

and my general attitude towards Life itself, made it impossible for me to regard the possibility of war as other than a supreme calamity. Yet so impervious was I even yet to belief that it might actually come to pass, that instead of rallying our people against the War I was leaving home to go to Ireland. Shocked by the news that a company of soldiers had fired on an unarmed crowd in Dublin,¹ I had decided upon a brief visit there, that I might investigate and publish the facts in my paper,² *The Women's Dreadnought*.

In my blind confidence I was not alone. No outcry against the coming war had yet been raised.

As I made my preparations for departure, the members of our Bow branch had gathered for a concert in the ramshackle little meeting hall at the rear of the house, 400 Old Ford Road, which served as a home for Norah Smyth and me and the Paynes, and as central office of the Federation.³ Only when I came to make a little farewell speech from the platform I said, in a swift flash of intuition, which assailed me as though from an outside source: "Should war be declared I shall return at once."

I passed to the grey city of Dublin, lately so melancholy in decay, now forbidding with hatred of England, displayed in its white heat at sound of every English voice—yet kindly towards me, when folk knew me as one of England's persecuted.

A little round shallow dent in the wall of a house by the Liffey, at Bachelor's Walk, a dent one could think had been scraped by a child with a rusty nail, a cross and the letters R.I.P., roughly drawn in straggling chalk lines, marked the spot where old Mrs. Duffy met her death, when the soldiers fired on a jeering crowd of children flinging bits of banana-peel. Tragic and wellnigh incredible in its cruelty, the event appeared to us then, before the War had dimmed our sense of the value of human life.

I visited the houses of sorrow and anxiety for the victims of that deed: a little boy shot in the back, a girl with her ankle shattered, a good father lying dead in the mortuary, three people killed and thirty wounded by a moment's firing.

"You killed my father!" the frail girl cried, shaking her slender fist in sobbing anger, as the troops marched by, their flashing bayonets

¹ The Irish Unionists, backed by Conservative support in Britain, had established in Northern Ireland a rebel armed force to oppose the then Home Rule Bill. The supporters of Irish self-government had retaliated by setting up the "National Volunteers." The Ulster Volunteers had landed arms without hindrance. The National Volunteers landed arms at Howth on July 26th. They were intercepted by police and military. As the British soldiers were returning to barracks they fired on a jeering crowd, mainly composed of children, at Bachelor's Walk.

² Later *The Workers' Dreadnought*.

³ The East London Federation of the Suffragettes, later Workers' Suffrage Federation, later Workers' Socialist Federation.

—great murderous ugly knives—gleaming at the end of their long guns; a strange and horrible menace to parade through the quiet streets of civilians on their peaceful rounds and children at their play. I shuddered at thought of those hideous weapons plunged in the shrinking human breast; but even yet I could not conceive of war.

On the morning of August 4th I was at the inquest on the three who were killed. Not half a dozen spectators were present. Public interest had turned from these sad proceedings to the European theatre, for already war had begun between Russia and Germany, Germany and France. In the half-light of the Court the young soldiers, whose guns had been fired, stood in the box to give testimony, their voices cowed to a whisper, weedy and undersized, mere pygmies beside the tall, athletic members of the Irish Constabulary, towering over them. The jury refused to place responsibility upon these lads, directing all blame to the Government, and asserting that the military were illegally on the streets. The verdict passed almost unnoticed—for when we awoke on August 5th we learnt that the great blow had fallen; Britain and Germany were at war!

Stunned by the news, I could not yet realise its full horror. I would take the boat home that night. In the meantime, almost automatically, I followed my previous plan, to attend the morning's sitting of the Dublin City Council. All was confusion there, the members streaming out from the Chamber, blocking the corridors in their talk. Miss Harrison, the one woman Councillor, complained that the roll-call had been taken eight minutes before the time, and the session adjourned for lack of a quorum, in order that resolutions censuring the Government might be shelved. A few of the members took up her protest, but the majority howled them down; three people dead and thirty wounded counted for nothing in the teeth of a great war—an unhappy augury of future ills.

Maud Joachim,¹ who had been my companion in Dublin, set out with me for the boat. The dark streets were densely thronged with people swarming toward the quay. Often our cab was jammed in the press, and before and behind us were many other vehicles thus stayed. On a jaunting car a woman clung to her man, weeping aloud in complete abandon. It was not a pleasant crowd, neither light-hearted, nor earnest with enthusiasm, but irritable and inclined to wrath. Curses flew freely and impatient altercations rose. Occasionally we heard a faint cheer on the outskirts, but sombre gloominess brooded over all. The dense, dark masses of people, surging about the station, seemed like a human sea, beating against our little vehicle. Suddenly, clinging to our cab door, as a drowning man to a spar, appeared a thick-set, strange old man, with weird, wild red-grey locks and spreading beard. Inaudible in the deafening din, by gestures he assumed control of me. I hastily parted from Maud Joachim, as he seized a bag of mine in either hand, and hurling himself among the people, attempted to force a passage for himself and me to the great closed door of the boat station.

¹ Niece of the great violinist and active as a Suffragette.

I sat between Norah Smyth and good Mrs. Payne, the shoemaker, on the sofa in my workroom, repeating my thesis: "This war, like the Boer War and all the others we have known, is fought for material gains. It is not glorious and noble, but a hideous blot on the escutcheon of the European Governments, a huge and shameful loss to humanity."

Norah Smyth wrinkled a puzzled brow. She had taken on the look which always accompanied her oft-used phrase: "I have a dishevelled brain!"

"If Mrs. Payne and I were France and Germany, and you were Belgium, would you think it right for us to fight out our quarrel on top of you?" she queried.

"You must look deeper and further into it than that, Smyth, if you want to understand it," I told her.

Mrs. Payne, her work-seamed hand on my knee, affectionate, confiding, reached up her worn, pale face to me, appealing: "You see, Miss Pankhurst, it's like this . . ."

As children unable to comprehend the long words in the story-book, they stared at me, nonplussed; their minds all dazed and glamourised by the torrents of Press rhetoric, and the atmosphere of excitement and rumour growing apace in every street. I saw in those two questioners the type of millions. How should one rend from their eyes the veil of illusion, how unravel for them the tangled and knotted skein? Behind the miseries of "Little Belgium" torn by contending armies, unseen by these two beside me, so innocent and so ignorant, was the avid struggle of the governments of the Great Powers for dominance; the fierce rivalries of their naval and military chiefs; financiers, company promoters, civil engineers, greedy for concessions; manufacturers and merchants demanding raw materials on favoured terms, and monopoly of closed markets for their wares; armament makers eagerly seeking occasion for their hideous products. In the great chaos and tortuous convolutions of this unbodied thing we call Capitalism, wherein too often we are as corks, tossed on the ocean, all this was vague, amorphous. How could one make it plain to those whose untutored minds craved only for curt, net slogans?

They plied me with simple, foolish questions:

"What would you do if you saw a great strong man killing a baby?"

"Suppose I pointed a pistol at you?"

"It was them as started it first: are we to let 'em go on till they've killed everyone?"

