

The Suffragette Spirit

by

Geraldine Lennox

PUBLISHED BY

THE SUFFRAGETTE FELLOWSHIP

1932

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London, Westminster.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For forty years—1865-1905—the women of Great Britain under the leadership of Mrs. Fawcett had worked hard and consistently for Woman's Suffrage. Their demand was just and simple—that the tax-paying women of Great Britain should be granted the vote, i.e. that the women should be granted the vote on the same terms as the men. With the power of the vote behind them the women would be able to help frame the laws under which they had to live. Meetings and demonstrations were held continuously all over the country during those forty years, the women working enthusiastically in a constitutional and law-abiding way. But they got no further with their cause, and, each time the franchise was extended to men (1867 to the working men and in 1884 to the agricultural labourers) the women were left out; they did not count.

In 1905 there arose in Manchester two women, Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel, who realised that, to put Woman's Suffrage into the realm of practical politics, different methods would have to be adopted. A General Election was imminent and it was a foregone conclusion that the Liberals would be returned to power.

On the 13th October, 1905, Sir Edward Grey, a prospective Liberal Cabinet Minister, spoke in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney went to this meeting and asked "If you are elected to Parliament will you do your best to make Woman's Suffrage a Government Measure?" This question was asked three times and also sent as a written message to the platform; it was never answered. Instead, the two girls were thrown out of the meeting and sent to prison for one week. Thus was born the Militant Movement and from that time onwards it spread like a flame throughout the land. Under the leadership of Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel Pankhurst thousands of women rushed to join the movement, sinking all political and social differences, working side by side, determined at all costs to win their political freedom. They voiced the demand of forty years ago—that the tax-paying women be granted the vote.

The whole militant campaign was planned with great strategy, each move being well considered before any action was taken. During the nine years from 1905 to 1914 over one thousand British women went to prison for the vote, many enduring long hunger-strikes and many the horrors of forcible feeding. Before long Votes for Women was the burning question of the day and Woman's Suffrage was at last in the realm of Practical Politics. At the outbreak of war in 1914 all militancy ceased and on February 6th, 1918 the limited Franchise for Women was granted by the passing of the "Sex Disqualification Act."

In July 1928 came the full Franchise for all women over 21 years. And so, the last coping stone was placed on the British Constitution.

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THE SUFFRAGETTE LECTURES.

In 1928, the year of the complete victory of the Votes for Women campaign, Edith How-Martyn suggested that the militant pioneers should be kept in remembrance by an annual Suffragette Lecture. The idea was favourably received, and the following lectures have been given:—

1928

Evelyn Sharp
on

Mary Wollstonecroft.

JN

979

1929

Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence
on

Lady Constance Lytton.

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1932

1930

C. Nina Boyle
on

"Women Pioneers: unknown and unhonoured."

1931

Geraldine Lennox
on

"The Suffragette Spirit and Modern Problems."

The first three Lectures are unpublished as yet but thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Alice Gordon the Suffragette Fellowship is able to publish this, the fourth lecture, given at Caxton Hall, on 17th November, 1931.

The cordial thanks of the Fellowship are given to Mrs. Gordon for thus making the fourth lecture available to a much larger public.

The men and women of the coming time will, I am persuaded, be filled with admiration for the patient work of the early pioneers and the heroic determination and persistence in spite of coercion, repression, mis-representation, and insult of those who fought the later militant fight.

Perhaps the women born in the happier days that are to come, while rejoicing in the inheritance that we of to-day are preparing for them, may sometimes wish that they could have lived in the heroic days of stress and struggle and have shared with us the joy of battle, the exaltation that comes of sacrifice of self for great objects and the prophetic vision that assures us of the certain triumph of this twentieth-century fight for human emancipation.

EMMELINE PANKHURST.

January, 1911.

THE SUFFRAGETTE SPIRIT

by

GERALDINE LENNOX.

In her opening remarks the Chairman, Mrs. Una Duval, referred to the work of Suffragettes during the War and to the wonderful comradeship which has survived all vicissitudes. Mrs. Duval gave a brief account of the fellowship and emphasized the value from a historical point of view of collecting the records of the militant suffrage movement.

When the giving of this lecture was summarily thrust upon me by Edith How-Martyn, the idea was that I should give, from my own experience, some incidents and impressions of days in the Militant Suffrage Movement.

