the hour of our freedom might be at hand, that our prisoners had perhaps already won us our precious symbol—the vote.

Soon, however, a number of professed suffragists in the House began to complain that Mr Dickinson's bill, practically the original bill, was not 'democratic' enough, that it would enfranchise only the women of the upper classes—to which, by the way, most of them belonged. That this was not true had been proved again and again from the municipal registers, which showed a majority of working women's names as qualified householders. The contention was but a shallow excuse, and we knew it. Therefore we were not surprised when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman departed from his pledge of support, and allowed the bill to be talked out.

Following this event, the second Women's Parliament assembled, on the afternoon of March 20, 1907. As before, we adopted a resolution calling upon the Government to introduce an official suffrage measure, and again we voted to send the resolution from the hall to the Prime Minister. Lady Harberton was chosen to lead the deputation, and instantly hundreds of women sprang up and volunteered to

accompany her. This time the police met the women at the door of the hall, and another useless, disgraceful scene of barbarous, brute-force opposition took place. Something like one thousand police had been sent out to guard the House of Commons from the peaceful invasion of a few hundred women. All afternoon and evening we kept Caxton Hall open, the women returning every now and again, singly and in small groups, to have their bruises bathed, or their torn clothing repaired. As night fell the crowds in the street grew denser, and the struggle between the women and the police became more desperate. Lady Harberton, we heard, had succeeded in reaching the entrance to the House of Commons, nay, had actually managed to press past the sentries into the lobby, but her resolution had not been presented to the Prime Minister. She and many others were arrested before the police at last succeeded in clearing the streets, and the dreadful affair was over.

The next day, in Westminster police court, the magistrate meted out sentences varying from twenty shillings or fourteen days to forty shillings or one month's imprisonment. Two of the women, Miss Woodlock and Mrs Chatterton, who had left Holloway only a week before, were, as 'old offenders,' given thirty days without the option of a fine. Another woman, Mary Leigh, was given thirty days because she offended the magistrate's dignity by hanging a 'Votes for Women' banner over the edge of the dock. Those of my readers who are unable to connect the word 'militancy' with anything milder than arson are invited to reflect that within the first two months of the year 1907 the English Government sent to prison one hundred and thirty women whose 'militancy' consisted merely of trying to carry a resolution from a hall to the Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

Our crime was called obstructing the police. It will be seen that it was the police who did the obstructing.

It may be asked why neither of these deputations was led by me personally. The reason was that I was needed in another capacity, that of leader and supervisor of the suffrage forces in the field to defeat Government candidates at by-elections. On the night of the second 'riot,' while our women were still struggling in the streets, I left London for Hexham in Northumberland, where by our work the majority of the Liberal candidate was reduced by a thousand votes. Seven more by-elections followed in rapid succession.

Our by-election work was such a new thing in English politics that we attracted an enormous amount of attention wherever we went. It was our custom to begin work the very hour we entered a town. If, on our way from the station to the hotel, we encountered a group of men, say, in the marketplace, we either stopped and held a meeting on the spot, or else we stayed long enough to tell them when and where our meetings were to be held, and to urge them to attend. The usual first step, after securing lodgings, was to hire a vacant shop, fill the windows with suffrage literature, and fling out our purple, green, and white flag. Meanwhile, some of us were busy hiring the best available hall. If we got possession of the battle-ground before the men, we sometimes 'cornered' all the good halls and left the candidate nothing but schoolhouses for his indoor meetings. Truth to tell, our meetings were so much more popular than theirs that we really needed the larger halls. Often, a candidate with the Suffragettes for rivals spoke to almost empty benches. The crowds were away listening to the women.

Naturally, this greatly displeased the politicians, and it

scandalised many of the old-fashioned Liberal partisans. In one place, I think it was Colne Valley in Yorkshire, an amusing instance of masculine hostility occurred. We had arrived on a day when both Conservative and Liberal committees were choosing their candidates, and we thought it a good opportunity to hold a series of outdoor meetings. We tried to get a lorry for a rostrum, but the only man in town who had these big vans to let disapproved of Suffragettes so violently that he wouldn't let us have one. So we borrowed a chair from a woman shopkeeper, and went at it. Soon we had a large crowd and an interested audience. We also got the attention of a number of small boys with peashooters, and had to make our speeches under a blistering fire of dried peas.

While I was speaking the fire ceased, to my relief—for dried peas sting. I continued my speech with renewed vigor, only to have one of my best points spoiled by roars of laughter from the crowd. I finished somehow, and sat down; and then it was explained to me that the pea-shooters had been financed by one of the prominent Liberals of the town, another man who disapproved of our policy of opposing the Government. As soon as the ammunition gave out this man furnished the boys with a choice supply of rotten oranges. These were not so easily handled, it appeared, for the very first one went wild, and struck the chivalrous gentleman violently in the neck. This it was that had caused the laughter, and stopped the attack on the women.

We met with some pretty rough horse-play, and even with some brutality, in several by-elections, but on the whole we found the men ready, and the women more than ready, to listen to us. We tamed and educated a public that had always been used to violence at elections. We even tamed

the boys, who came to the meetings on purpose to skylark. When we were in Rutlandshire that spring three schoolboys came to see me and told me, shyly, that they were interested in suffrage. They had had a debate on the subject at their school, and although the decision had been for the other side, all the boys wanted to know more about it. Wouldn't I please have a meeting especially for them? Of course I consented, and I found my boy audience quite delightful. Indeed, I hope they liked me half as well as I did them.

All through the spring our by-election work continued with amazing success, although our part in the Government losses was rarely admitted by the politicians. The voters knew, however. At an election in Suffolk, where we helped to double the Unionist vote, the successful candidate, speaking to the crowd from his hotel window, said, 'What has been the cause of the great and glorious victory?' Instantly the crowd roared, 'Votes for Women!'—'Three cheers for the Suffragettes!' This was not at all what the successful candidate had intended, but he waved his hand graciously and said, 'No doubt the ladies had something to do with it.'

The newspaper correspondents were not so reluctant to acknowledge our influence. Even when they condemned our policy, they were unsparing in their admiration for our energy, and the courage and ardour of our workers. Said the correspondent of the London *Tribune*, a Liberal paper hostile to our tactics: 'Their staying power, judging them by the standards of men, is extraordinary. By taking afternoon as well as evening meetings, they have worked twice as hard as the men. They are up earlier, they retire just as late. Women against men, they are better speakers, more logical, better informed, better phrased, with a surer insight for the telling argument.'

After a summer spent in strengthening our forces, organising new branches, holding meetings—something like three thousand of these between May and October—invading meetings of Cabinet Ministers—we managed to do that about once every day—electioneering, and getting up huge demonstrations in various cities, we arrived at the end of the year. In the last months of the year, I directed several hotly contested by-elections, at one of which I met with one of the most serious misadventures of my life.

This by-election was held in the division of Mid-Devon, a stronghold of Liberalism. In fact, since its creation in 1885, the seat has never been held by any except a Liberal member. The constituency is a large one, divided into eight districts. The population of the towns is a rough and boisterous one, and its devotion, blind and unreasoning, to the Liberal Party has always reflected the rude spirit of the voters. A Unionist woman told me, shortly after my arrival, that my life would be unsafe if I dared openly to oppose the Liberal candidate. She had never dared, she assured me, to wear her party colours in public. However, I did speak—in our headquarters at Newton Abbott, the principal town of the division, at Hull, and at Bovey Tracey. We held meetings twice a day, calling upon the voters to ‘beat the Government in Mid-Devon, as a message that women must have votes next year.’ Although some of the meetings were turbulent, we were treated with much more consideration than either of the candidates, who, not infrequently, were howled down and put to flight. Often the air of their meetings was thick with decayed vegetables and dirty snowballs. We had some rather lively sessions, too. Once, at an outdoor meeting, some young roughs dragged our lorry round and round until it seemed that we must be upset, and several times the

language hurled at us from the crowd was quite unfit for me to repeat. Still, we escaped actual violence until the day of the election, when it was announced that the Unionist candidate had won the seat by a majority of twelve hundred and eighty. We knew instantly that the deepest resentment of the Liberals would be aroused, but it did not occur to us that the resentment would be directed actively against us.

After the declaration at the polls, my companion, Mrs Martel, and I started to walk to our lodgings. Some of our friends stopped us, and drew our attention to the newly elected Unionist member of Parliament, who was being escorted from the polling place by a strong guard of police. We were warned that our safety demanded an immediate flight from the town. I laughingly assured our friends that I was never afraid to trust myself in a crowd, and we walked on. Suddenly we were confronted by a crowd of young men and boys, clay-cutters from the pits on the edge of town. These young men, who wore the red rosettes of the Liberal Party, had just heard of their candidate's defeat, and they were mad with rage and humiliation. One of them pointed to us, crying: 'They did it! Those women did it!' A yell went up from the crowd, and we were deluged with a shower of clay and rotten eggs. We were not especially frightened, but the eggs were unbearable, and to escape them we rushed into a little grocer's shop close at hand. The grocer's wife closed and bolted the door, but the poor grocer cried out that his place would be wrecked. I did not want that to happen, of course, so I asked them to let us out by the back door. They led us out the door, into a small back yard which led into a little lane, whence we expected to make our escape. But when we reached the yard we

found that the rowdies, anticipating our move, had surged round the corner, and were waiting for us.

They seized Mrs Martel first, and began beating her over the head with their fists, but the brave wife of the shopkeeper, hearing the shouts and the oaths of the men, flung open the door and rushed to our rescue. Between us we managed to tear Mrs Martel from her captors and get her into the house. I expected to get into the house, too, but as I reached the threshold a staggering blow fell on the back of my head, rough hands grasped the collar of my coat, and I was flung violently to the ground. Stunned, I must have lost consciousness for a moment, for my next sensation was of cold, wet mud seeping through my clothing. Sight returning to me, I perceived the men, silent now, but with a dreadful, lowering silence, closing in a ring around me. In the centre of the ring was an empty barrel, and the horrid thought occurred to me that they might intend putting me in it. A long time seemed to pass, while the ring of men slowly drew closer. I looked at them, in their drab clothes smeared with yellow pit-clay, and they appeared so underfed, so puny and sodden, that a poignant pity for them swept over me. 'Poor souls,' I thought, and then I said suddenly, 'Are none of you *men*?' Then one of the youths darted toward me, and I knew that whatever was going to happen to me was about to begin.

At that very moment came shouts, and a rush of police who had fought their way through hostile crowds to rescue us. Of course the mob turned tail and fled, and I was carried gently into the shop, which the police guarded for two hours, before it was deemed safe for us to leave in a closed motor-car. It was many months before either Mrs Martel or I recovered from our injuries.

The rowdies, foiled of their woman prey, went to the

Conservative Club, smashed all the windows in the house, and kept the members besieged there through the night. The next morning the body of a man, frightfully bruised about the head, was found in the mill-race. Throughout all this disorder and probable crime, not a man was arrested. Contrast this, if you like, with the treatment given our women in London.