To write on the tablets of their consciousness the truth as I saw it, seemed to exile them to some far-off purgatory, remote from the easy heaven of their desires. They flinched from the huge conception that a perpetual reaching out for new fields of exploitation was inherent to the Capitalist system. To show them that the rivalry of the Governments to secure preferential opportunities for their Nationals was the vast master-cause of the War, was to thrust on them a vision of human Society, ruthless and without scruple as the grip of the boa-constrictor upon the lamb. It was to tear from them the tinsel and the glory,

to send their souls shivering and naked into a grey, cold world of disillusion, peopled by harsh and revolting truths. How could I give them back joy and confidence in the teeth of that shattering knowledge? How convey to them, as a living certainty, my own unfaltering belief in a Society, consciously and concertedly providing for the needs of the world's population, estimating it, catering for it, eliminating scarcity, and avoiding glut? How convince them that to-day's haphazard production of commodities, turned out without measure to compete for buyers in the world market, is destined to be outlived by advancing humanity; to become the horrified amazement of the historian, when a co-operative social system has made possible a general spirit of fraternity unknown to-day?

in it. Such social experiments as the toy factory might well have veiled from me its sorrows, but for the daily contact I had with the maimed and bereaved.

The new type of baby doll received instant popularity. The Women's Emergency Corps presently produced a rival to it, less artistic, more grotesque, but more quickly and easily made, and therefore cheaper. To fill these dolls was so simple that the Queen on a visit to the work-room was said to have stuffed one.

Hilda Jeffries, who came to us from the Chelsea Polytechnic, had remarkable aptitude for toy designing. She poured out monkeys, extraordinarily alive and knowing, playful lambs, saucy terriers, a stream of successes which took repeat orders for years. Factories of all sorts began making soft toys. The many varieties we know to-day were not seen before the War. The Teddy bear and the flat-faced rag doll practically monopolised the field.

Dolls with hard heads and limbs were more difficult. Edith Downing, a sculptor who had been a militant of the W.S.P.U., modelled for us one of the first of them with a pretty child's head, far removed from the conventional doll. I got it very efficiently reproduced by a manufacturer, somewhere in London, who before the War pretended his goods were French, because British dolls were regarded as mere imitations of no account. I essayed to get a china reproduction from the Potteries. After many enquiries a firm agreed to do it; but though the sample seemed just passable, the bulk delivery was exceedingly bad; the colour fugitive, the glaze uneven and sticky-looking. We did not adventure any further in the china dolls, but the firm which had sent us a barrel-load of failures and other potteries persevered in the quest.

We were able to watch the progress of other factories at the exhibitions of British toys which the Board of Trade organised periodically for the new toy industry.

The management of the factory was a source of anxiety. One morning in the early stages a Polish woman, perhaps thirty-five years of age, came to me with a letter from Keir Hardie, to whom she had gone with a letter from someone else. Pale and crushed-looking, she said she had come to London to organise an exhibition of Swiss products, which had been abandoned on account of the War. She pleaded that she was utterly stranded. She told me she had previously been employed in the management, though not the technical management, of a philanthropic training school for corset-making in Switzerland. Her English was broken and scanty; but I assumed she could add up a column of figures, and engaged her forthwith to keep the books at the factory, then just beginning. She knew nothing of commercial book-keeping, but I telephoned to my uncle, Herbert Goulden, who dealt in paper and book-cloth in the City, to come over and tutor her; which he did very kindly several times a week till she knew the ropes. Very soon she was manager of the factory; the self-effacing Joachim quickly slipped away, leaving her dominant. In those days the manageress professed for me un-

alterable devotion, flinging her arms around me with ecstatic cries: "Ah, Miss Pankhurst! Sweet! Sweet!" and declaring that flowers should spring from the ground where I trod. I pitied her as a woman alone and bereaved. Insistent in her demands for the factory she would conjure me, in the name of Karl Marx, whenever I cited finances as an obstacle to her wishes. As a "clerical worker" she must be employed shorter hours than the toy-makers, on no account beginning till 10 a.m. This was an established Trade Union principle.

I found myself under the constant necessity of inspecting the factory products. Many times in the early days I had to stop batches of dolls and toys going out, and Smyth and I had to put other things aside to work late at night, touching up painted toys, re-fastening dolls' wigs, renovating dolls' clothes. More than once I went to the factory early and discovered the young girls playing ball with the toys, which got thumbled and soiled in the process. When the enthusiasm of learning a new toy had evaporated and output failed to keep pace with anticipations, I suggested that piece rates might be a regrettable necessity to enable the toys to pay their way, but the tenets of Karl Marx were cited as an insurmountable barrier with so much vehemence that I capitulated.

Pricing, of which I had learnt the rule of thumb from my mother's Manchester adventure in shopkeeping, was Greek to the staff. The first toys despatched to Selfridges went out without a delivery note, and this big firm declared it contrary to their custom to pay unless delivery could be proved. All such failings I strove to remedy. Generous helpers responded to my appeals. Amongst others an I.L.P. traveller in fancy goods, Mr. Durant of Birmingham, gave coaching in business management. A Suffragette comrade, whose fine sewing was a marvel, taught our workers some of her craft and her pride in it. Little Agnes Kirner gazed at her with admiration, and wept with disappointment when her own sewing failed to reach the standard. Smyth poured some hundreds of her modest inheritance into the factory, others gave smaller sums.

One evening, long after war work had liquidated unemployment, and the Queen Mary Rooms were no more, and after many declarations that unless the factory could be made self-supporting it must close, Smyth and I went sadly thither, to say that the closing time had come. All responded with proposals to take reduced wages until they could pull up output. Karl Marx now was ousted in favour of "your great economists, Stuart Mill and Adam Smith." The manageress urged the piece rates she had denounced. Smyth provided a little more capital from her inheritance. Later, when the corner was turned successfully, Dr. Tchaykovsky deposited shares to guarantee the factory an overdraft in the slack summer season.

Our manageress blossomed into a capable saleswoman, a watchful manager, keen to reduce prices, demanding that the number of designs should be limited, and the style of the toys be altered, in order that the price might be brought down. Commercial necessity was crushing most

break. I often had to go back to the diets I had used when recovering from the hunger strike; days of hot water, days of white of egg and water, then gradually prune juice and dried biscuits, a teaspoonful of scraped raw beef, or an all-fruit diet, assisted at times by dried seaweed. With such expedients I kept on, unceasing.

Tracing the sums due to the women was a tedious business. Paymasters wrote in pencil, their writing often almost illegible. Army departments contradicted each other, failed to keep their own rules, and made unconscionable muddles.

The unmarried wife of a soldier came crying to me from Bethnal Green, bringing three little children between three years and three months. Her man, who was now wounded and in hospital, had allotted her 9s. a week, but neither the allotment nor any other money had reached her in the three months since he was called up, save small doles amounting to 39s. 9d. from the S.S.F.A. She had pawned all her furniture and was in desperate straits. Should her man die before the allotment question were settled, she would probably get no pension of any sort.