A title to cover the subject was difficult to arrive at, as anything of a personal nature was to be deprecated, and after many suggestions had been made and turned down, that of "The Suffragette Spirit" was adopted, but it changed the character of the lecture.

To the uninitiated it may seem a sorry title, dealing with a something that is dead and gone. I shall have failed miserably if, at the close of this evening, you, my audience, have not glimpsed something of the greatness of that spirit and realise how essential that same spirit is to-day.

The word "Suffragette" was first coined by the *Daily Mail* in the early days of militancy, and was meant to be a term of derision. We, who remain, knowing how much it stood for to us, retain it, and are proud to do so.

The Suffragette Spirit! What was it? It was an unswerving loyalty to an ideal—the political emancipation of womanhood, with all that that implied; obedience to leaders; a thorough discipline and denial of self, with all its petty weaknesses; a sharing of work and hardships and a magnificent enthusiasm which made all loss and suffering of no account. It was a spirit that would not sit down under injustice—a spirit that meant to get things done.

This spirit lay dormant in the hearts of many women all over the country. It took one woman, Emmeline Pankhurst, to light the spark which, to quote Mr. Baldwin's words on the day he unveiled her statue, "Set the heather on fire."

[In preparing this lecture I must acknowledge my indebtedness to the late Mrs. C. C. Stopes, whose book "British Freewomen" has supplied much valuable and interesting matter.]

Women of the leisured class; clerks, shop-girls, mill-hands, nurses, doctors, actresses, and church workers. Jews, Gentiles, and unbelievers—all were gathered in in one great movement with one seemingly tiny end in view, that of gaining the vote.

But the vote, my friends, was but the key—the key to freedom. A freedom not to be used for self, but to make life less hard for others. To raise the standard of morality so that children might enter the world less handicapped, morally and physically. That public life might be cleaner, and above all, that the country might have the benefit of the woman's as well as the man's point of view.

To give some idea of how that spirit came into being, it is necessary to go back into the past, how far, I did not imagine until I came to prepare this lecture. "Let us," someone says, "look at the beginnings of things, for they help us to understand the ends."

When I started looking into the "beginnings of things" I was amazed and thrilled. It was like a blinding revelation to find what a magnificent heritage we, British women, are heirs to.

To-day women and girls fly off alone to the uttermost parts of the earth, break records to the Cape as unostentatiously and as coolly as if taking the tube to Piccadilly. Women serve on juries, plead in courts and a short time ago it was a surprise, but British women did all that centuries ago. They didn't fly but they did things requiring just as much courage and endurance.

The earliest date of our authentic history was the century in which Christ was born, and it is from the Romans and other foreigners unexceptional witness comes as to the part women played in the life of this country. It seems to have made a great impression upon strangers to find that in Britain equality of the sexes was a reality; that men revered womanhood and that women sympathised with men and that a high code of morality was the natural outcome of this well-balanced society.

It was talked about and many well-known men, as now, began to express themselves strongly on the matter, some taking one view, some the other.

We find that Thucydides, the great Greek historian and writer seems to have held the view, so often shouted at us in the past, "Woman's place is the home," though he expressed it in more cultured language: "She is the best woman concerning whom there is least discourse made by people abroad, either in praise or dispraise; judging that as the person so the very name of a woman ought to be retired and not to go gad abroad"!

Plutarch, on the other hand, maintained that many worthy things, both public and private, had been done by women, and in support of his contention said, "It is not amiss to give a brief historical account of those that are public in the first place," and among the examples he cites is one of the Continental Celts, kindred to the British, some of whom had wandered north-west and some due south throughout Europe.

"There arose," he says, "a very grievous and irreconcilable contention among the Celts before they passed over the Alps to inhabit that tract of Italy which, now they inhabit, proceeded to a civil war. The women, placing themselves between the armies, took up the controversies, argued them so accurately and determined them so impartially that an admirable friendly correspondence and general amity ensued, both civil and domestic. Hence the Celts made it their practice to take women into consultation about peace or war and to use them as mediators in any controversies that arose between them and their allies." Would to God the nations of the world would do the same to-day, then there would soon be no more war and we should dwell in peace.

Caesar tells us that the British women had their duties in court, council, and in camp and that no distinction of sex was made in places of command or government.