The King opened Parliament in great state on January 29, 1908. Again his speech omitted all mention of woman suffrage, and again the W. S. P. U. issued a call for a Women's Parliament, for February 11th, 12th and 13th. Before it was convened we heard that an excellent place in the ballot had been won by a friend of the movement, Mr Stanger, who promised to introduce a suffrage bill. February 28th was the day fixed for the second reading, and we realised that strong pressure would have to be brought to bear to prevent the bill being wrecked, as the Dickinson bill had been the previous year. Therefore, on the first day of the Women's Parliament, almost every woman present volunteered for the deputation, which was to try to carry the resolution to the prime minister. Led by two well-known portrait painters, the deputation left Caxton Hall and proceeded in orderly ranks, four abreast, toward the House of Commons. The crowds in the streets were enormous, thousands of sympathisers coming out to help the women, thousands of police determined that the women should not be helped, and thousands of curious spectators. When the struggle was over, fifty women were locked up in police-court cells.

The next morning, when the cases were tried, Mr Muskett, who prosecuted for the Crown, and who was perhaps a little tired of telling the Suffragettes that these scenes in the streets must cease, and then seeing them go

on exactly as if he had not spoken, made a very severe and terrifying address. He told the women that this time they would be subject to the usual maximum of two months' imprisonment, with the option of a fine of five pounds, but that, in case they ever offended again, the law had worse terrors in store for them. It was proposed to revive, for the benefit of the Suffragettes, an Act passed in the reign of Charles II, which dealt with 'Tumultuous Petitions, either to the Crown or Parliament.' This Act provided that no person should dare to go to the King or to Parliament 'with any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration or other address' accompanied with a number of persons above twelve. A fine of one hundred pounds, or three months' imprisonment, might be imposed under this law. The magistrate then sentenced all but two of the women to be bound over for twelve months, or to serve six weeks in the second division. Two other women, 'old offenders,' were given one month in the third division, or lowest class. All the prisoners, except two who had very ill relatives at home, chose the prison sentence.

The next day's session of the Women's Parliament was one of intense excitement, as the women reviewed the events of the previous day, the trials, and especially the threat to revive the obsolete Act of Charles II, an act *which was passed to obstruct the progress of the Liberal Party, which came into existence under the Stuarts, and under the second Charles was fighting for its life*. It was an amazing thing that the political descendants of these men were proposing to revive the Act to obstruct the advance of the women's cause, fighting for its life under George V and his Liberal government. At least, it was evidence that the Government were baffled in their attempt to crush our movement. Christabel Pankhurst,

presiding over the second session of the Women's Parliament, said: 'At last it is realized that women are fighting for freedom, as their fathers fought. If they want twelve women, aye, and more than twelve, if a hundred women are wanted to be tried under that act and sent to prison for three months, they can be found.'

I was not present at this session, nor had I been present at the first one. I was working in a by-election at South Leeds, the last of several important by-elections in great industrial centres, where our success was unquestioned, except by the Liberal press. The elections had wound up with a great procession, and a meeting of 100,000 people on Hounslet Moor. The most wonderful enthusiasm marked that meeting. I shall never forget what splendid order the people kept, in spite of the fact that no police protection was given us; how the vast crowd parted to let our procession through; how the throngs of mill women kept up a chorus in broad Yorkshire: 'Shall us win? Shall us have the vote? We shall!' No wonder the old people shook their heads, and declared that 'there had never been owt like it.'

2

With those brave shouts in my ears, I hurried down to London for the concluding session of the parliament, for I had determined that I must be the first person to challenge the Government to carry out their threat to revive the old Act of Charles II. I made a long speech to the women that day, telling them something of my experiences of the past months, and how all that I had seen and heard throughout the country had only deepened my conviction of the necessity for women's votes. 'I feel,' I concluded, 'that the time has come when I must act, and I wish to be one of those to carry our resolution to Parliament this afternoon. My experience in the country, and especially in South Leeds, has taught me things that Cabinet Ministers, who have not had that experience, do not know, and has made me feel that I must make one final attempt to see them, and to urge them to reconsider their position before some terrible disaster has occurred.'

Amid a good deal of excitement and emotion, we chose the requisite thirteen women, who were prepared to be arrested and tried under the Charles II 'Tumultuous Petitions' Act. I had not entirely recovered from the attack made upon me at Mid-Devon, and my wrenched ankle was still too sensitive to make walking anything but a painful process.

Seeing me begin almost at once to limp badly, Mrs Drummond, with characteristic, blunt kindness, called to a man driving a dog-cart and asked him if he would drive me to the House of Commons. He readily agreed, and I mounted to the seat behind him, the other women forming in line behind the cart. We had not gone far when the police, who already surrounded us in great force, ordered me to dismount. Of course I obeyed and walked, or rather limped along with my companions. They would have supported me, but the police insisted that we should walk single-file. Presently I grew so faint from the pain of the ankle that I called to two of the women, who took hold of my arms and helped me on my way. This was our one act of disobedience to police orders. We moved with difficulty, for the crowd was of incredible size. All around, as far as eye could see, was the great moving, swaying, excited multitude, and surrounding us on all sides were regiments of uniformed police, foot and mounted. You might have supposed that instead of thirteen women, one of them lame, walking quietly along, the town was in the hands of an armed mob.

We had progressed as far as the entrance to Parliament Square, when two stalwart policemen suddenly grasped my arms on either side and told me that I was under arrest. My two companions, because they refused to leave me, were also arrested, and a few minutes later Annie Kenney and five other women suffered arrest. That night we were released on bail, and the next morning we were arraigned in Westminster police court for trial under the Charles II Act. But, as it turned out, the authorities, embarrassed by our readiness to test the act, announced that they had changed their minds, and would continue, for the present, to treat us as common street brawlers.

This was my first trial, and I listened, with a suspicion that my ears were playing tricks with my reason, to the most astonishing perjuries put forth by the prosecution. I heard that we had set forth from Caxton Hall with noisy shouts and songs, that we had resorted to the most riotous and vulgar behaviour, knocking off policemen's helmets, assaulting the officers right and left as we marched. Our testimony, and that of our witnesses, was ignored. When I tried to speak in my own defence, I was cut short rudely, and was told briefly that I and the others must choose between being bound over or going to prison, in the second division, for six weeks.

I remember only vaguely the long, jolting ride across London to Holloway Prison. We stopped at Pentonville, the men's prison, to discharge several men prisoners, and I remember shuddering at the thought of our women, many of them little past girlhood, being haled to prison in the same van with criminal men. Arriving at the prison, we groped our way through dim corridors into the reception-ward, where we were lined up against the wall for a superficial medical examination. After that we were locked up in separate cells, unfurnished, except for low, wooden stools.

It seemed an endless time before my cell door was opened by a wardress, who ordered me to follow her. I entered a room where another wardress sat at a table, ready to take an inventory of my effects. Obeying an order to undress, I took off my gown, then paused. 'Take off everything,' was the next order. 'Everything?' I faltered. It seemed impossible that they expected me to strip. In fact, they did allow me to take off my last garments in the shelter of a bath-room. I shivered myself into some frightful underclothing, old and patched and stained, some coarse, brown woollen stockings

with red stripes, and the hideous prison dress stamped all over with the broad arrow of disgrace. I fished a pair of shoes out of a big basket of shoes, old and mostly mismates. A pair of coarse but clean sheets, a towel, a mug of cold cocoa, and a thick slice of brown bread were given me, and I was conducted to my cell.

My first sensations when the door was locked upon me were not altogether disagreeable. I was desperately weary, for I had been working hard, perhaps a little too hard, for several strenuous months. The excitement and fatigue of the previous day, and the indignation I had suffered throughout the trial, had combined to bring me to the point of exhaustion, and I was glad to throw myself on my hard prison bed and close my eyes. But soon the relief of being alone, and with nothing to do, passed from me. Holloway Prison is a very old place, and it has the disadvantages of old places which have never known enough air and sunshine. It reeks with the odours of generations of bad ventilation, and it contrives to be at once the stuffiest and the draughtiest building I have ever been in. Soon I found myself sickening for fresh air. My head began to ache. Sleep fled. I lay all night suffering with cold, gasping for air, aching with fatigue, and painfully wide awake.

The next day I was fairly ill, but I said nothing about it. One does not expect to be comfortable in prison. As a matter of fact, one's mental suffering is so much greater than any common physical distress that the latter is almost forgotten. The English prison system is altogether mediaeval and outworn. In some of its details the system has improved since they began to send the Suffragettes to Holloway. I may say that we, by our public denunciation of the system, have forced these slight improvements. In 1907 the rules

were excessively cruel. The poor prisoner, when she entered Holloway, dropped, as it were, into a tomb. No letters and no visitors were allowed for the first month of the sentence. Think of it—a whole month, more than four weeks, without sending or receiving a single word. One's nearest and dearest may have gone through dreadful suffering, may have been ill, may have died, meantime. One was given plenty of time to imagine all these things, for the prisoner was kept in solitary confinement in a narrow, dimly-lit cell, twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four. Solitary confinement is too terrible a punishment to inflict on any human being, no matter what his crime. Hardened criminals in the men's prisons, it is said, often beg for the lash instead. Picture what it must be to a woman who has committed some small offence, for most of the women who go to Holloway are small offenders, sitting alone, day after day, in the heavy silence of a cell—thinking of her children at home—thinking, thinking. Some women go mad. Many suffer from shattered nerves for a long period after release. It is impossible to believe that any woman ever emerged from such a horror less criminal than when she entered it.

Two days of solitary confinement, broken each day by an hour of silent exercise in a bitterly cold courtyard, and I was ordered to the hospital. There I thought I should be a little more comfortable. The bed was better, the food a little better, and small comforts, such as warm water for washing, were allowed. I slept a little the first night. About midnight I awoke, and sat up in bed, listening. A woman in the cell next mine was moaning in long, sobbing breaths of mortal pain. She ceased for a few minutes, then moaned again, horribly. The truth flashed over me, turning me sick, as I realised that a life was coming into being, there in that

frightful prison. A woman, imprisoned by men's laws, was giving a child to the world. A child born in a cell! I shall never forget that night, nor what I suffered with the birth-pangs of that woman, who, I found later, was simply waiting trial on a charge which was found to be baseless.