A woman whose separation allowance was 18s. 6d. a week, had 10s. a week deducted from it, to repay some doles she had had from the S.S.F.A., which amounted to 50s., and which she had not known to be loans. In dozens of cases I was pleading with the authorities that if they would insist upon recovering such doles, the repayments should be in very small sums.

A Bow Reservist, set to guard Wapping tunnel, came over to see me. Called up fourteen days before, he had had no pay, and had only managed to get a loan of five shillings from the colour-sergeant to bring home. He had Army rations, of course, but his wife had no money to feed his five little children. On their account he had hurried here. His baby was ill and his wife—little wonder—was far from well. I telephoned to the local S.S.F.A. The office was closed. The officials were not present on Wednesdays, a charwoman said. The soldier blasphemed when he heard it. Relieved when I told him Nurse Hebbes should go round to supply his family with their immediate needs, he talked of his own hardships. He and his mates were sleeping in their clothes on the floor of the ladies' waiting-room in the railway station. They got little rest, for they were forbidden even to take off their belts, and officers came round frequently to inspect them. Their uniform was arriving by instalments. He showed me some of the garments marked "made in Germany." "It's a fool's trick," he grumbled, "taking me from my work in Bow to guard that tunnel. There's men in Wapping out of work could do it, and sleep in their own beds!"

CHAPTER X

BEARDING HERBERT SAMUEL—THE BITTER BREAD OF CHARITY

APPEALS poured in on us:

"Will you open a workroom for the poor women in Hackney Road or Mansford Street? I am a poor mother with two sons at the War and I am nearly starving. If we ask for help we are told to sell our homes. We have plenty of people coming to enquire all our business, and then walking away."

"Chronic poverty"; thus lightly the Pharisees dismissed this lack which seared my heart. People in terrible need constantly appealed to us. Often I was constrained to take the food from our table to give to starving people, sometimes the blankets from our beds. Smyth had a board in her room covered with little bits of paper intended to record the repayments of unfortunate people to whom she had lent her money. Once, twice, thrice, even four times they might come with their pennies and shillings; then, almost invariably, they broke down. "Do not lend," I begged her; "they cannot repay except by starving their children. Give what you can afford and leave the rest."

An inquest on a Southwark baby revealed that a man working short time and his wife and six children had been struggling to exist on 12s. 6d. a week, out of which 6s. 6d. had to be paid in rent. The baby at fifteen months weighed only 7 lbs. 6 ozs., instead of the normal 18 to 20 lbs. They had had no relief from any source. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes." A poor charwoman went to the caretaker of a mission house in Notting Dale, crying: "I haven't had any food for three or four days, I have strangled my little boy!" She was tried for the murder of the two-year old boy and sentenced to ten years penal servitude. It was admitted that she was suffering from lack of food. Though sometimes relieved, we were informed in Poplar that charwomen were "casual" workers, ineligible for aid from the National Relief Fund; this being the opinion of a Local Government Board Inspector.

Beside the time-honoured Poor Law disability there were all sorts of foolish and cruel restrictions against granting these or those children the free school meals, which should have helped to protect the children from hardship—the children had been having the meals already a certain time (though the family income, so far from improving, had actually been reduced). The school meals were indeed nothing to

It was on December 16th that German warships shelled West Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough, and departed unhindered. A storm of imprecations rose. Winston Churchill's denunciation of the German raiders as "baby killers" was widely echoed. Only a few of us found voice to answer: "This is war." Ignored was the fact that our British blockade would destroy vastly more children by starvation in neutral, as well as in enemy countries, than would be injured in all the bombardments.

In the brief Christmas days, when the slackening of propaganda gave me a respite, I went with Smyth to see the havoc wrought by the Scarborough bombardment. Travelling by night we arrived in a cheerless dawn. The sky and sea were a leaden grey. The big amusement "palaces" on the front were scarred and battered by shell-fire, iron columns twisted and broken, brickwork crumbling, windows gone. Yawning breaches disclosed the pictures and furnishings, riddled and rent by the firing, dimmed and discoloured by blustering winds and spray. The little steep streets, leading up from the foreshore, were barred by wire entanglements—the first I had ever seen—great stakes driven into the ground, with a mass of stout barbed wire threaded around and around them, and tangled about between. At many points were high barricades of sand-filled sacks, with a row of loopholes for the rifles.

We knocked at one of the sea-front boarding houses. The woman who opened to us was weary and dishevelled as though she had spent the night out in the storm. She gazed at us, startled and hostile, when we asked for a lodging. When we urged that we had come from London and understood she was accustomed to let, she hesitated suspiciously, then reluctantly explained that she had promised to hold herself in readiness to receive any shipwrecked seamen who might be saved from drowning. "I've been up with them all night—some of 'em's gone, some of 'em's still here. We have to put 'em in hot blankets as soon as they're carried in."

"But there won't be another wreck to-night!" we essayed, rather feebly, to rally her.

"There were three lots brought in here yesterday, and two the day before," she answered mournfully, and pointed to the many craft out in the bay, telling us they were all minesweepers engaged in the perilous work of clearing away explosive mines laid by the German warships and daily causing the loss of many vessels.

This was an aspect of the German visit not recorded in the Press. In our ignorance of war, we heard her with shocked surprise.

She agreed at last that we should stay with her, on condition that we would leave at once if another party of shipwrecked mariners were brought in. Barely an hour had passed when her daughter flung open our door:

"Another boat's blown up! You'll have to go!"

Out we went to the blast. Groups of shawl-wrapped women were gazing seaward. "They've landed some of them at that slip," a woman told us, and pointed to a small dingy brown steamer with a cluster of people looking down at her from the quay. "A motor-car's gone off with one of them—he was covered with a white sheet!" a shrill voice cried; and even as the words were uttered another car dashed away. A bent old crone ran by us wailing: "He was a young man with black hair; with thick black hair; his head was all smashed in!"

Groups of people moved about us, awestruck, with a hand shading the eyes, gazing out to sea, or across to the little steamer at the end of the slip.

Someone advised us to enquire for lodgings at a near-by cottage, the front door of which opened directly on to the foreshore. A fisherman in his blue jersey was seated by the fire; his wife was too much troubled by the peril of the men out there in the bay, to consider whether or not she would give us a bed. She talked to us a long time before she could bring her mind to it. She spoke of the bombardment; it was terrible, the noise so loud, so fearfully loud, she thought she must go mad. Little children were killed; many people were injured. "A lady who not five days before was singing in this Bethel" was helping a poor old woman down into her cellar, when she was struck dead by a piece of shell. No one knew when it might happen again; people could not settle down to ordinary life; all sense of security was destroyed. Her husband and the other fishermen were prohibited from following their calling because of the mines. Their means of support was stopped; yet he was best at home; yes, even if they should have to starve! She had a son in the Navy and a son-in-law on a mine-sweeper; that was enough!