Selden in his chapter on women in "*Janus Anglorum*" records that Boadicea so successfully commanded the British Armies as to beat and conquer the Roman Viceroy, and "no doubt," he says, "that noble lady was a deliberative member of the Council when the resolution was taken to fight and that she should command the forces."

Tacitus records that under the leadership of Boadicea the Britons all rose to arms and he gives a report of her speech on the eve of the battle in which she was defeated. She had already driven Catus over the sea, been victorious against another general, subdued Colonia, sacked Verulam, and was marching on London. Her army built an intrenched camp near what is now called Islington and addressing it she called on them "to witness that it was usual for the Britons to war under the conduct of women, but on that occasion," she said, "she entered the field not as one descended from ancestors so illustrious to recover her kingdom and her treasure, but as one of the humblest among them, to take vengeance for liberty extinguished, her own body lacerated with stripes and the chastity of her daughters defiled. . . . they would see that in that battle they must conquer or perish. Such was the resolve of a woman; the men might live if they pleased and be the slaves of the Romans."

It was a bloody battle, 80,000 of the Britons being slain, husbands, wives, babes, and even the very beasts being killed to appear a Roman "glory."

There is no more touching picture in the history of our country than this of the forces of oppression and lust,—the spirit of Nero himself, who was then Emperor—pitted against this woman, who as patriot, mother, and as individual fought in defence of country, home, and honour and failed.

Here I feel was the first known record of that spirit we are dealing with to-night.

The defeat of Boadicea rang the death-knell of the freedom of British womanhood and of the spirit of British manhood. Under the Romans the British wife was no longer the brave help-meet, counsellor and inspirer of the British man. Roman customs completed what the Roman arms and Roman laws had begun and the spirit of British womanhood was crushed.

With the withdrawal of Roman troops for home affairs Britain was left pretty much to the mercy of any invader. There was an infusion of new blood into the land, fortunately of another good northern stock, in which women were thought something of. They, too, helped their men when fighting and acted as surgeons and nurses when their men were wounded. Women's counsels were asked and acted upon.

In those days it was not the woman who brought a dowry to her husband, but the husband who dowered the wife.

The marriage service emphasised the fact that the wife did not stand aside from aspirations after noble deeds and the perils of war, in that part of the ceremony took the form of handing her a spear. Symbolic of the partnership existing between husband and wife in toil and danger, that she was destined "to suffer and to dare with him alike in peace and war. . . . It was pointed out that, she must live and die with the feeling that she was receiving what she must hand down to her children, neither tarnished, nor depreciated, what future daughters-in-law might receive, and pass on to her grandchildren." Women's virtue was protected. The young men married late, their vigour was unimpaired, and the maidens were not hurried into marriage.

These racial peculiarities also marked the early Saxon invaders but as there were no foreign witnesses to note them with surprise it is only indirectly from public records one can glimpse the state of affairs, but we know that the Queen's Consort took a real active part in the ruling of their kingdoms. Sexburga (627 A.D.) is mentioned by William of Malmesbury who writes of her admiringly: "There was not wanting to this woman a great spirit to discharge the duties of the Kingdom. She levied new armies, kept the old ones to

duty, governed her subjects with clemency, kept her enemies quiet with threats: in a word, did everything at that rate that there was no other difference between her and any king in management except her sex."

Ethelfleda, the daughter of the Great Alfred, called The Lady of Mercia, ruled that kingdom for eight years after the deaths of her father and husband and completed her father's work in finally defeating and subjugating the Danes. What the Royal women did was but the reflex of the common law and customs of the time, though naturally their rank gave them more power, and what was customary in England was also true of the women of Ireland.

To-day some Church dignitaries hold up holy hands in horror at the bare suggestion of women occupying pulpits yet centuries ago women with men built up the Church in Britain and in no menial way either.

The Abbess Hilda presided over a monastery at Whitby where there was a man's wing and a woman's wing, the church being built between. Many learned bishops were educated there. In 664 an ecclesiastical synod met at her Abbey over which it is recorded she presided, "so that the calm of her presence and the influence of her control might soothe excitement on the mixed questions of the day, chiefly those regarding Easter" and as there were delegates from Rome, from the Scots, from the Angles, and the Britons it cannot have been an easy task.

Then came the Norman invasion which swept like a hurricane over old institutions. The conquest was not one of extermination but of superposition. The great mass of the people remained Saxon in heart, but the Normans, though of a kindred race, had come from a long sojourn in a land where language, thought, and custom had become Latinised: a land that already held the principles of the Salic Law. William promised to respect the laws of the country but when his promise was broken who dare appeal against a conqueror's will, or the soldier's sword!