The days passed very slowly, the nights more slowly still. Being in hospital, I was deprived of chapel, and also of work. Desperate, at last I begged the wardress for some sewing, and she kindly gave me a skirt of her own to hem, and later some coarse knitting to do. Prisoners were allowed a few books, mostly of the 'Sunday-school' kind. One day I asked the chaplain if there were not some French or German books in the library, and he brought me a treasure, '*Autour de mon Jardin*,' by Jules Janin. For a few days I was quite happy, reading my book and translating it on the absurd little slate they gave us in lieu of paper and pencil. That slate was, after all, a great comfort. I did all kinds of things with it. I kept a calendar, I wrote all the French poetry I could remember on it, I even recorded old school chorals and old English exercises. It helped wonderfully to pass the endless hours until my release. I even forgot the cold, which was the harder to bear because of the fur coat, which I knew was put away, ticketed with my name. I begged them for the coat, but they wouldn't let me have it.

At last the time came when they gave me back all my things, and let me go free. At the door the Governor spoke to me, and asked me if I had any complaints to make. 'Not of you,' I replied, 'nor of any of the wardresses. Only of this prison, and all of men's prisons. We shall raze them to the ground.'

Back in my comfortable home, surrounded by loving friends, I would have rested quietly for a few days, but there

was a great meeting that night at Albert Hall, to mark the close of a week of self-denial to raise money for the year's campaign. Women had sold papers, flowers, toys, swept crossings, and sung in the streets for the cause. Many women, well known in the world of art and letters, did these things. I felt that I should be doing little if I merely attended the meeting. So I went. My release was not expected until the following morning, and no one thought of my appearing at the meeting. My chairman's seat was decorated with a large placard with the inscription, 'Mrs Pankhurst's Chair.' After all the others were seated, the speakers, and hundreds of ex-prisoners, I walked quietly onto the stage, took the placard out of the chair and sat down. A great cry went up from the women as they sprang from their seats and stretched their hands toward me. It was some time before I could see them for my tears, or speak to them for the emotion that shook me like a storm.

The next morning I, with the other released prisoners, drove off to Peckham, a constituency of London, where the W. S. P. U. members were fighting a vigorous by-election. In open brakes we paraded the streets, dressed in our prison clothes, or exact reproductions of them. Naturally, we attracted a great deal of attention and sympathy, and our daily meetings on Peckham Rye, as their common is known, drew enormous crowds. When polling day came our members were stationed at every polling booth, and many men as they came to the booths told us that they were, for the first time, voting 'for the women,' by which they meant against the Government. That night, amid great excitement, it was made known that the Liberal majority of 2,339 at the last general election had been turned into a Conservative majority of 2,494. Letters poured into the newspapers,

declaring that the loss of this important Liberal seat was due almost entirely to the work of the Suffragettes, and many prominent Liberals called upon party leaders to start doing something for women before the next general election. The Liberal leaders, with the usual perspicacity of politicians, responded not at all. Instead they beheld with approval the rise to highest power the arch-enemy of the suffragists, Mr Asquith.

Mr Asquith became prime minister about Easter time, 1908, on the resignation, on account of ill health, of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Mr Asquith was chosen, not because of any remarkable record of statesmanship, nor yet because of great personal popularity—for he possessed neither—but simply because no better man seemed available just then. He was known as a clever, astute, and somewhat unscrupulous politician. He had filled several high offices to the satisfaction of his party, and under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, a post which is generally regarded as a stepping-stone to the Premiership. The best thing the Liberal press found to say of the new Premier was that he was a ‘strong’ man. Generally in politics this term is used to describe an obstinate man, and this we already knew Mr Asquith to be. He was a bluntly outspoken opponent of woman suffrage, and it was sufficiently plain to us that no methods of education or persuasion would ever prove successful where he was concerned. Therefore the necessity of action on our part was greater than ever.

Such an opportunity presented itself at once through changes that took place in the new Cabinet. According to English law, all new comers into the Cabinet are obliged to resign their seats in Parliament and offer themselves to

their constituencies for re-election. Besides these vacancies there were several others, on account of death or elevations to the peerage. This made necessary a number of by-elections, and the Women's Social and Political Union once more went into the field against the Liberal candidates. I shall deal no further with these by-elections than is necessary to show the effect of our work on the Government, and its subsequent effect on our movement—which was to force us into more and more militancy. I shall leave it to the honest judgment of my readers to place where it ought rightly to be placed the responsibility for those first broken windows.

We selected as our first candidate for defeat Mr Winston Churchill, who was about to appeal to his constituency of North West Manchester to sanction his appointment as president of the Board of Trade. My daughter Christabel took charge of this election, and the work of herself and her forces was so successful that Mr Churchill lost his seat by 420 votes. All the newspapers acknowledged that it was the Suffragettes who had defeated Mr Churchill, and one Liberal newspaper, the London *Daily News*, called upon the party to put a stop to an intolerable state of affairs by granting the women's demand for votes.

Another seat was immediately secured for Mr Churchill, that of Dundee, then strongly—in the merely party sense—Liberal, and therefore safe. Nevertheless, we determined to fight Mr Churchill there, to defeat him if possible, and to bring down the Liberal majority in any case. I took personal charge of the campaign, holding a very large meeting in Kinnaird Hall on the evening before Mr Churchill's arrival. Although he felt absolutely sure of election in this Scottish constituency, Mr Churchill dreaded the effect of our presence

on the Liberal women. The second meeting he addressed in Dundee was held for women only, and instead of asking for support of the various measures actually on the government's programme, the politician's usual method, he talked about the certainty of securing, within a short time, the Parliamentary franchise for women. 'No one,' he declared, 'can be blind to the fact that at the next general election woman suffrage will be a real, practical issue; and the next Parliament, I think, ought to see the gratification of the women's claims. I do not exclude the possibility of the suffrage being dealt with in this Parliament.' Mr Churchill earnestly reiterated his claim to be considered a true friend of the women's cause; but when pressed for a pledge that his Government would take action, he urged his inability to speak for his colleagues.

This specious promise, or rather, prophecy of woman suffrage at some indefinite time, won over a great many of the Liberal women, who forthwith went staunchly to work for Mr Churchill's election. Dundee has a large population of extremely poor people, workers in the jute mills and the marmalade factories. Some concessions in the matter of the sugar tax, timely made, and the announcement that the new Government meant to establish old age pensions, created an immense wave of Liberal enthusiasm that swept Mr Churchill into office in spite of our work, which was untiring. We held something like two hundred meetings, and on election eve, five huge demonstrations—four of them in the open air and one which filled a large drill hall. Polling day, May 9th, was very exciting. For every Suffragette at the polling-booths there were half a dozen Liberal men and women, handing out bills with such legends as 'Vote for Churchill, and never mind the women,' and 'Put

Churchill in and keep the women out.' Yet for all their efforts, Mr Churchill polled 2200 votes less than his Liberal predecessor had polled at the general election.

In the first seven by-elections following Mr Asquith's elevation to the premiership, we succeeded in pulling down the Liberal vote by 6663. Then something happened to check our progress. Mr Asquith received a deputation of Liberal members of Parliament, who urged him to allow the Stanger suffrage bill, which had passed its second reading by a large majority, to be carried into law. Mr Asquith replied that he himself did not wish to see women enfranchised, and that it would not be possible for the Government to give the required facilities to Mr Stanger's bill. He added that he was fully alive to the many defects of the electoral system, and that the Government intended, 'barring accidents,' to bring in a reform bill before the close of that Parliament. Woman suffrage would have no place in it, but it would be so worded that a woman-suffrage amendment might be added if any member chose to move one. In that case, said Mr Asquith, he should not consider it the duty of the Government to oppose the amendment if it were approved by a majority of the House of Commons—*provided* that the amendment was on democratic lines, and that it had back of it the support, the strong and undoubted support, of the women of the country as well as the present electorate.

One would not suppose that such an evasive utterance as this would be regarded in any quarter as a promise that woman suffrage would be given any real chances of success under the Asquith Government. That it was, by many, taken quite seriously is but another proof of the gullibility of the party-blinded public. The Liberal press lauded Mr Asquith's 'promise,' and called for a truce of militancy in order that

the Government might have every opportunity to act. Said the *Star*, in a leader typical of many others: 'The meaning of Mr Asquith's pledge is plain. Woman's suffrage will be passed through the House of Commons before the present Government goes to the country.'

As for the women's Liberal Associations, they were quite delirious with joy. In a conference called for the purpose of passing resolutions of gratitude, Lady Carlisle said: 'This is a glorious day of rejoicing. Our great Prime Minister, all honour to him, has opened a way to us by which we can enter into that inheritance from which we have been too long debarred.'

At the two following by-elections, the last of the series, enormous posters were exhibited, 'Premier's Great Reform Bill: Votes for Women.' We tried to tell the electors that the pledge was false on the face of it; that the specious proviso that the amendment be 'democratic' left no doubt that the Government would cause the rejection of any practical amendment that might be moved. Our words fell on deaf ears, and the Liberal majorities soared.

Just a week later Mr Asquith was questioned in the House of Commons by a slightly alarmed anti-suffragist member. The member asked Mr Asquith whether he considered himself pledged to introduce the reform bill during that Parliament, whether he meant to allow such a bill to carry a woman-suffrage amendment, if such were moved, and whether, in that case, the suffrage amendment would become part of the Government policy. Evasive as ever, the Prime Minister, after some sparring, replied, 'My honourable friend has asked me a question with regard to a remote and speculative future.' Thus was our interpretation of Mr Asquith's 'promise' justified from his own lips. Yet the Liberal

women still clung to the hope of Government action, and the Liberal press pretended to cling to it. As for the Women's Social and Political Union, we prepared for more work. We had to strike out along a new line, since it was evident that the Government could, for a time at least, neutralise our by-election work by more false promises. Consistent with our policy, of never going further than the Government compelled us to go, we made our first action a perfectly peaceable one.

On the day when the Stanger bill had reached its second reading in the House, and several days after I had gone to Holloway for the first time, Mr Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary, made a speech which greatly interested the Suffragettes. He professed himself a suffragist, and declared that he intended to vote for the bill. Nevertheless, he was confident that it could not pass, because of the division in the Cabinet, and because it had no political party united either for or against it. Woman suffrage, said Mr Gladstone, must advance to victory through all the stages that are required for great reforms to mature. First academic discussion, then effective action, was the history of men's suffrage; it must be the same with women's suffrage. 'Men,' declared Mr Gladstone, '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 work. 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 the people did not go about in small crowds, nor were they content with enthusiastic meetings in large halls; they assembled in their tens of thousands all over the country.

‘Of course,’ added Mr Gladstone, ‘it is not to be expected that women can assemble in such masses, but power belongs to masses, and through this power a Government can be influenced into more effective action than a Government will be likely to take under present conditions.’

The Women’s Social and Political Union determined to answer this challenge. If assembling in great masses was all that was necessary to convince the Government that woman suffrage had passed the academic stage and now demanded political action, we thought we could undertake to satisfy the most skeptical member of the Cabinet. We knew that we could organise a demonstration that would out-rival any of the great franchise demonstrations held by men in the thirties, sixties, and eighties. The largest number of people ever gathered in Hyde Park was said to have approximated 72,000. We determined to organise a Hyde Park demonstration of at least 250,000 people. Sunday, June 21, 1908, was fixed for the date of this demonstration, and for many months we worked to make it a day notable in the history of the movement. Our example was emulated by the non-militant suffragists, who organised a fine procession of their own, about a week before our demonstration. Thirteen thousand women, it was said, marched in that procession.