It had been a hard year in Scarborough; the holiday-makers had cancelled their bookings when war broke out. If they had only paid a little for the rooms it would have helped poor people. The big hotels had compelled their clients to pay in full, but little lodging-house keepers could not enforce their contracts. She could not understand the War. She could not understand why Scarborough had been left without protection—why there were no guns. "The War's nothing to us—we didn't want it! Cleverer people than us know what it's for!" So she ran on with bitterness, until at last, having grown used to us, she said that we might stay.

Later her daughter looked in to speak with us. She too must talk of the bombardment; it had terrified her inexpressibly and had seemed to last for years. People could not sleep now; many would not even go to bed. Everyone had a bundle made up in readiness for flight; but how little one could carry in a bundle! One could not afford to move one's home; and one's living was here in Scarborough. A widow she knew had her boarding-house, her only means of livelihood, completely smashed and shattered. When would it be rebuilt? She shook her head. I asked her what was being done to relieve distress. Not much, she thought, and laughed ironically. "They only think of asking

I wanted to see my mother ; much as her war attitude grieved me, far apart as our views had grown, I could not be in Paris, where her home was then, without a visit to her.

We found her at her fireside with Sister Pine. She would speak of nothing but the War, talking fast and emphatically, obviously perceiving—though we did not gainsay her by a single word—the opposition in our hearts.

I listened unhappily, speechless, resolved to occasion no quarrel. When she demanded suddenly : “ What are *you* doing ? ” with a strain of contemptuous irony in her voice, which I well knew from childhood, I answered only : “ In the East End.”

When Norah Smyth added : “ We have been to Scarborough,” Mrs. Pankhurst turned on her a tirade, declaring it impossible to police a vast coast-line such as ours when every man and every ounce of ammunition was needed at the Front. Then she reverted to the bellicose thesis which Christabel, now her unchallenged mentor, was propounding at the time : The blockade ! A war of attrition ! Intern them all ! She seemed a very Maenad of the War with her flashing eyes.

We were distant from each other as though a thousand leagues had intervened ; an aching void, in truth ; for we were near, so poignantly near in the memory of old efforts and old loves. My senses were bruised by each familiar mannerism employed to accentuate these unfamiliar themes. A sad anti-climax to a life's struggle—the thought knelled like a death bell in my brain. I was glad to get away, exhausted by sorrow.

At Senlis, we were told, we should most readily see the damage done by the German advance in the first weeks of the War. The destruction was more hideously complete than I had imagined possible. The buildings had been systematically demolished and reduced to mere heaps of debris. It was difficult to realise that these deserted ruins had so lately been inhabited. A solitary woman stood sorrowing beside the charred remains of her home.

I preferred to talk with him of his efforts to secure clean and pure milk for children. Sybil Smith had impressed on me his crystalline virtue. It was said that his wife, already notorious for her sauciness, had been lucky to secure so good a man.

It seemed to me strange in the midst of the Great War to be filing out with the women, while the men sat on chatting over their wine, as they did in the time of our grandfathers. In the rush of an agitator's life, I had forgotten that such foolish customs still obtained. I wondered at this huge company gathered here, this great extravagance and display, and thought of the poor little homes in Bow, and our own frugal household. Smyth, just then, had decided that to spare more of our cash for the movement, and to leave more food for others, we must substitute margarine for butter, and maize for wheat-flour, and make other such economies. How tiny appeared such little sacrifices as we could yet make, in face of these huge luxuries! How amazing the futility of this life, upborn by the underworld of toil and striving I knew so well. . . .

My Sybil had vanished. Bereft of her company, I ensconced myself lonely on an ottoman. A troupe of lovely beings bore down on me. "What are you doing in war work?" a clear voice asked me.

"Nothing!" I answered with passion. "I am not connected with the War!"

"Of course we are all connected with the War!" the beauty answered haughtily.

The lovely women turned their backs on me. I felt the icy atmosphere of their disdain. . . .

Sybil reappeared. The men began to straggle in. Tall Lord Eustace Percy, pallid and drooping, was one of the first. A sister of Mrs. Astor, a slender sylph, clearer of feature, fairer, more flaxen, was at the moment explaining to Sybil, politely interested and admiring, that the dress she was wearing, with an ingenious waist belt, was the creation of her "little maid"—doubtless a war economy!

"How would you like to have a dress like that, Lord Eustace?" said Sybil, smiling indulgently.

I had slipped into the corner of a sofa. Balfour came in with a crowd of admiring old fogies and seated himself beside me. He spoke of some non-political subject of current interest. The sylph of the waist belt took the vacant place on his other hand, and sang negro folk songs to her banjo; her voice was soft, her ditties plaintive. Balfour bent towards her, ogling foolishly, with compliments a trifle too fulsome, in the manner of a dying epoch, wherein women were merely toys. . . .

When the songster was tired, an American journalist declaimed in raucous tones on the march of the German armies into Belgium, endeavouring to make our flesh creep by his story. He had witnessed them passing through some hamlet where he was staying. "For forty hours, tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp! this machine went on!"



Topical

DURING THE ANTI-GERMAN RIOTS

With such chilling and bitter sarcasm the ardent idealism of the pioneer is ever met ; yet the true pioneers fling out their golden conceptions on the world, recking not of obstacles, serene in their faith.

From French Suffragists came equally emphatic denunciations. An American woman who considered joining the Women's International Congress Movement sent a copy of its objects to ex-President Roosevelt : he condemned them as "silly and base."

Mrs. Astor wrote to me that she would never have invited me to her house, had she known I would offer to attend such a Congress. She added that she had learnt we were paying £1 a week in the toy factory, instead of the 10s. of the Queen Mary Rooms. Had she known it she would not have aided us. Many members of the Women's Social and Political Union, who during its inactivity had worked for our Federation, now sheered off and left us. Some even of those who had professed internationalist and pacifist views now rallied to their old allegiance to Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel ; some hesitated, uncertain what course to take. Many subscribers to our work for mothers and children withdrew. By every post came letters refusing further support. "Subscribers are falling off like dead leaves at the end of the season !" I said to Smyth, but we held on, redoubling our efforts, that those who depended on us might not suffer. Many times, before and since, the choice came to me, whether for the sake of the work I was doing, to stay my hand and remain silent, or to speak and do what I believed to be right, knowing that through me, all else that I was prominently engaged in would suffer attack and perhaps extinction. I was guided by the opinion that freedom of thought and speech is more important than any good which can ever come of concealing one's views, and by the knowledge that in the hour of its greatest unpopularity the pioneering cause needs one most. Yet it was often hard to choose thus sternly, flying in the face of what seemed prudent, casting to the winds the result of laborious effort ; hard, not on my own account ; for I had shed all personal aims when I gave up painting in the years of the Suffragette struggle before the War ; hard only on account of the work I was striving to do, and the people who looked to me for aid. On this occasion we weathered the storm. Smyth came forward as usual with donations and loans, writing off most of the latter, too, as donations, when she found, as financial secretary, they were too hard to repay. New workers and subscribers came gradually in to replace the departed.