Women suffered much more than men did from the Norman invasion, because all lands taken by the invaders were held of the King by feudal tenure or by military service and here ladies, is the beginning of the end, so far as women were concerned.

Male heirs became much more valuable to the Crown than female issue, inasmuch as personal service was more effective and reliable than representative service, but the principle of justice, the custom of the land and the springs of human nature combined in opposition to a further exercise of the Royal will. Husbands and fathers were not so keen to risk their lives in the cause of a king who had made it

impossible for their wives and daughters to keep their estates.

The Feudal system has been credited with limiting personality and privilege to males, but it was only on the extinction of the Feudal system and the translation of service—payments into money—payments that woman lost the definite place assigned to her. Women's rights came second in Feudal times because they had to be protected by men's swords.

In ancient times woman was free. She was free to contract, to sign, to seal, to act as a *feme sole*. On her marriage the wife conferred her title on her husband as men did theirs upon their wives. Husbands and wives held their lands in common. The responsibilities the woman could not undertake, could be borne by him, as her representative. When she died, he lost his representative character; his tenure of her lands was only "by courtesy" and that only if he had a child by her. If not, they reverted at her death to the donor.

When a woman's husband died intestate she had a legal right to the third of his property. In Kent she had a right to the half, until she married again.

Our early ancestors never dreamt that the whole proceeds of the common labours should be the property of one partner. It took centuries of mis-translation of the first principles of government to let this partial idea develop into its modern complexity.

The absorption of a married woman's property by a husband developed for her a massive code of legal restrictions and a stern doctrine of civil disabilities. She was dissociated, first from property, then from privilege, finally becoming herself property. This was the natural outcome of ignoring her personal and proprietary rights.

Representative Freewomen were always a small minority because of the different principles of inheritance. I mean that there were fewer heiresses than heirs; male professional and trade industries were protected against female competition so that female owners of earned property were fewer than men; through the low rate of women's wages and various causes tending to disable single women even in the retention of property, these owners represented smaller incomes than did men of their own class, hence the opinion of British Freewomen came to be ignored and thus women were ousted by degrees from the building up of the British Constitution in the foundations of which they had borne so large and practical a part.

The privilege of British Freewomen remained a recognised quantity until the middle of the 19th century when it was completely wiped out.

The process of degradation was rapid in every period when principles that should have worked in the opposite direction occupied the public mind.

The subjection of women is entirely antagonistic to the spirit and teaching of Christ yet the changes in the Christian creed mark epochs in their gradual enthrallment, as for instance the 16th century Reformation and the 17th century Revival.

The great cry of "No Bishop" was true of the Puritans, but their real practical work in politics was to make the representation of women in the Lower House theoretically impossible.

Every great era in the evolution of so-called popular liberty was marked by the restriction of woman's freedom.

In the 17th century when hereditary serfdom was finally abolished and slavery by purchase became impossible in Britain, the doctrine tending to disfranchise women was first propagated.

When in 1832, great outbursts of fervid eloquence on "Liberty" were preparing the way for laying out millions of the nation's money on enfranchising even its colonial slaves, the disfranchisement of women was affected by the use of a single statutory word. On the 29th June, 1867, while William Lloyd Garrison the Champion of Negro emancipation was receiving an ovation in St. James's Hall, men in St. Stephen's at that very moment were discussing whether to give women political existence or not and decided against doing so.

* * * *

About that time there lived in Manchester a very happy family, the children were fortunate in that, as one of them puts it, "they were born at a time when a great struggle for human freedom was in progress and doubly so because their parents took a personal part in the great movements of their time."

From early infancy these children had listened to and were familiar with pro and con discussions on slavery and the American Civil War. When the negro slaves were emancipated and many in poverty, the children had little lucky bags and used to help to collect money for their relief.

Their bed-time stories were bits from "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and one of those children, who afterwards became our beloved leader, Emmeline Pankhurst, leaves it on record that these stories made a lasting impression on her brain and character.

"They awakened in me," she says, "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."

She lived in Manchester, a city which has witnessed many stirring episodes, especially of a political character. The Manchester people were, generally speaking, liberal in their sentiments, defenders of free speech and liberty of opinion. But in the late sixties there happened one of those tragic events that proved an exception to the rule. It was the time of the Fenian Movement in Ireland.