On our demonstration we spent, for advertising alone, over a thousand pounds, or five thousand dollars. We covered the hoardings of London and of all the principal provincial cities with great posters bearing portraits of the women who were to preside at the twenty platforms from which speeches were to be made; a map of London, showing the routes by which the seven processions were to advance, and a plan of the Hyde Park meeting-place were also shown. London, of course, was thoroughly organised. For weeks a

small army of women was busy chalking announcements on sidewalks, distributing handbills, canvassing from house to house, advertising the demonstration by posters and sandwich boards carried through the streets. We invited everybody to be present, including both Houses of Parliament. A few days before the demonstration Mrs Drummond and a number of other women hired and decorated a launch and sailed up the Thames to the Houses of Parliament, arriving at the hour when members entertain their women friends at tea on the terrace. Everyone left the tables and crowded to the water's edge as the boat stopped, and Mrs Drummond's strong, clear voice pealed out her invitation to the Cabinet and the members of Parliament to join the women's demonstration in Hyde Park. 'Come to the park on Sunday,' she cried. 'You shall have police protection, and there will be no arrests, we promise you.' An alarmed someone telephoned for the police boats, but as they appeared, the women's boat steamed away.

What a day was Sunday, June 21st—clear, radiant, filled with golden sunshine! As I advanced, leading, with the venerable Mrs Wolstenholm-Elmy, the first of the seven processions, it seemed to me that all London had turned out to witness our demonstration. And a goodly part of London followed the processions. When I mounted my platform in Hyde Park, and surveyed the mighty throngs that waited there and the endless crowds that were still pouring into the park from all directions, I was filled with amazement not unmixed with awe. Never had I imagined that so many people could be gathered together to share in a political demonstration. It was a gay and beautiful as well as an awe-inspiring spectacle, for the white gowns and flower-trimmed hats of the women, against the background

of ancient trees, gave the park the appearance of a vast garden in full bloom.

The bugles sounded, and the speakers at each of the twenty platforms began their addresses, which could not have been heard by more than half or a third of the vast audience. Notwithstanding this, they remained to the end. At five o'clock the bugles sounded again, the speaking ceased, and the resolution calling upon the Government to bring in an official woman-suffrage bill without delay was carried at every platform, often without a dissenting vote. Then, with a three-times-repeated cry of 'Votes for Women!' from the assembled multitude, the great meeting dispersed.

The London *Times* said next day: 'Its organisers had counted on an audience of 250,000. That expectation was certainly fulfilled, and probably it was doubled, and it would be difficult to contradict any one who asserted that it was trebled. Like the distances and the number of the stars, the facts were beyond the threshold of perception.'

The *Daily Express* said: 'It is probable that so many people never before stood in one square mass anywhere in England. Men who saw the great Gladstone meeting years ago said that compared with yesterday's multitude it was as nothing.'

We felt that we had answered the challenge in Mr Gladstone's declaration that 'power belongs to the masses,' and that through this power the Government could be influenced; so it was with real hope that we despatched a copy of the resolution to the Prime Minister, asking him what answer the Government would make to that unparalleled gathering of men and women. Mr Asquith replied formally that he had nothing to add to his previous statement—that the Government intended, at some indefinite time, to bring

in a general reform bill which *might* be amended to include woman suffrage. Our wonderful demonstration, it appeared, had made no impression whatever upon him.

3

Now we had reached a point where we had to choose between two alternatives. We had exhausted argument. Therefore either we had to give up our agitation altogether, as the suffragists of the eighties virtually had done, or else we must act, and go on acting, until the selfishness and the obstinacy of the Government was broken down, or the Government themselves destroyed. Until forced to do so, the Government, we perceived, would never give women the vote.

We realised the truth of John Bright's words, spoken while the reform bill of 1867 was being agitated. Parliament, John Bright then declared, had never been hearty for any reform. The Reform Act of 1832 had been wrested by force from the Government of that day, and now before another, he said, could be carried, the agitators would have to fill the streets with people from Charing Cross to Westminster Abbey. Acting on John Bright's advice, we issued a call to the public to join us in holding a huge demonstration, on June 30th outside the House of Commons. We wanted to be sure that the Government saw as well as read of our immense following. A public proclamation from the Commissioner of Police, warning the public not to assemble in Parliament Square and declaring that the approaches to

the Houses of Parliament must be kept open, was at once issued.

We persisted in announcing that the demonstration would take place, and I wrote a letter to Mr Asquith telling him that a deputation would wait upon him at half-past four on the afternoon of June 30th. We held the usual Women's Parliament in Caxton Hall, after which Mrs Pethick Lawrence, eleven other women, and myself, set forth. We met with no opposition from the police, but marched through cheering crowds of spectators to the Strangers' Entrance to the House of Commons. Here we were met by a large group of uniformed men commanded by Inspector Scantlebury, of the police. The inspector, whom I knew personally, stepped forward and demanded officially, 'Are you Mrs Pankhurst, and is this your deputation?'

'Yes,' I replied.

'My orders are to exclude you from the House of Commons.'

'Has Mr Asquith received my letter?' I asked.

For answer the inspector drew my letter from his pocket and handed it to me.

'Did Mr Asquith return no message, no kind of reply?' I inquired.

'No,' replied the inspector.

We turned and walked back to Caxton Hall, to tell the waiting audience what had occurred. We resolved that there was nothing to do but wait patiently until evening, and see how well the public would respond to our call to meet in Parliament Square. Already we knew that the streets were filled with people, and early as it was the crowds were increasing rapidly. At eight we went out in groups from Caxton Hall, to find Parliament Square packed with a throng,

estimated next day at least 100,000. From the steps of public buildings, from stone copings, from the iron railings of the Palace Yard, to which they clung precariously, our women made speeches until the police pulled them down and flung them into the moving, swaying, excited crowds. Some of the women were arrested, others were merely ordered to move on. Mingled cheers and jeers rose from the spectators. Some of the men were roughs who had come out to amuse themselves. Others were genuinely sympathetic, and tried valiantly to help us to reach the House of Commons. Again and again the police lines were broken, and it was only as the result of repeated charges by mounted police that the people's attacks were repelled. Many members of Parliament, including Mr Lloyd-George, Mr Winston Churchill, and Mr Herbert Gladstone, came out to witness the struggle, which lasted until midnight and resulted in the arrest of twenty-nine women. Two of these women were arrested after they had each thrown a stone through a window of Mr Asquith's official residence in Downing Street, the value of the windows being about \$2.40.

This was the first window-breaking in our history. Mrs Mary Leigh and Miss Edith New, who had thrown the stones, sent word to me from the police court that, having acted without orders, they would not resent repudiation from headquarters. Far from repudiating them, I went at once to see them in their cells, and assured them of my approval of their act. The smashing of windows is a time-honoured method of showing displeasure in a political situation. As one of the newspapers, commenting on the affair, truly said, 'When the King and Queen dine at Apsley on the 13th inst. they will be entertained in rooms the windows of which the Duke of Wellington was obliged to

protect with iron shutters from the fury of his political opponents.’

In Winchester a few years ago, to give but one instance, a great riot took place as a protest against the removal of a historic gun from one part of the town to another. In the course of this riot windows were broken and other property of various kinds was destroyed, very serious damage being done. No punishment was administered in respect of this riot and the authorities, bowing to public opinion thus riotously expressed, restored the gun to its original situation.

Window-breaking, when Englishmen do it, is regarded as honest expression of political opinion. Window-breaking, when Englishwomen do it, is treated as a crime. In sentencing Mrs Leigh and Miss New to two months in the first division, the magistrate used very severe language, and declared that such a thing must never happen again. Of course the women assured him that it would happen again. Said Mrs Leigh: ‘We have no other course but to rebel against oppression, and if necessary to resort to stronger measures. This fight is going on.’

The summer of 1908 is remembered as one of the most oppressively hot seasons the country had known for years. Our prisoners in Holloway suffered intensely, some being made desperately ill from the heat, the bad air, and the miserable food. We who spent the summer campaigning suffered also, but in less degree. It was a tremendous relief when the cool days of autumn set in, and it was with renewed vigour that we prepared for the opening day of Parliament, which was October 12th. Again we resolved to send a deputation to the Prime Minister, and again we invited the general public to take part in the demonstration.

We had printed thousands of little handbills bearing this inscription: 'Men and Women, Help the Suffragettes to Rush the House of Commons, on Tuesday Evening, October 13th, at 7:30.'

On Sunday, October 11th, we held a large meeting in Trafalgar Square, my daughter Christabel, Mrs Drummond and I speaking from the plinth of the Nelson monument. Mr Lloyd-George, as we afterward learned, was a member of the audience. The police were there, taking ample notes of our speeches. We had not failed to notice that they were watching us daily, dogging our footsteps, and showing in numerous ways that they were under orders to keep track of all our movements. The climax came at noon on October 12th, when Christabel, Mrs Drummond and I were each served with an imposing legal document which read, 'Information has been laid this day by the Commissioner of Police that you, in the month of October, in the year 1908, were guilty of conduct likely to provoke a breach of the peace by initiating and causing to be initiated, by publishing and causing to be published, a certain handbill, calling upon and inciting the public to do a certain wrongful and illegal act, viz., to rush the House of Commons at 7:30 P.M. on October 13th inst.'

The last paragraph was a summons to appear at Bow Street police station that same afternoon at three o'clock. We did not go to Bow Street police station. We went instead to a crowded 'At Home' at Queen's Hall, where it can be imagined that our news created great excitement. The place was surrounded by constables, and the police reporters were on hand to take stenographic reports of everything that was said from the platform. Once an excited cry was raised that a police inspector was coming in to arrest us. But the officer

merely brought a message that the summons had been adjourned until the following morning.

It did not suit our convenience to obey the adjourned summons quite so early, so I wrote a polite note to the police, saying that we would be in our headquarters, No. 4 Clement's Inn, the next evening at six o'clock, and would then be at his disposal. Warrants for our arrests were quickly issued, and Inspector Jarvis was instructed to execute them at once. This he found impossible to do, for Mrs Drummond was spending her last day of liberty on private business, while my daughter and I had retreated to another part of Clement's Inn, which is a big, rambling building. There, in the roof-garden of the Pethick Lawrence's private flat, we remained all day, busy, under the soft blue of the autumn sky, with our work and our preparations for a long absence. At six we walked downstairs, dressed for the street. Mrs Drummond arrived promptly, the waiting officers read the warrants, and we all proceeded to Bow Street in cabs. It was too late for the trial to be held. We asked for bail, but the authorities had no mind to allow us to take part in the 'rush' which we had incited, so we were obliged to spend the night in the police station. All night I lay awake, thinking of the scenes which were going on in the streets.