The women of Russia, Germany, Austria, France and Belgium were permitted to proceed to the Congress ; but the British Government, having directed the Press abuse of our mission, refused to let British women go. McKenna, at one point, conceded to Miss Courtney and Miss Marshall, who were conducting the negotiations, that passports should be issued to twenty women of discretion, whom he selected from the two hundred. Some of the chosen were quite flattered by his choice : such phrases as : "They don't mind when they feel they can really trust you" fell from their lips. It is impossible to describe the atmosphere of repression which overhung the movement. Vain efforts

at diplomacy attempted to parry opposition. In the *Dreadnought* I had written of the Women's Peace Conference at The Hague. I received a letter of protest from Miss Crystal MacMillan of the British Committee for the Congress :

"British Committee of the
International Women's Congress.

"DEAR MISS PANKHURST,

"It has been pointed out to us that in the *Woman's Dreadnought* you speak of this International Congress as a 'Peace Congress.' This is giving rise to a good deal of misunderstanding, as the Congress cannot fairly be so described. The definition of the terms of peace is the only point in connection with peace on which it expresses an opinion or makes a demand. To call it a 'Peace Conference' gives the impression that its object is to demand peace at any price. We shall be very glad, therefore, if you will do what you can to remove the false impression which has been created.

"C. MACMILLAN."

Alas, for the caution and confidence of the chosen ladies ; McKenna, for all his promises, did not permit them to sail. Miss Courtney, it is true, had been too sharp for him. When he assured her : "Of course I should have no objection to issue permits to you and Miss Marshall," she answered : "I will take mine now," and was allowed to proceed. The others were kept waiting expectant, until the eleventh hour. On one occasion McKenna assured them that he would have issued the necessary permits to them there and then ; but the official whose duty it was to affix his signature to the documents had left the office for the night. It would be quite out of order for himself, or anyone save that particular official to sign. On their final visit he assured the chosen ladies that he would assuredly have let them travel at last ; but, to his great regret, "the boats had stopped running" on account of a great event of which they would certainly read in the Press. No notice of the event ever appeared. The ladies declared they had been tricked. The rest of us were curtly and frankly informed that no permits to attend the Congress were being issued.

Having no illusion that I might receive a permit, I had drafted a series of resolutions to be sent to the Congress. These covered the abolition of secret and sectional treaties and alliances and the creation of a permanent peace treaty uniting all nations ; the abolition of national armies and navies ; the democratisation of the international Court of Arbitration and the extension of its scope. I showed the resolutions to Keir Hardie ; he took the sheets from me eagerly. "This is important," he said, in his forceful way, and urged me to propose that a committee be appointed by the Congress to consider such proposals. "Then something may come of it," he said. We did not know that the American delegates to the Congress, amongst whom was Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, had held a preliminary conference on their voyage from New York and had worked out a similar programme.

induce the Executive to call a week's Conference to debate such international questions, then to the fore, as the Freedom of the Seas, Disarmament, the Self-Determination of Oppressed Nationalities and so on! Protracted as the task was, it was accomplished at length! When I returned to the East End after these lengthy sittings, to find myself obliged to cut out sleep, and work forty-eight hours, with scarcely a break, to cope with the arrears which had accumulated during my absence, I often told my East End colleagues I should prefer to resign from the W.I.L. "Oh, do stay there and leaven them!" Norah Smyth and others urged me: but I did so reluctantly. In the East End we were equally powerless to stay the hideous progress of the War; but we could alleviate some of its miseries. To me it was essential to be able to voice my opinions spontaneously, and without fear or favour. To trim one's statements, in order to conciliate influential opinion, oppressed me with a sense of insincerity.

CHAPTER XX

THE MUNITION WORKERS—SHORTAGE OF MUNITIONS—GOVERNMENT
APPEAL TO WOMEN

THE hardships and dangers of munition work began to appear. On March 15th W. C. Anderson complained in the House of Commons that at Armstrong Whitworth's Elswick factory women were employed seven days a week for upwards of twelve hours a day. They got from 8s. to 11s. a week with a bonus forfeited for failure to work Sundays. Some of the girls had worked 20 hours at a stretch and 95 hours a week. Two girls had died of dope poisoning at the Army aeroplane works at Crayford, and when the first death occurred, 43 others were found to be seriously affected by the fumes.

News was coming through that the failure of the British attempt to drive back the German lines at Neuve Chapelle had been due to shortage of munitions. To the jingo super-patriot, failure to excel must needs be criminal: Asquith, the War Office, Kitchener, each and all had a share of execration from the extreme jingoes. Nowadays, military experts write dispassionately that the British military authorities were unversed in trench warfare, and slower than the Germans to appreciate the huge scale of the ammunition required and that British weapons were crudely inferior to the German. From the national arsenal at Woolwich came complaints that the men and machines there were, even then, not fully employed, and that before the War and since, the national armament factories had gone short of work in order that more orders might be given to the private armament firms. It was alleged that private firms had been subsidised to keep up equipment in case of war, but had not fulfilled their contracts in this respect.

Undoubtedly the munitions were inadequate to the vast scale of hostilities. The Government was abused for lack of forethought, for sloth and inefficiency. The attack was hastily diverted from the Government and the armament firms, to the munition workers overwhelmed by excessive toil. A twelve hour day and seven day week had become usual and was often exceeded in the munition factories. Nevertheless, Lloyd George received a deputation of employers who declared that drunkenness, and bad time-keeping in the factories were hindering the supply of munitions to the trenches. Under his sponsorship their charges were given wide currency as incontrovertible fact. Keir Hardie, acutely ill, flashed out a protest:¹

¹ At a demonstration held in connection with the I.L.P. Annual Conference at Norwich.

At the "Mothers' Arms" Nurse Hebbes was weighing grey powders. She beamed on me with her happy smile. What an air of radiance that girl had! "We shall have to give Mrs. Harter's sister a job here," I told her. "She can bring the baby with her. It is the only thing to be done with them for the present." She smiled at me under drooped lashes: "All right!" she said, replacing her stock. "Shall I go and tell her at once?"

Mrs. Payne opened the door to me, plaintive:

"That chap's gone away and never married that young woman—Ain't it all right? Mrs. Harter's been here crying for you."

"I know. Don't worry, he will come back again. Get Miss Cohen for me, please, Mrs. Payne."

My secretary came in, grave-browed, rosy lips pursed, notebook and pencil ready.

"Bodger;¹ you know his number?"

She nodded, and I began:

"Dear Mr. Bodger,

"I hope you will let us arrange a little wedding breakfast for you at the Women's Hall. Please let me have the date of your marriage when it is fixed. . . ."

Smyth and I went shares in the cost. The nursery helpers did the rest. It was all very gay; Nurse Hebbes with the baby, little Mrs. Fern presenting flowers to the bride. Bodger appeared as a model bridegroom, painfully inarticulate; but managing to stammer some sentences in reply to a toast—a poor specimen, weak and garrulous, yet with something keen and ferrety about the nose and eyes which made one think of a sharp fox-terrier dog. The bride, with her heavy face, dull-eyed and indifferent, staggered out on her crutch.

"It is doubtful whether I have committed a mortal sin in helping to tie those two together permanently," I said to Hebbes and Smyth. "She will get her separation allowance now, but they will produce more children!"