There had been a Fenian Riot. The leaders were arrested. As the men were being taken to jail in the prison van, the van was stopped and an attempt made at rescue. The lock of the door could not be forced, and one of the would-be rescuers fired his pistol at it in an effort to break it. The bullet struck a policeman who fell mortally wounded. For this several men were arrested and charged with murder.

The subsequent trial, when three of the men were found guilty and sentenced to death caused much local excitement. Many people feeling that as the shooting had not been done with intent to kill, the charge of murder was a wrong one. But the law took its course and the men were publicly executed.

A short time after, Emmeline Goulden, as she then was, on her way home from school, passed the prison where the men had been confined. Thinking of this she looked and 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. She was transfixed with horror and in that hour she awoke to one of the most terrible facts of life—that justice and judgment often lie a world apart.

"I relate this incident of my formative years," writes Mrs. Pankhurst in "Her Own Story," "to illustrate the fact that the impressions of childhood often have more to do with character and future conduct than heredity or education."

Many people are driven to a realisation of social injustices by their own bitter personal experience—this was not the case with her. From childhood she had been surrounded by protective love in a comfortable home. But even there she realised that there was something wrong. Some false conception of family relations; some incomplete ideal. This vague indefinite feeling began to shape itself into real conviction about the time she and her brothers were sent to school.

Then, as now, a boy's education was supposed to be of much more importance than that of his sister. Father and mother talked it over and discussed it with uncles and other relations, whereas the education of herself and her sisters was

hardly talked over at all and was almost ignored by her father. She thought about this and suddenly it came to her that men apparently considered themselves superior to women and that women acquiesced in their point of view. This conviction became stronger as the years passed.

From reading the newspapers aloud to her father she had, at a very early age, developed a genuine interest in politics and as a child she thought the Reform Bill of 1866 was going to do most wonderful things for the country. The first election after that was a memorable occasion. "It is chiefly memorable to me," writes Mrs. Pankhurst in "Her Own Story," "as being the first in which I ever participated. My sister and I had just been presented with new winter frocks, green in colour, and made alike. Every girl child in those days wore a red flannel petticoat and when we first put on our frocks I was struck with the fact that we were wearing red and green, the colours of the Liberal party."

Her father being a Liberal she of course thought that the Liberals ought to win the election and she conceived a scheme for helping the party's progress. With her small sister strolling after her she walked the better part of a mile to the nearest polling booth which was in a rough factory neighbourhood. Arrived there, the two children picked up their green skirts to show off their scarlet petticoats and brimful of importance, walked up and down before the assembled crowds to encourage the Liberal vote! Outraged authority in the form of a nursery maid soon discovered them and they were taken home in disgrace.

At the age of fourteen Emmeline Goulden attended her first suffrage meeting and heard Miss Lydia Becker, the great pioneer suffragist, speak. She left that meeting a conscious and confirmed suffragist and for years she devoted all her available time, thought, and energies to constitutional work on behalf of woman's emancipation and as we know she had many opportunities as from 1870 to 1901 hardly a year passed without some Bill or Resolution being before the House of Commons. Hundreds of petitions signed by thousands of men and women were presented. Hundreds of meetings held all over the country yet it was all of no avail.

As she herself puts it, "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."

In 1894 Mrs. Pankhurst was elected a Poor Law Guardian in Manchester. She found conditions in the workhouses pretty bad. The old people, poorly fed, sitting on backless forms or benches. They had no privacy, no possessions, not even a locker. The women had no pockets even in their gowns, so that they were obliged to keep any small treasures they had inside their bodices.

Little girls, seven and eight years of age were to be found on their knees scrubbing the cold stones of the long corridors. They 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. These conditions had existed for years. The men Guardians had never noticed them or if they had, had done nothing. Soon after Mrs. Pankhurst took office, the old people were supplied with comfortable Windsor chairs to sit in, and in five years she had changed the face of the earth for the little ones, for it was mainly due to her efforts that land was bought in the country, and a cottage home provided for the children. A modern school was also built, with a gymnasium and a swimming bath, with trained teachers in charge. She was also instrumental in getting better food for the workhouse inmates, and at less cost because she fought against waste and extravagance in other ways. The difficulties she had to contend with at this time made her realise that new laws were necessary but that new laws would never be made or old ones altered, until women got the vote.