The next morning, in a courtroom crowded to its utmost capacity, my daughter rose to conduct her first case at law. She had earned the right to an LL.B. after her name, but as women are not permitted to practise law in England, she had never appeared at the bar in any capacity except that of defendant. Now she proposed to combine the two rôles of defendant and lawyer, and conduct the case for the three of us. She began by asking the magistrate not to try the case in that court, but to send it for trial before a judge

and jury. We had long desired to take the Suffragettes' cases before bodies of private citizens, because we had every reason to suspect that the police-court officials acted under the direct commands of the very persons against whom our agitation was directed. Jury trial was denied us; but after the preliminary examination was over the magistrate, Mr Curtis Bennett, allowed a week's adjournment for preparation of the case.

On October 21st the trial was resumed, with the courtroom as full as before and the press table even more crowded, for it had been widely published that we had actually subpoenaed two members of the Government, who had witnessed the scenes on the night of October 13th. The first witness to enter the box was Mr Lloyd-George. Christabel examined him at some length as to the meaning and merits of the word *rush*, and succeeded in making him very uncomfortable—and the charge against ourselves look very flimsy. She then questioned him about the speeches he had heard at Trafalgar Square, and as to whether there had been any suggestion that property be destroyed or personal violence used. He admitted that the speeches were temperate and the crowds orderly. Then Christabel suddenly asked, 'There were no words used so likely to incite to violence as the advice you gave at Swansea, that the women should be ruthlessly flung out of your meeting?' Mr Lloyd-George looked black, and answered nothing. The magistrate hastened to the protection of Mr Lloyd-George. 'This is quite irrelevant,' he said. 'That was a private meeting.' It was a public meeting, and Christabel said so. 'It was a private meeting *in a sense*,' insisted the magistrate.

Mr Lloyd-George assumed an air of pompous indignation when Christabel asked him, 'Have we not received

encouragement from you, and if not from you from your colleagues, to take action of this kind?' Mr Lloyd-George rolled his eyes upward as he replied, 'I should be very much surprised to hear that, Miss Pankhurst.'

'Is it not a fact,' asked Christabel, 'that you yourself have set us an example of revolt?' 'I never incited a crowd to violence,' exclaimed the witness. 'Not in the Welsh graveyard case?' she asked. 'No!' he cried angrily. 'You did not tell them to break down a wall and disinter a body?' pursued Christabel. He could not deny this but, 'I gave advice which was found by the Court of Appeal to be sound legal advice,' he snapped, and turned his back as far as he could in the narrow witness-box.

Mr Herbert Gladstone had asked to be allowed to testify early, as he was being detained from important public duties. Christabel asked to question one witness before Mr Gladstone entered the box. The witness was Miss Georgiana Brackenbury, who had recently suffered six weeks' imprisonment for the cause, and had since met and had a talk with Mr Horace Smith, the magistrate, who had made to her a most important and damaging admission of the government's interference in suffragists' trials. Christabel asked her one question. 'Did Mr Horace Smith tell you in sentencing you that he was doing what he had been told to do?' 'You must not put that question!' exclaimed the magistrate. But the witness had already answered 'Yes.' There was an excited stir in the courtroom. It had been recorded under oath that a magistrate had admitted that Suffragettes were being sentenced not by himself, according to the evidence and according to law, but by the Government, for no one could possibly doubt where Mr Horace Smith's orders came from.

Mr Gladstone, plump, bald, and ruddy, in no way resembles his illustrious father. He entered the witness-box smiling and confident, but his complacency vanished when Christabel asked him outright if the Government had not ordered the Commissioner of Police to take this action against us. Of course the magistrate intervened, and Mr Gladstone did not answer the question. Christabel tried again. 'Did you instruct Mr Horace Smith to decide against Miss Brackenbury, and to send her to prison for six weeks?' That too was objected to, as were all questions on the subject.

All through the examination the magistrate constantly intervened to save the Cabinet Minister from embarrassment, but Christabel finally succeeded in making Mr Gladstone admit, point by point, that he had said that women could never get the vote because they could not fight for it as men had fought.

A large number of witnesses testified to the orderly nature of the demonstration on the 13th, and then Christabel rose to plead. She began by declaring that these proceedings had been taken, as the legal saying is, 'in malice and vexation,' in order to lame a political enemy. She declared that, under the law, the charge which might properly be brought against us was that of illegal assembly, but the Government had not charged us with this offence, because the Government desired to keep the case in a police court.

'The authorities dare not see this case come before a jury,' she declared, 'because they know perfectly well that if it were heard before a jury of our countrymen we should be acquitted, just as John Burns was acquitted years ago for taking action far more dangerous to the public peace than we have taken. We are deprived of trial by jury. We are also deprived of the right to appeal against the magistrate's

decision. Very carefully has this procedure been thought out.'

Of the handbill she said: 'We do not deny that we issued this bill; none of us three has wished to deny responsibility. We did issue the bill; we did cause it to be circulated; we did put upon it the words "Come and help the Suffragettes rush the House of Commons." For these words we do not apologise. It is very well known that we took this action in order to press forward a claim, which, according to the British constitution, we are well entitled to make.'

In all that the Suffragettes had done, in all that they might ever do, declared my daughter, they would only be following in the footsteps of men now in Parliament. 'Mr Herbert Gladstone has told us in the speech I read to him that the victory of argument alone is not enough. As we cannot hope to win by force of argument alone, it is necessary to overcome by other means the savage resistance of the Government to our claim for citizenship. He says, "Go on, fight as the men did." And then, when we show our power and get the people to help us, he takes proceedings against us in a manner that would have been disgraceful even in the old days of coercion. Then there is Mr Lloyd-George, who, if any man has done so, has set us an example. His whole career has been a series of revolts. He has said that if we do not get the vote—mark these words—we should be justified in adopting the methods the men had to adopt, namely, pulling down the Hyde Park railings.' She quoted Lord Morley as saying of the Indian unrest: "'We are in India in the presence of a living movement, and a movement for what? For objects which we ourselves have taught them to think are desirable objects; and unless we can somehow reconcile order with satisfaction of those ideals and aspirations, the fault will not be theirs, it will be ours—it

will mark the breakdown of British statesmanship.”—Apply those words to our case,’ she continued.

‘Remember that we are demanding of Liberal statesmen that which is for us the greatest boon and the most essential right—and if the present Government cannot reconcile order with our demand for the vote without delay, it will mark the breakdown of their statesmanship. Yes, their statesmanship has broken down already. They are disgraced. It is only in this court that they have the smallest hope of being supported.’

My daughter had spoken with passion and fervour, and her righteous indignation had moved her to words that caused the magistrate’s face to turn an angry crimson. When I rose to address the Court I began by assuming an appearance of calmness which I did not altogether feel. I endorsed all that Christabel had said of the unfairness of our trial and the malice of the Government; I protested against the trial of political offenders in a common police court, and I said that we were not women who would come into the court as ordinary law-breakers. I described Mrs Drummond’s worthy career as a wife, a mother, and a self-sustaining business woman. I said, ‘Before you decide what is to be done with us, I should like you to hear from me a statement of what has brought me into the dock this morning.’ And then I told of my life and experiences, many of which I have related in these pages of what I had seen and known as a Poor Law Guardian and a registrar of births and deaths; of how I had learned the burning necessity of changing the status of women, of altering the laws under which they and their children live, and of the essential justice of making women self-governing citizens.

‘I have seen,’ I said, ‘that men are encouraged by law to

take advantage of the helplessness of women. Many women have thought as I have, and for many, many years have tried, by that influence of which we have been so often reminded, to alter these laws, but we find that influence counts for nothing. When we went to the House of Commons we used to be told, when we were persistent, that members of Parliament were not responsible to women, they were responsible only to voters, and that their time was too fully occupied to reform those laws, although they agreed that they needed reforming.

‘We women have presented larger petitions in support of our enfranchisement than were ever presented for any other reform; we have succeeded in holding greater public meetings than men have ever held for any reform, in spite of the difficulty which women have in throwing off their natural diffidence, that desire to escape publicity which we have inherited from generations of our foremothers. We have broken through that. We have faced hostile mobs at street corners, because we were told that we could not have that representation for our taxes that men have won unless we converted the whole of the country to our side. Because we have done this, we have been misrepresented, we have been ridiculed, we have had contempt poured upon us, and the ignorant mob have been incited to offer us violence, which we have faced unarmed and unprotected by the safeguards which Cabinet Ministers enjoy. We have been driven to do this; we are determined to go on with this agitation because we feel in honour bound. Just as it was the duty of your forefathers, it is our duty to make the world a better place for women than it is today.

‘Lastly, I want to call attention to the self-restraint which was shown by our followers on the night of the 13th, after

we had been arrested. Our rule has always been to be patient, exercise self-restraint, show our so-called superiors that we are not hysterical; to use no violence, but rather to offer ourselves to the violence of others.

‘That is all I have to say to you, sir. We are here, not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to become law-makers.’

The burly policemen, the reporters, and most of the spectators were in tears as I finished. But the magistrate, who had listened part of the time with his hand concealing his face, still held that we were properly charged in a common police court as inciters to riot. Since we refused to be bound over to keep the peace, he sentenced Mrs Drummond and myself to three months’ imprisonment, and Christabel to ten weeks’ imprisonment. It was destined to be a kind of imprisonment the authorities had never yet been called upon to deal with.

My first act on reaching Holloway was to demand that the Governor be sent for. When he came I told him that the Suffragettes had resolved that they would no longer submit to being treated as ordinary law-breakers. In the course of our trial two Cabinet Ministers had admitted that we were political offenders, and therefore we should henceforth refuse to be searched or to undress in the presence of the wardresses. For myself I claimed the right, and I hoped the others would do likewise, to speak to my friends during exercise, or whenever I came in contact with them. The Governor, after reflection, yielded to the first two demands, but said that he would have to consult the Home Office before permitting us to break the rule of silence. We were accordingly allowed to change our clothing privately, and, as a further concession, were placed in adjoining cells. This was little advantage to me, however, since within a few days I was removed to a hospital cell, suffering from the illness which prison life always inflicts on me. Here the Governor visited me with the unwelcome news that the Home Secretary had refused to allow me the privilege of speech with my fellow prisoners. I asked him if I might, when I was strong enough to walk, take exercise with my friends. To this he assented, and I soon had the joy of seeing my daughter and the other brave

comrades, and walking with them in the dismal courtyard of the prison. Single file we walked, at a distance of three or four feet from one another, back and forth under the stony eyes of the wardresses. The rough flags of the pavement hurt our feet, shod in heavy, shapeless prison boots. The autumn days were cold and cheerless, and we shivered violently under our scanty cloaks. But of all our hardships the ceaseless silence of our lives was worst.