In a week Bodger appeared again: "It is cruel; they've took out all my teeth!"

Four years had passed. I hurried through the cheerless purlois of

¹ This name is fictitious.

the New North Road in the grey winter afternoon. A knot of people had gathered. A speaker shouted hoarsely from the soap-box. At sight of me he leapt down, leaving another to take his place, and came to me at a run. It was Bodger: "They've only given me 11s. 6d. pension. They took out all my teeth and never give me any more! Can't you see into it. . . ."

making; the Hendon aeroplane works paying women 3d. per hour, at work for which men got 10d. per hour; women booking clerks at Victoria Station getting 15s. a week, though the men they replaced got 35s.; and so on, in district after district, trade after trade. The majority of the women war workers on time rates were getting from 6s. to 18s. per week, a relatively small number on piece rates making from 6s. to 7s. a week to £1 or £1 5s. od. Firms like Bryant and May's, the match makers, were now making munitions. Accustomed to employ large numbers of women and girls at ill-paid work, they knew by long experience that piece rates would secure them a higher production than could be induced by a bonus. Without a care for pre-war standards, in a trade new to their factory, they had fixed for munition work, often perilous and heavy, similar sweated piece rates to those paid for matches.

I told Dr. Addison that when I had published, under the heading, "Records of Disgraceful Sweating," the fact that Maconochies in their East End works were employing women at 13s. 9d. for a 55 hour week, pushing trucks weighing 50 to 75 lbs., the firm had protested that 13s. 9d. was "the recognised Government rate of pay for a 55 hour week." A copy of that letter I left for Lloyd George to study for himself.

Mrs. Cressall said that her husband had worked in a white lead works for seventeen years—a dangerous trade in which the workers ran the risk of a serious form of industrial poisoning. His wage was 26s. for a 60 hour week; a starvation wage. This firm was now gradually discharging men and replacing them by boys at 17s. a week. Other such firms were employing women at a still lower wage.

We left reminders that women and girls were still working both by night and day on 12 hour shifts, and that many girls fell asleep on the night shift. Mrs. Leigh Rothwell of the National Federation of Women Workers, who was with us, cited instances of women at that time working from 7.30 a.m. to 11 p.m.¹ and of women standing at work all day on floors covered with water, for lack of the little care which would have provided a grating to raise them above the wet.

We complained of the injurious working of the Munitions Tribunals. Men employed under the Trade Union rate of pay were appealing to the tribunals for leave to go where they would get the standard rate of wages and were meeting with refusals, workers were appealing in vain for leaving certificates, though the firms for which they were nominally working had nothing for them to do.

Dr. Addison told us that the Munitions Department had all the problems we had mentioned "acutely in mind"; and as soon as it had time to do so, it would set up excellent conditions for the workers. His promise carried no conviction; we knew that the war machine would grind on without heed, and that only by strenuous agitation would the smallest ameliorations be secured for the poor drudges who served it.

¹ It was disclosed in the House of Commons that thousands of boys from 14 to 16 years were working from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. on night duty at Woolwich Arsenal. Many of them lived long distances from their work.

The National Register was in being. Clearly I could not sign it. For me that would be an act of treachery to conviction. I could not give my name to aid the slaughter in this war, fought on both sides for grossly material ends, which did not justify the sacrifice of a single mother's son. Clearly I must continue to oppose it, and expose it, to all whom I could reach with voice or pen. Clearly I must declare that the "National Service" in industry the Government was proposing, was not the collective action of a free people agreeing on equal terms to subordinate their individual ends for the common weal, but the enslavement of the many for the profit of the few.

Yet I was surrounded by masses of poor women who had taken war work, soldiers' clothes and equipment, munitions, whatever came, as the sole means of keeping them and theirs from starvation. Inevitably they passed to war work as peace employment failed. For these women the fight against sweating must be maintained. I announced my own refusal to sign the Register and urged all who had decided to take war work under the Register to stipulate for the standard rate of wages hitherto paid for the job, with the war increases or bonuses paid in the case of men.

Smyth and I and some others of our Federation in the East End who refused registration went scot-free in respect of penalties. We were told that the officials at the Town Hall had filled up the forms for us to avoid trouble. That may have been so, and I can believe that some of the Councillors helped to supply the particulars; but naturally we had no certificates of registration, and when, later in the War, certain articles of food were rationed, we received no ration tickets. We counted it a little price to pay for our convictions. Some registration resisters up and down the country were left unmolested, but some were fined and had their goods distrained. Some were sent to gaol, though the Act made no mention of imprisonment. One of these was James Sellar, who had come from Australia as a boy to escape compulsory military training on conscientious grounds. Mrs. Girdlestone, the wife of a Bristol clergyman, was sent to prison for fourteen days. She hunger-struck and forcible feeding was decided on, though her heart and lungs were defective. Her doctor, however, paid her fine. Mrs. Garner, one of our members, was ordered five weeks' imprisonment. Alice Heale, an old member of the W.S.P.U., on refusal to sign the register, was discharged by the magistrate as a "pauper lunatic" and committed to the care of her sister. Miss K. A. Raleigh, another Suffragette, was fined because she had entered "Members of Parliament" as persons partially dependent on her, had stated she would only undertake war work if paid a man's wage for it, and that she considered women ought to have the vote.

Already young men who opposed the War were banding themselves together to oppose conscription. Stanley Rogers, the secretary of the Letchworth Anti-Conscription League, was imprisoned for refusing to register.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ANOTHER WAR CHRISTMAS

IT was the second Christmas of the War. I had a longing to go to Merthyr Tydfil, to renew myself in the communion of memory with him who had made the name of that place a household word. Smyth and I and Jim went down there together, enjoying long walks over the mountains, and pleasant meetings with comrades, gathered together as a little company of believers, working and hoping for the dawn of Peace to break, in a world distraught by war. Harry Morris, a frail, small man, rejoicing in regular practice with the Dowlais Male Voice Choir, and toiling with devoted zeal in the business management of the I.L.P., showed us his cherished collection of Keir Hardie letters. Originally a miner, Morris had been victimised for his Socialist activities, and was now an insurance agent. Obligated by this business to take long tramps over the mountains in all weathers, he often arrived home in a state of exhaustion which aroused the concern of his sharp-tongued, warm-hearted sister, who was always tender and considerate towards him. Their brother Tom, a clever fellow, who had gained his position by evening study, was manager of a mine at Troedyrhiw. In the hard days of unemployment and reaction after the War, he too was victimised, on his brother's account.

We helped the I.L.P. women members to dress the tree for a children's party, and later heard the children sing the verses Keir Hardie had written for the melody of the Welsh anthem. A vision of him crossed my eyes, as he came from the station that Easter I was in Merthyr, a scurry of children to meet him, his firm steps brought to a standstill by the clasp of a toddler's arms about his leg.