"Up to this," Mrs. Pankhurst writes, "I thought I had been a suffragist, now I began to think about the vote in women's hands, not only as a right, but as a desperate necessity."

"I am convinced," she says, "that the enfranchised women 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." (And here I should like to remind my audience that it was a woman, Queen Elizabeth, who caused the Act to be passed which brought into being our Boards of Poor Law Guardians.)

In 1898, Dr. Pankhurst died and Mrs. Pankhurst resigned her place on the Board of Guardians and was almost immediately appointed Registrar of Births and Deaths in Manchester. There again she was reminded, even more forcibly, of the little respect there was in the world for women and girls.

The district was in a working-class quarter and she instituted opening the office twice a week in the evenings.

The women and girls were glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to talk over their troubles with a Woman Registrar and many were the dreadful stories she listened to. Little girls of thirteen often came to register the births of their babies, illegitimate of course. In a number of these cases she found that the child's own father or some other near male relation was responsible for her state. There was nothing that could be done in most cases.

During her term of office a very young mother of an illegitimate child neglected her baby and it died. She was tried for murder and sentenced to death. A sentence afterwards commuted, but this experience led Mrs. Pankhurst to feel that if civilisation was to advance at all in the future it would only be through the help of women; women freed of their political shackles, women with full power to work their will in society.

In 1900 she was asked to stand as a candidate for the Manchester School Board.

Here, she found that the women cared a great deal more about their work and took more interest in the children than did the men. Yet the men were paid more and did less than the women teachers.

But instead of seeing this and realising how important it was that women should 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 and placed it in the hands of the Municipalities. School Boards were abolished altogether and the corporations had full control of both elementary and secondary education, but the law allowed the corporations to co-opt at least one woman. Manchester co-opted four of whom Mrs. Pankhurst was one.

On the strong recommendation of the Labour Party Mrs. Pankhurst was appointed to the Committee on Technical Instruction. The one woman admitted to this Committee.

She found that in the Manchester Technical College which was supposed to be the second best in Europe, spending thousands of pounds annually for technical training, that practically no training was provided for women. Even in classes where they might easily have been admitted, such as the confectionery and bakery classes, they were kept out because the men's trade unions objected to them being educated for such skilled work.

"It was," she says, "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 that class unless they lifted themselves out of it." She began to be desperate and asked herself many times what was to be done.

One day when talking over the matter with her daughters,

Christabel startled her mother with the remark, "How long you women have been trying for the vote. For my part, I mean to get it."

Thinking over this Mrs. Pankhurst wondered was there any difference between trying for the vote and getting it. Then occurred to her the idea of linking up the older suffrage workers with the young unwearied ones, and after that she and her daughters sought a way to bring this union about.

A couple of years later Susan B. Anthony visited Manchester. Christabel Pankhurst, who met her, was deeply impressed by this venerable reformer and was filled with sorrow and indignation that such a splendid worker for humanity seemed destined to die without seeing the hopes of her lifetime realised. Speaking about it Miss Pankhurst remarked, "It is unendurable to think of another generation of women wasting their lives begging for the vote. We must not lose any more time. We must act."

That declaration was the first stone laid in the foundation of the W.S.P.U. in 1903.

In 1905 another suffrage bill was before the House—the first for eight years—and the second reading was set down for Friday, 13th May. It was deliberately "talked out" by spinning out the debate on the Roadway Lighting Bill with silly jokes and foolish stories. Members of the Commons listened to this insulting performance with laughter and applause. So low had the majority of British politicians sunk.

Women waiting in the Strangers' Lobby, hearing what was happening, were indignant. Mrs. Pankhurst, who was present, seized the opportunity and called on the women to come and hold a protest meeting outside. They did, and Mrs. Wolstenholm Elmy, one of the oldest suffrage workers in England, began to speak. Immediately the police arrived and dispersed them, but the meeting was held in Broad Sanctuary. The women adopted a resolution condemning the Government's action in allowing a small minority to talk out the bill. The police this time only took their names.

This was the first militant act of the Union.

Shortly after that Miss Pankhurst and Miss Annie Kenney asked a question at Sir Edward Grey's meeting in Manchester, the question was handed round from one to the other on the platform and laughed over and ignored.