At the end of the second week I decided I would no longer endure it. That afternoon at exercise I suddenly called my daughter by name and bade her stand still until I came up to her. Of course she stopped, and when I reached her side we linked arms and began to talk in low tones. A wardress ran up to us, saying: 'I shall listen to everything you say.' I replied: 'You are welcome to do that, but I shall insist on my right to speak to my daughter.' Another wardress had hastily left the yard, and now she returned with a large number of wardresses. They seized me and quickly removed me to my cell, while the other suffrage prisoners cheered my action at the top of their voices. For their 'mutiny' they got three days' solitary confinement, and I, for mine, a much more severe punishment. Unrepentant, I told the Governor that, in spite of any punishment he might impose on me, I would never again submit to the silence rule. To forbid a mother to speak to her daughter was infamous. For this I was characterised as a 'dangerous criminal' and was sent into solitary confinement, without exercise or chapel, while a wardress was stationed constantly at my cell door to see that I communicated with no one.

It was two weeks before I saw any of my friends again, and meantime the health of Mrs Drummond had been so seriously impaired that she was released for hospital

treatment. My daughter also, I learned, was ill, and in desperation I made application to the Board of Visiting Magistrates to be allowed to see her. After a long conference, during which I was made to wait outside in the corridor, the magistrates returned a refusal, saying that I might renew my application in a month. The answer then, they said, would depend on my conduct. A month! My girl might be dead by that time. My anxiety sent me to bed ill again, but, although I did not know it, relief was already on its way. I had told the visiting magistrates that I would wait until public opinion got within those walls, and this happened sooner than I had dared to hope. Mrs Drummond, as soon as she was able to appear in public, and the other suffrage prisoners, as they were released, spread broadcast the story of our mutiny, and of a subsequent one led by Miss Wallace Dunlop, which sent a large number of women into solitary confinement. The Suffragettes marched by thousands to Holloway, thronging the approaches to the prison street. Round and round the prison they marched, singing the Women's Marseillaise and cheering. Faintly the sound came to our ears, infinitely lightening our burden of pain and loneliness. The following week they came again, so we afterwards learned, but this time the police turned them back long before they reached the confines of the prison.

The demonstrations, together with a volley of questions asked in the House of Commons, told at last. Orders came from the Home Office that I was to see my daughter, and that we were to be allowed to exercise and to talk together for one hour each day. In addition, we were to be permitted the rare privilege of reading a daily newspaper. Then, on December 8th, the day of Christabel's release, orders came

that I, too, should be discharged, two weeks before the expiration of my sentence.

At the welcome breakfast given us, as released prisoners, at Lincoln's Inn Hotel, I told our members that henceforth we should all insist on refusing to abide by ordinary prison rules. We did not propose to break laws and then shirk punishment. We simply meant to assert our right to be recognised as political prisoners. We reached this point after due reflection. We first set ourselves not to complain of prison, not to say anything about it, to avoid it, to keep away from all side issues, to keep along the straight path of political reform, to get the vote; because we knew that when we had won it we could reform prisons and a great many other abuses as well. But now that we had had in the witness box the admission of Cabinet Ministers that we are political offenders, we should in future demand the treatment given to men political offenders in all civilised countries. 'If nations,' I said, 'are still so governed that they make political offenders, then Great Britain is going to treat her political offenders as well as political offenders are treated by other nations. If it were the custom to treat political offenders as ordinary offenders against the well-being of society are treated, we should not have complained if we were treated like that; but it is not the international custom to do it, and so, for the dignity of the women of the country, and for the sake of the consciences of the men of the country, and for the sake of our nation amongst the nations of the earth, we are not going to allow the Liberal government to treat us like ordinary law-breakers in future.'

I said the same thing that night in a great meeting held in Queen's Hall to welcome the released prisoners, and, although we all knew that our determination involved a

bitter struggle, our women endorsed it without a moment's hesitation. Had they been able to look forward to the events which were even then overshadowing us, could they have foreseen the new forms of suffering and danger that lay in waiting, I am certain that they would still have done the same thing, for our experiences had taught us to dispense with fear. Whatever of timidity, of shrinking from pain or hardship any of us had originally possessed, it had all vanished. There were no terrors that we were not now ready to face.

The year 1909 marks an important point in our struggle, partly because of this decision of ours, never again to submit to be classed with criminals; and partly because in this year we forced the Liberal Government to go on record, publicly, in regard to the oldest of popular rights, the right of petition. We had long contemplated this step, and now the time seemed ripe for taking it.

In the closing days of 1908 Mr Asquith, speaking on the policy to be carried out in 1909, commented on the various deputations he was obliged at that time to receive. They called on him, he said, 'from all quarters and in all causes, on an average of something like two hours on three days in every week.' The deputations all asked for different things, and, although all of the things could not possibly be included in the King's speech, Mr Asquith was inclined to agree that many of them ought to be included. This declaration from the Prime Minister that he was constantly receiving deputations of men, and listening favourably to their suggestions of what policies to pursue, aroused in the Suffragettes feelings of deep indignation. This in part they expressed on January 25th, when the first meeting of the Cabinet Council took place. A small deputation from the W. S. P. U. proceeded to Downing Street to claim

the right to be heard, as men were heard. For knocking at the door of the official residence four of the women, including my sister, Mrs Clark, were arrested and sent to prison for one month.

A month later the seventh of our Women's Parliaments was called against this and against the fact that no mention of women had been included in the King's speech. Led by Mrs Pethick Lawrence, Lady Constance Lytton and Miss Daisy Solomon, a deputation of women endeavoured to carry the resolution to the House of Commons. They were promptly arrested and, next day, were sent to prison on sentences of from one to two months. The time was rapidly approaching when the legality of these arrests would have to be tested. In June of the year 1909 the test was made.

It will be remembered that we had endeavoured to force the authorities to make good their threat to charge us under the obsolete Charles II 'Tumultuous Petitions Act,' which prescribes severe penalties for persons proceeding to Parliament in groups of more than twelve for the purpose of presenting petitions. It had been stated that if we were charged under that act our case would be given a hearing before a judge and jury instead of a police magistrate. Since this was exactly what we desired to have happen we had sent deputation after deputation of more than twelve persons, but always they were tried in police courts, and were sent to prison often for periods as long as that prescribed in the Charles II Act. Now we determined to do something still more ambitious; we resolved to test, not the Charles II Act, but the constitutional right of the subject to petition the Prime Minister as the seat of power.

The right of petition, which has existed in England since the earliest known period, was written into the Bill of

Rights which became law in 1689 on the accession of William and Mary. It was, in fact, one of the conditions attaching to the accession of the joint monarchs. According to the Bill of Rights, 'It is the right of subjects to petition the King and all commitments, and prosecutions for such petitionings are illegal.' The power of the King having passed almost completely into the hands of Parliament, the Prime Minister now stands where the King's majesty stood in former times. Clearly, then, the right of the subject to petition the Prime Minister cannot be legally denied. Thus were we advised, and in order to keep within the strict letter of the law, we accepted the limitations of the right of petition laid down in the Charles II Act, and decided that our petition should be carried to the House of Commons by small groups of women.

Again I called together, on the evening of June 29th, a Parliament of women. Previously I had written to Mr Asquith stating that a deputation of women would wait on him at the House of Commons at eight o'clock in the evening. I wrote him further that we were not to be refused, as we insisted upon our constitutional right to be received. To my note the Prime Minister returned a formal note declining to receive us. Nevertheless we continued our preparations, because we knew that the Prime Minister would continue to decline, but that in the end he would be forced to receive us.

An incident which occurred a week before the date of the deputation was destined to have important consequences. Miss Wallace Dunlop went to St Stephen's Hall in the House of Commons, and marked with printer's ink on the stone work of the Hall an extract from the Bill of Rights. The first time she made the attempt she was interrupted by a

policeman, but two days later she succeeded in stamping on the ancient walls the reminder to Parliament that women as well as men possess constitutional rights, and that they were proposing to exercise those rights. She was arrested and sentenced to prison for one month, in the third division. The option of a heavy fine was given her, which of course she refused. Miss Wallace Dunlop's prison term began on June 22nd. Perhaps her deed had something to do with the unusual interest taken in the approaching deputation, an interest which was shown not only by the public but by many members of Parliament. In the House of Commons a strong feeling that the women ought this time to be received manifested itself in many questions put to the Government. One member even asked leave to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgent public importance, namely the danger to the public peace, owing to the refusal of the Prime Minister to receive the deputation. This was denied, however, and the Government mendaciously disclaimed all responsibility for what action the police might take toward the deputation. The Home Secretary, Mr Gladstone, when asked by Mr Kier Hardie to give instructions that the deputation, if orderly, should be admitted to St Stephen's, replied: 'I cannot say what action the police ought to take in the matter.'

Our Women's Parliament met at half past seven on the evening of June 29th, and the petition to the Prime Minister was read and adopted. Then our deputation set forth. Accompanying me as leader were two highly respectable women of advanced years, Mrs Saul Solomon, whose husband had been Prime Minister at the Cape, and Miss Neligan, one of the foremost of the pioneer educators of England. We three and five other women were preceded by

Miss Elsie Howey, who, riding fast, went on horseback to announce our coming to the enormous crowds that filled the streets. She, we afterward learned, progressed as far as the approaches to the House of Commons before being turned back by the police. As for the deputation, it pressed on through the crowd as far as St Margaret's Church, Westminster, where we found a long line of police blocking the road. We paused for a moment, gathering strength for the ordeal of trying to push through the lines, when an unexpected thing happened. An order was given from some one, and instantly the police lines parted, leaving a clear space through which we walked towards the House. We were escorted on our way by Inspector Wells, and as we passed the crowd broke into vociferous cheering, firmly believing that we were after all to be received. As for myself I did little speculating as to what was about to happen. I simply led my deputation on as far as the entrance to St Stephen's Hall. There we encountered another strong force of police commanded by our old acquaintance, Inspector Scantlebury, who stepped forward and handed me a letter. I opened it and read it aloud to the women. 'The Prime Minister, for the reasons which he has already given in a written reply to their request, regrets that he is unable to receive the proposed deputation.'

I dropped the note to the ground and said: 'I stand upon my rights, as a subject of the King, to petition the Prime Minister, and I am firmly resolved to stand here until I am received.'