Back again at Old Ford, our New Year opened with children's parties in Bow, Poplar, and Canning Town. Children are only children once; we wanted to compensate them as far as we could for the dark days of war. In Bow Baths were gathered more than 900 children of our members, and two nights later a crowd of the members themselves. Smyth's whimsical cousin Georgie Mackey gave a huge Christmas tree, and Smyth, disguised as Father Christmas, presented the gifts. George Lansbury and his friend Hobday provided a marionette show. Dr. Harry Schütze of the Lister Institute, and his wife who writes stories as Henrietta Leslie, had arranged a spring pageant. Its flowers were our East End blooms: dark Mary Carr from poor little Ranwell Street, where people all helped each other, the two pretty Cohens, one as slender as the lily she represented

and the other, Nellie, my secretary, glowing as a ripe peach; fair, straight Violet Lansbury, garlanded with primroses, "the Spirit of the Spring." Pale Lily Gatward, with our own purple, white, and green flag, was "the Spirit of Liberty," and beside her Joan Beauchamp, a stern, stiff young "Spirit of Peace," who afterwards became the editor of the Conscientious Objectors' *Tribunal*, and went to gaol for it. They were led by a quartet of merry three-year-olds, with red caps of liberty, and the mottoes: "Peace" and "Plenty," emblematic, indeed, of the urgent needs of our human case.

To me the central loveliness of it all was sixteen-year-old Rose Pengelly, "the Spirit of the Woods." A charming elf-like figure, with red-gold hair and skin rosy as a flower. Playing upon Pan's reeds, she danced with unimagined grace, artless, untaught—a vision of youth's loveliness, the denizen of a slum! Delicious little creature, I had loved her since that day, just before the War, when she led the strikers from Back's asbestos factory into our "Women's Hall," telling us they had nicknamed her "Sylvia," and that it was her business to pack the heavy "saggers" of ware and carry them to the furnace, to run errands for the housekeeper, to peel potatoes, to wash the "governor's" shirts and sheets.

On Thursday I saw her at the children's party dancing before the rest, a glimpse of moving ecstasy, which made my heart tremble with its beauty. On Saturday she should have danced again—but the knife of the machine she was working descended on her pretty right hand, rending and mangling the thumb and a couple of fingers. She fainted, poor child, and lay unconscious whilst someone was sent to seek a policeman and ask his permission to procure a small quantity of brandy to revive her. (Except by such sanction, war-time regulations permitted the sale of brandy only by the quart.) Her new employer making no offer to pay a cab fare, she walked to the station, took the train to the London Hospital, and there sat in the Out-Patients Department till late in the evening, when her crushed thumb and two fingers were amputated. Poor stoic maid of the working class!

A prize was offered to the child who wrote the best account of our Poplar party. I asked Bernard Shaw to judge the essays. He did so in amusing fashion:

"MISS MOLLY BEER,

9 Brabazon Street, Upper North Street, Poplar
in account with G. Bernard Shaw.

Correcting two mistakes in grammar	1d.
Striking out two apostrophes put before "s," when there was nothing belonging	½d.
Completing the word "affectionately" as it was written "affec."	1d.
Counting 22 kisses for Miss Pankhurst	1½d.
	<hr/> 4d.

same time threats of a Trade War against Germany, during and after the War, were uttered from Government and other circles, and the Allies prepared to confer in Paris with this aim.

On April 11th Bethmann Hollweg again spoke of peace in the Reichstag, declaring he had already expressed his willingness to enter peace negotiations; but the Allies had refused to consider the proposal, and had threatened the complete destruction of Germany. Asquith retorted that the destruction of Prussia's military domination would not mean that Germany would be wiped off the map of Europe, or her national life destroyed or mutilated.

Behind the scenes Colonel House was vainly offering the mediation of President Wilson, and promising to bring the United States into the War on the side of the Allies should Germany refuse to enter a peace conference on terms acceptable to the Allies. America would add the proviso that the conference must be pledged to make warfare on sea and land more humane towards neutrals, and to bind the signatory Powers to unite against any Power refusing other methods of arbitrament than warfare. Sir Edward Grey, the recipient of these offers, had rejected them, though for many months he had led the gullible House to believe he was working with him precisely to this end. House animadverted in his diary on "the selfishness of Governments."

How the virus of militarist nationalism had gripped the belligerent peoples may be gathered from the fact that when Haase, a German Socialist of the Minority but by no means an extremist, suggested in the Reichstag that the War might end without victors or vanquished, the majority of the Socialist Members, of late the apostles of international fraternity, declared by 58 votes to 33 that he had violated the discipline and good faith of the Party!

CHAPTER XXXVII

ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS—CLYDE DEPORTATIONS—WITH THE COLONIAL SOLDIERS IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

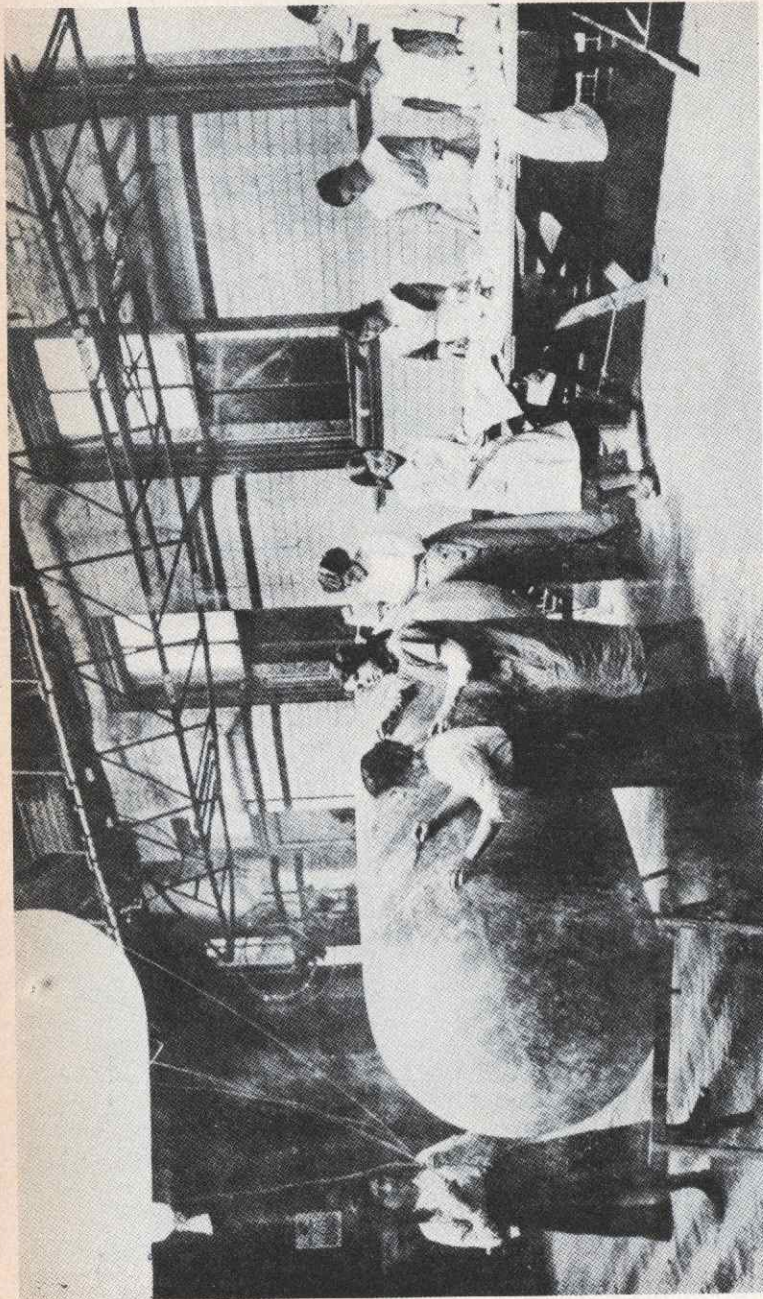
MY cousin, Bertie Goulden, had come back from the Dardanelles that winter. He was one of the Australian soldiers; for he was away in the Antipodes when war broke out. He enlisted the day after the declaration, believing it his duty to help the old country, the Dad, and the girls. I had spurred him to emigrate, seeing no scope for him here. He had gone almost without money, and had suffered manifold hardships. He was just beginning to succeed by great exertions, had bought himself a piece of land, and some horses, when he left all he had achieved.