Annie Kenney, indignant, jumped to her feet and shouted out, "Will the Liberal Government give votes to women?" Immediately there was uproar and she and Miss Pankhurst were flung out of the hall. They held a meeting of protest outside, were arrested, and tried. Annie Kenney was fined five shillings or three days in prison. Christabel Pankhurst ten shillings or one week in prison; both chose prison.

I find to-day a deplorable ignorance amongst the younger generation of women as to the work of the Militant Suffrage Societies. They seem to think that we were a body of wild women out for nothing but the destruction of property and rowdy scenes in Whitehall and that all the imprisonments were for acts of violence.

The W.S.P.U. was officially started in 1903 and it was not until some years later and after hundreds of women had been arrested and sent to prison for legitimate political agitation that the first stone was flung.

The constitutional propaganda work such as meetings, lobbying, letters to the press, deputations, and petitions had gone on extensively from the moment the Union was formed. Its processions through the streets of London and its demonstrations in Hyde Park and the Albert Hall were on a scale beyond anything known before, yet Governments took no notice.

And this in a country where liberty had been founded on a Magna Charta the main clause of which is: "To none will we deny, to none will we sell, to none will we delay the right of justice."

Was it any wonder that self-respecting women rose in revolt! Any wonder that they took to other methods?

It was not that they wanted to. It was not that they liked militancy. They knew that they themselves would have to suffer but they faced it and went through with it for the sake of womanhood and humanity.

Have you ever tried to imagine what it meant to people like Mrs. Pankhurst, Lady Constance Lytton, Mrs. Haverfield, Mrs. Saul Solomon, Mrs. Brackenbury, Mrs. Clarke, and hundreds of others to go out and face a howling mob; to be harried and hustled by the police, to be arrested, tried, imprisoned, face hunger in a prison cell, and then the horrors of forcible feeding?

These women did it—many, not once but several times—for what—political freedom.

They, to quote the words of Boadicea, were in the fight "to take vengeance for liberty extinguished, their own bodies lacerated with stripes." They saw "that in that battle they must conquer or perish." Some brave souls perished, but the battle was won.

To those who have passed on we pay a silent proud tribute. To you, the newly enfranchised, we appeal. What use are you making of your freedom? To-day the whole world is faced with problems never known before. Woman's position is still far from equal. Unemployment is rife; housing conditions are appalling. Morality is slack and there are wars and rumours of wars. These questions will never

be properly tackled until women play their part on equal terms with men.

I appeal to you, young voters. Take up the torch and face the problems of to-day in the spirit of high endeavour, resolving that you will do your share, selflessly and ceaselessly to prove your right to the magnificent heritage left you, and then once more men will reverence womanhood and woman will sympathise with man and Britain will lead the world in peace and in prosperity.

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SUFFRAGETTE FELLOWSHIP.

The Suffragette Fellowship is an association of members of the former militant Suffrage societies and others who are in sympathy with the Suffragette Spirit and activities of the Fellowship. Particulars may be obtained from any of the Custodians:—

Una Duval, 16a, John Street, Adelphi, W.C. 1.	Temple Bar 6043.
Elsa Gye, Adsett, Ridgeway, Mill Hill, N.W. 7.	Finchley 1382.
Edith How-Martyn, Parliament Mansions, S.W. 1.	Victoria 4244.
Geraldine Lennox, 12, St. George's Mansions, S.W. 1.	Victoria 6096.
Winifred Mayo, 1, Selwood Place, S.W. 7.	Kensington 8451.

The Fellowship arranges celebrations of the Suffrage victories of 6th February, 1918, and 2nd July, 1928, of Mrs. Pankhurst's Birthday, 14th July, and of the first imprisonments—13th October, 1905.

An Annual Suffragette Lecture is given.

A Book of the Suffragette Prisoners is being compiled to contain photographs and short biographical notice of every Suffragette Prisoner. Prisoners are asked to send in their records and a photograph taken about the time of the imprisonment.

A Record Room has been opened where a collection is being made of Suffragette papers, letters, press-cuttings, manuscripts, books, banners, and any other interesting matter connected with the militant campaign of Votes for Women. Much valuable historical material has already been lost and all friends having records are earnestly asked to arrange to give them to the Fellowship.

~~Write to Miss Atkinson or call on her at 12, St. George's Mansions, Causton Street, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, any afternoon except Saturday and Sunday.~~

Copies of this pamphlet may be obtained from any of the Custodians. Price 3d. each.