Inspector Scantlebury turned away and walked rapidly towards the door of the Strangers' Entrance. I turned to Inspector Jarvis, who remained, to several members of Parliament and some newspaper men who stood looking

on, and begged them to take my message to the Prime Minister, but no one responded, and the Inspector, seizing my arm, began to push me away. I now knew that the deputation would not be received and that the old miserable business of refusing to leave, of being forced backward, and returning again and again until arrested, would have to be re-enacted. I had to take into account that I was accompanied by two fragile old ladies, who, brave as they were to be there at all, could not possibly endure what I knew must follow. I quickly decided that I should have to force an immediate arrest, so I committed an act of technical assault on the person of Inspector Jarvis, striking him very lightly on the cheek. He said instantly, 'I understand why you did that,' and I supposed then that we would instantly be taken. But the other police apparently did not grasp the situation, for they began pushing and jostling our women. I said to the inspector: 'Shall I have to do it again?' and he said 'Yes.' So I struck him lightly a second time, and then he ordered the police to make the arrests.

The matter did not end with the arrest of our deputation of eight women. In recurring deputations of twelve the Suffragettes again and again pressed forward in vain endeavour to reach the House of Commons. In spite of the fact that the crowds were friendly and did everything they could to aid the women, their deputations were broken up by the police and many of the women arrested. By nine o'clock Parliament Square was empty, an enormous force of mounted police having beaten the people back into Victoria Street and across Westminster Bridge. For a short time all looked tranquil, but soon little groups of women, seven or eight at a time, kept appearing mysteriously and making spirited dashes toward the House. This extraordinary

procedure greatly exasperated the police, who could not unravel the mystery of where the women came from. As a matter of bygone history the explanation is that the W. S. P. U. had hired thirty offices in the neighborhood, in the shelter of which the women waited until it was time for them to sally forth. It was a striking demonstration of the ingenuity of women opposing the physical force of men, but it served still another purpose. It diverted the attention of the police from another demonstration which was going on. Other Suffragettes had gone to the official residence of the First Lord of the Admiralty, to the Home Office, the Treasury and Privy Council Offices, and had registered their contempt for the Government's refusal to receive the deputation by the time-honoured method of breaking a window in each place.

One hundred and eight women were arrested that night, but instead of submitting to arrests and trial, the Women's Social and Political Union announced that they were prepared to prove that the Government and not the women had broken the law in refusing to receive the petition. My case, coupled with that of the Hon. Mrs Haverfield, was selected as a test case for all the others, and Lord Robert Cecil was retained for the defence. Mr Muskett, who conducted the case for the prosecution, tried to prove that our women had not gone to the House of Commons to present a petition, but this was easily demonstrated to be an unwarranted claim. The speeches of the leader, the official articles published in our newspaper, *Votes for Women*, and the letters sent to Mr Asquith, not to speak of the indisputable facts that every member of the deputation carried a copy of the petition in her hand, furnished evidence enough of the nature of our errand. The whole case of the subject's

right of petition was then brought forward for discussion. Mr Muskett spoke first, then our council, Mr Henle, then Lord Robert Cecil. Last of all I spoke, describing the events of June 29th. I told the magistrate that should he decide that we and not the Government had been guilty of an infraction of the law, we should refuse to be bound over, but should all choose to go to prison. In that case we should not submit to being treated like criminals. 'There are one hundred and eight of us here today,' I said, pointing to the benches where my fellow-prisoners sat, 'and just as we have thought it is our duty to defy the police in the street, so when we get into prison, as we are political prisoners, we shall do our best to bring back into the twentieth century the treatment of political prisoners which was thought right in the case of William Cobbett, and other political offenders of his time.'

The magistrate, Sir Albert de Rutzen, an elderly, amiable man, rather bewildered by this unprecedented situation, then gave his decision. He agreed with Mr Henle and Lord Robert Cecil that the right of petition was clearly guaranteed to every subject, but he thought that when the women were refused permission to enter the House of Commons, and when Mr Asquith had said that he would not receive them, the women acted wrongly to persist in their demands. He should, therefore, fine them five pounds each, or sentence them to prison for one month in the second division. The sentence would be suspended for the present until learned counsel could obtain a decision from a higher court on the legal point of the right of petition.

I then put in a claim for all the prisoners, and asked that all their cases might be held over until the test case was decided, and this was agreed to, except in regard to fourteen

women charged with window-breaking. They were tried separately and sent to prison on sentences varying from six weeks to two months. Of them later.

The appeal against Sir Albert de Rutzen's decision was tried in a Divisional Court early in December of that year. Lord Robert Cecil again appeared for the defence, and in a masterly piece of argumentation, contended that in England there was and always had been the right of petition, and that the right had always been considered a necessary condition of a free country and a civilised Government. The right of petition, he pointed out, had three characteristics: In the first place, it was the right to petition the actual repositories of power; in the second place, it was the right to petition in person; and in the third place, the right must be exercised reasonably. A long list of historical precedents were offered in support of the right to petition in person, but Lord Robert argued that even if these did not exist, the right was admitted in the Charles II 'Tumultuous Petitions Act,' which provides 'That no person or persons whatsoever shall repair to His Majesty or both or either Houses of Parliament upon pretence of presenting or delivering any petition, complaint, remonstrance, or declaration or other address, accompanied with excessive number of people . . .' etc. The Bill of Rights had specially confirmed the right of petition in so far as the King personally was concerned. 'The women,' pursued Lord Robert, 'had gone to Parliament Square on June 29th in the exercise of a plain constitutional right, and that in going there with a petition they had acted according to the only constitutional method they possessed, being voteless, for the redress of their grievances.'

If then it were true, as contended, the subject not only

possessed the right to petition, but to petition in person, the only point to be considered was whether the right had been exercised reasonably. If persons desired to interview the Prime Minister, it was surely reasonable to go to the House of Commons, and to present themselves at the Strangers' Entrance. Mrs Pankhurst, Mrs Haverfield and the others had, as the evidence showed, proceeded along the public highway and had been escorted to the door of the House of Commons by an officer of the police, and could not therefore, up to that point, have been acting in an unlawful manner. The police had kept clear a large open space opposite the House of Commons, the crowd being kept at a certain distance away. Within the open space there were only persons having business in the House of Commons, members of the police force and the eight women who formed the deputation. It could not possibly be contended that these eight women had caused an obstruction. It was true that a police officer told them that the Prime Minister was not in the House of Commons, but when one desired an interview with a member of Parliament one did not make his request of a casual policeman in the street. Moreover, the police did not possess any authority to stop anyone from going into the House of Commons.

The letter given the women, in which the Prime Minister said that he could not or would not see them, had been cited. Now, had the Prime Minister, in his letter, said that he could not or would not see the women at that time, that the time was not convenient; but that he would at some future time, at a more convenient time, receive them, that would have been a sufficient answer. The women would not have been justified in refusing to accept such an answer, because the right to petition must be exercised reasonably.

But the letter contained an unqualified refusal, and that, if we allow the right of petition to exist, was no answer at all. Last of all Lord Robert argued that if there is a right to petition a member of Parliament, then it must be incumbent on the part of a member of Parliament to receive the petition, and that no one has a right to interfere with the petitioner. If the eight women were legally justified in presenting their petition, then they were also justified in refusing to obey the orders of the police to leave the place.

In an address full of bias, and revealing plainly that he had no accurate knowledge of any of the events that had led up to the case in hand, the Lord Chief Justice delivered judgment. He said that he entirely agreed with Lord Robert Cecil as to the right to present a petition to the Prime Minister, either as Prime Minister or as a member of Parliament; and he agreed also that petitions to the King should be presented to the Prime Minister. But the claim of the women, he said, was not merely to present a petition, but to be received in a deputation. He did not think it likely that Mr Asquith would have refused to receive a petition from the women, but his refusal to receive the deputation was not unnatural, 'in consequence of what we know did happen on previous occasions.'¹

Referring to the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839, which provides that it shall be lawful for the Commissioner of Police to make regulations and to give instructions to the constable for keeping order, and for preventing any obstruction of thoroughfares in the immediate neighbourhood of

¹ Mr Asquith had never, since becoming Prime Minister, received a deputation of women, nor had he ever received a deputation of the W. S. P. U. So it was absurd of the Lord Chief Justice to speak of 'what did happen on previous occasions.'

the House of Commons, and the Sessional Order empowering the police to keep clear the approaches to the House of Commons, the Lord Chief Justice decided that I and the other women were guilty of an infraction of the law when we insisted on a right to enter the House of Commons. The Lord Chief Justice therefore ruled that our conviction in the lower court had been proper, and our appeal was dismissed with costs.

Thus was destroyed in England the ancient constitutional right of petition, secured to the people by the Bill of Rights, and cherished by uncounted generations of Englishmen. I say the right was destroyed, for of how much value is a petition which cannot be presented in person? The decision of the high court was appalling to the members of the W. S. P. U., as it closed the last approach, by constitutional means, to our enfranchisement. Far from discouraging or disheartening us, it simply spurred us on to new and more aggressive forms of militancy.

Between the time of the arrest in June and the handing down of the absurd decision of the Lord Chief Justice that although we, as subjects, possessed the right of petition, yet we had committed an offence in exercising that right, nearly six months had passed. In that interval certain grave developments had lifted the militant movement onto a new and more heroic plane. It will be remembered that a week before our deputation to test the Charles II Act, Miss Wallace Dunlop had been sent to prison for one month for stamping an extract from the Bill of Rights on the stone walls of St Stephen's Hall. On arriving at Holloway on Friday evening, July 2nd, she sent for the Governor and demanded of him that she be treated as a political offender. The Governor replied that he had no power to alter the sentence of the magistrate, whereupon Miss Wallace Dunlop informed him that it was the unalterable resolution of the Suffragettes never again to submit to the prison treatment given to ordinary offenders against the law. Therefore she should, if placed in the second division as a common criminal, refuse to touch food until the Government yielded her point. It is hardly likely that the Government or the prison authorities realised the seriousness of Miss Wallace Dunlop's action, or the heroic mould of the Suffragettes' character. At all events the Home

Secretary paid no attention to the letter sent him by the prisoner, in which she explained simply but clearly her motives for her desperate act, and the prison authorities did nothing except seek means of breaking down her resistance. The ordinary prison diet was replaced by the most tempting food, and this instead of being brought to her cell at intervals, was kept there night and day, but always untouched. Several times daily the doctor came to feel her pulse and observe her growing weakness. The doctor, as well as the Governor and the wardresses argued, coaxed and threatened, but without effect. The week passed without any sign of surrender on the part of the prisoner. On Friday the doctor reported that she was rapidly reaching a point at which death might at any time supervene. Hurried conferences were carried on between the prison and the Home Office, and that evening, June 8th, Miss Wallace Dunlop was sent home, having served one-fourth of her sentence, and having ignored completely all the terms of her imprisonment.

On the day of her release the fourteen women who had been convicted of window-breaking received their sentences, and learning of Miss Wallace Dunlop's act, they, as they were being taken to Holloway in the prison van, held a consultation and agreed to follow her example. Arrived at Holloway they at once informed the officials that they would not give up any of their belongings, neither would they put on prison clothing, perform prison labour, eat prison food or keep the rule of silence. The Governor agreed for the moment to allow them to retain their property and to wear their own clothing, but he told them that they had committed an act of mutiny and that he would have to so charge them at the next visit of the magistrates. The women then addressed petitions to the Home Secretary, demanding that

they be given the prison treatment universally allowed political offenders. They decided to postpone the hunger strike until the Home Secretary had had time to reply. Meanwhile, after a vain appeal for more fresh air, for the weather was stiflingly hot, the women committed one more act of mutiny, they broke the windows of their cells.

