

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

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

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

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

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

² Keir Hardie.

CHAPTER VI

AUTOCRAT OF THE W.S.P.U.

1907-1908

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