We learned this from the prisoners themselves. Several days after they had gone to prison, my daughter Christabel and Mrs Tuke, filled with anxiety for their fate, gained admission to an upper story room of a house overlooking the prison. Calling at the top of their voices and waving a flag of the Union, they succeeded in attracting the prisoners' attention. The women thrust their arms through the broken panes, waving handkerchiefs, Votes for Women badges, anything they could get hold of, and in a few shouted words told their tale. That same day the visiting magistrates arrived, and the mutineers were sentenced to terms of seven to ten days of solitary confinement in the punishment cells. In these frightful cells, dark, unclean, dripping with moisture, the prisoners resolutely hunger struck. At the end of five days one of the women was reduced to such a condition that the Home Secretary ordered her released. The next day several more were released, and before the end of the week the last of the fourteen had gained their liberty.

The affair excited the greatest sympathy all over England, sympathy which Mr Gladstone tried to divert by charging two of the prisoners with kicking and biting the wardresses. In spite of their vigorous denials these two women were sentenced, on these charges, one to ten days and the other to a month in prison. Although still very weak from the previous hunger strike, they at once entered upon a second hunger strike, and in three days had to be released.

After this each succeeding batch of Suffragette prisoners, unless otherwise directed, followed the example of these heroic rebels. The prison officials, seeing their authority vanish, were panic stricken. Holloway and other women's prisons throughout the Kingdom became perfect dens of violence and brutality. Hear the account given by Lucy Burns of her experience:

'We remained quite still when ordered to undress, and when they told us to proceed to our cells we linked arms and stood with our backs to the wall. The Governor blew his whistle and a great crowd of wardresses appeared, falling upon us, forcing us apart and dragging us towards the cells. I think I had twelve wardresses for my share, and among them they managed to trip me so that I fell helplessly to the floor. One of the wardresses grasped me by my hair, wound the long braid around her wrist and literally dragged me along the ground. In the cell they fairly ripped the clothing from my back, forcing on me one coarse cotton garment and throwing others on the bed for me to put on myself. Left alone exhausted by the dreadful experience I lay for a time gasping and shivering on the floor. By and by a wardress came to the door and threw me a blanket. This I wrapped around me, for I was chilled to the bone by this time. The single cotton garment and the rough blanket were all the clothes I wore during my stay in prison. Most of the prisoners refused everything but the blanket. According to agreement we all broke our windows and were immediately dragged off to the punishment cells. There we hunger struck, and after enduring great misery for nearly a week, we were one by one released.'

How simply they tell it. 'After enduring great misery—' But no one who has not gone through the awful experience

of the hunger strike can have any idea of how great that misery is. In an ordinary cell it is great enough. In the unspeakable squalor of the punishment cells it is worse. The actual hunger pangs last only about twenty-four hours with most prisoners. I generally suffer most on the second day. After that there is no very desperate craving for food. Weakness and mental depression take its place. Great disturbances of digestion divert the desire for food to a longing for relief from pain. Often there is intense headache, with fits of dizziness, or slight delirium. Complete exhaustion and a feeling of isolation from earth mark the final stages of the ordeal. Recovery is often protracted, and entire recovery of normal health is sometimes discouragingly slow.

The first hunger strike occurred in early July. In the two months that followed scores of women adopted the same form of protest against a Government who would not recognise the political character of their offences. In some cases the hunger strikers were treated with unexampled cruelty. Delicate women were sentenced, not only to solitary confinement, but to wear handcuffs for twenty-four hours at a stretch. One woman on refusing prison clothes was put into a straightwaistcoat.

The irony of all this appears the greater when it is considered that, at this precise time, the leaders of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons were in the midst of their first campaign against the veto power of the Lords.

On September 17th a great meeting was held in Birmingham, on which occasion Mr Asquith was to throw down his challenge to the Lords, and to announce that their veto was to be abolished, leaving the people's will paramount in England. Of course the Suffragettes seized this opportunity for a demonstration. This course was perfectly logical. Denied

the right of petition, shut out now from every Cabinet Minister's meeting, the women were forced to take whatever means that remained to urge their cause upon the Government. Mrs Mary Leigh and a group of Birmingham members addressed a warning to the public not to attend Mr Asquith's meeting as disturbances were likely to happen. From the time that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet left the House of Commons until the train drew in to the station at Birmingham they were completely surrounded with detectives and policemen. The precautions taken to guard Mr Asquith have never been equalled except in the case of the Tsar during outbreaks of revolution in Russia. From the station he was taken by an underground passage a quarter of a mile in length to his hotel, where he dined in solitary state, after having been carried upstairs in a luggage lift. Escorted to the Bingley Hall by a strong guard of mounted police, he was so fearful of encountering the Suffragettes that he entered by a side door. The hall was guarded as for a siege. Over the glass roof a thick tarpaulin had been stretched. Tall ladders were placed on either side of the building, and firemen's hose were laid in readiness—not to extinguish fires, but to play upon the Suffragettes should they appear at an inaccessible spot on the roof. The streets on every hand were barricaded, and police, in regiments, were drawn up to defend the barricades against the onslaughts of the women. Nobody was allowed to pass the barricades without showing his entrance tickets to long files of police, and then the ticket holders were squeezed through the narrow doors one by one.

Their precautions were in vain, for the determined Suffragettes found more than one way in which to turn Mr Asquith's triumph into a fiasco. Although no women gained

access to the hall, there were plenty of men sympathisers present, and before the meeting had proceeded far thirteen men had been violently thrown out for reminding the Prime Minister that 'the people' whose right to govern he was professing to uphold, included women as well as men. Outside, mingling in the vast crowds, bands of women attacked the barricades, the outer barricades being thrown down in spite of the thousands of police. From the roof of a neighbouring house Mrs Leigh and Charlotte Marsh tore up dozens of slates and threw them on the roof of Bingley Hall and in the streets below, taking care, however, to strike no one. As Mr Asquith drove away the women hurled slates at the guarded motor car. The fire hose was brought forth and the firemen were ordered to turn the water on the women. They refused, to their credit be it said, but the police, infuriated by their failure to keep the peace, did not scruple to play the cold water on the women as they crouched and clung to the dangerous slope of the roof. Roughs in the streets flung bricks at them, drawing blood. Eventually the women were dragged down by the police and in their dripping garments marched through the streets to the police station.

The Suffragettes who had rushed the barricades and flung stones at Mr Asquith's departing train received sentences from a fortnight to one month, but Miss Marsh and Mrs Leigh were sent to prison for three and four months respectively. All of the prisoners adopted the hunger strike, as we knew they would.

Several days later we were horrified to read in the newspapers that these prisoners were being forcibly fed by means of a rubber tube thrust into the stomach. Members of the Union applied at once both at the prison and at the

Home Office to learn the truth of the report, but all information was refused. On the following Monday at our request, Mr Keir Hardie, at question time in the House, insisted on information from the Government. Mr Masterman, speaking for the Home Secretary, reluctantly admitted that, in order to preserve the dignity of the Government and at the same time save the lives of the prisoners, 'hospital treatment' was being administered. 'Hospital treatment' was the term used to draw attention from one of the most disgusting and brutal expedients ever resorted to by prison authorities. No law allows it except in the case of persons certified to be insane, and even then when the operation is performed by skilled nursing attendants under the direction of skilled medical men, it cannot be called safe. In fact, the asylum cases usually die after a short time. *The Lancet*, perhaps the best known medical journal in the language, published a long list of opinions from distinguished physicians and surgeons who condemned the practice as applied to the suffrage prisoners as unworthy of civilisation. One physician told of a case which had come under his observation in which death had occurred almost as soon as the tube had been inserted. Another cited a case where the tongue, twisted behind the feeding tube, had, in the struggle, been almost bitten off. Cases where food had been injected into the lungs were not unknown. Mr C. Mansell-Moullin, M.D., F.R.C.S., wrote to *The Times* that as a hospital surgeon of more than thirty years' experience he desired indignantly to protest against the Government's term 'Hospital treatment' in connection with the forcible feeding of women. It was a foul libel, he declared, for violence and brutality have no place in hospitals. A memorial signed by 116 well-known physicians was addressed to the

Prime Minister protesting against the practice of forcible feeding, and pointing out to him in detail the grave dangers attaching to it.

So much for medical testimony against a form of brutality which continued and still continues in our English prisons, as a punishment for women who are there for consciences' sake. As for the testimony of the victims, it makes a volume of most revolting sort. Mrs Leigh, the first victim, is a woman of sturdy constitution, else she could scarcely have survived the experience. Thrown into Birmingham prison after the Asquith demonstration, she had broken the windows of her cell, and as a punishment was sent to a dark and cold punishment cell. Her hands were handcuffed, behind her during the day, and at night in front of her body *with the palms out*. She refused to touch the food that was brought to her, and three days after her arrival she was taken to the doctor's room. What she saw was enough to terrify the bravest. In the centre of the room was a stout chair resting on a cotton sheet. Against the wall, as if ready for action stood four wardresses. The junior doctor was also on hand. The senior doctor spoke, saying: 'Listen carefully to what I have to say. I have orders from my superior officers that you are not to be released even on medical grounds. If you still refrain from food I must take other measures to compel you to take it.' Mrs Leigh replied that she did still refuse, and she said further that she knew that she could not legally be forcibly fed because an operation could not be performed without the consent of the patient if sane. The doctor repeated that he had his orders and would carry them out. A number of wardresses then fell upon Mrs Leigh, held her down and tilted her chair backward. She was so taken by surprise that she could not resist successfully that time. They

managed to make her swallow a little food from a feeding cup. Later two doctors and the wardresses appeared in her cell, forced Mrs Leigh down to the bed and held her there. To her horror the doctors produced a rubber tube, two yards in length, and this he began to stuff up her nostril. The pain was so dreadful that she shrieked again and again. Three of the wardresses burst into tears and the junior doctor begged the other to desist. Having had his orders from the Government, the doctor persisted and the tube was pushed down into the stomach. One of the doctors, standing on a chair and holding the tube high poured liquid food through a funnel almost suffocating the poor victim. 'The drums of my ears,' she said afterwards, 'seemed to be bursting. I could feel the pain to the end of the breast bone. When at last the tube was withdrawn it felt as if the back of my nose and throat were being torn out with it.'

In an almost fainting condition Mrs Leigh was taken back to the punishment cell and laid on her plank bed. The ordeal was renewed day after day. The other prisoners suffered similar experiences.