He was one of those good, silent fellows who leave most of the thinking to other people, accepting what they see in the newspapers as literal truth, and assuming, in all sincerity, that the Government is sure to be right. "Bertie is just like the British public," I used to say in the old days at home, when his interests mainly centred in football and cricket.

Now that he was in the War I expected from him no criticism of its aims, no questioning of its authority. Knowing him in the maelstrom, I would not bother him with argument. Yet he looked at me now with a meaning kindness in his face, which made me feel that, in part at least, he agreed with me. When he assured me very earnestly: "The Turk is a gentleman," I knew that he had begun to realise the cruel iniquity of the War. He had been ill with enteric whilst his regiment was in Egypt, after the withdrawal from the Dardanelles, and was still the worse for it.

He insisted that Smyth and I should go to some show with him. We saw Pavlova on the films. I had always been too busy to manage to see her in the flesh. Dancing on the seashore, she was lovely, despite the limitations of the film. The drama she appeared in was of revolution, but where and when I have forgotten, if I ever knew. I was thinking of the War and the young man beside me, poignantly realising what a sterling sort he was. He was going now to France.

He was finally undone there. An injury to his knee, which never righted itself, would have been sufficient to disable him from working his land in Australia. Worse still, he had returned with consumption. It took ten years to kill him, the last five of them dragged out in suffering so acute that he sometimes rolled on the floor in agony extreme. The military authorities were all the time "curing" him; and at times his faith seemed implicit that they would accomplish it. I was eager for him to go to Switzerland, and would have set myself to accomplish it; but he would not entertain the proposal. He was afraid that by making any suggestion about



Photopress

YOUNG GIRLS AT A BALLOON FACTORY

north side was packed with soldiers who fell upon the approaching banners and tore them to shreds. The law offered no protection; so few policemen had never been seen in the Square at any demonstration. Instead of the hundreds usually present at our meetings, a bare six of them were to be seen. Far from assisting us to maintain order, they prevented our men speakers, and numbers of our members who wished to support us, from mounting the plinth, though we urged that they should come. We were left, a little group of women and a child or two, to deal with what might arise. The Government had obviously given orders to leave us to the violence of the mob. We were not afraid.

To speak from the north was impossible for the din the soldiers were making. I opened proceedings from the east, where the crowd applauded me. A small, hostile group had established itself by the plinth, prompted by the organisers of the disturbance, whom I recognised as old hands at such work; poor, shabby public-house loafers, they shouted without pausing for breath till their red faces were purple. I continued in spite of them. By taking pains to speak clearly and not too fast, one can make oneself heard a certain distance, even through such a noise. From the north the disturbers hurled at me roughly-screwed balls of paper, filled with red and yellow ochre, which came flying across the lions' backs, and broke with a shower of colour on anyone they chanced to hit. The reporters on the plinth had drawn near me to listen; thus, inadvertently, they intercepted the missiles aimed at me; and were covered with red and yellow. They sprang back to avoid a further volley, and Mrs. Drake's twelve-year-old daughter, Ruby, received a deluge of red full in her eyes. Crying, she buried her face in her mother's dress, while the "patriots" raised a cheer.

A man who had climbed the plinth from the west, came stealthily round, and dusted red and yellow ochre on the little group of women behind me. He was removed by a policeman; then a tall man wearing a khaki armlet was led from the Square by two other policemen. Only three guardians of the law remained in that vast concourse of people.

The soldiers from the north were now forcing their way towards us, resisted by the crowd on the east. After a brief tussle the soldiers prevailed, and came surging forward to storm the plinth. As the head of one of them topped it, Norah Smyth lunged at him vigorously and thrust him down. The other women sprang to help her; but two of them were dragged to the ground, and dozens of soldiers swarmed up. They crowded round me.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked.

"They say you are paid by the Germans," one of them blurted, shame-faced.

"Don't listen to her! Don't listen to her!" cried the organisers of the disturbance.

Yet listen they did, and many already had apologised; when two blustering civilians pushed past them, shouting: "You are women; go away! Go away before you are hurt!"

Two burly police inspectors then seized me, and forced me from the

John MacLean, who had been held in custody since February, was brought to trial in April, 1916, and sentenced to three years' penal servitude for advising the soldiers to lay down their arms, and the workers to down tools against Conscription and the Munitions Acts. Gallacher, Muir, and Bell were tried, at last, for publishing the suppressed *Worker*, Gallacher and Muir getting twelve months' imprisonment, and Bell three.

The I.L.P. was meeting in Newcastle that Easter. Mrs. Boyce was organising there for our Federation. I went up with Smyth for a meeting Boyce had arranged, and to attend the conference. I had not been to an I.L.P. conference for many a year; but in those days there was a drawing together of all who worked for peace. The Union of Democratic Control and numbers of Pacifist societies, old and new, gathered round the I.L.P., with its long established branches, its touch with the masses these others desired to influence.

I had pleasure and sorrow in meeting old friends I had known in childhood. The absence of Keir Hardie loomed over us.

Katherine Bruce Glasier, Katherine O'Bruce, as she liked to call herself, spoke at our meeting, talking in her effusive way of the "noble and true work" of our Federation, which seemed to her to typify the "working woman's soul"; calling up images of "the good grey poet," Walt Whitman; of Keir Hardie, William Morris, Edward Carpenter; denouncing with fervour the "hideous blasphemy of war."

At the reunion before the conference the great attraction was the caustic Irish fiddler, Casey, striding the platform like a quizzical satyr, lean and fit for leaping as a goat; his hard legs tightly cased in knee breeches; his goat's face, handsome in its odd way, more than half covered by a short, stubbly black beard. All the wild things of the woods seemed to gambol round him when his fiddle sounded, and his sprite of an accompanist, Dolly, played like a creature enchanted by his spell. She had the gift of perennial childhood; for they had been travelling about the country together, playing to working-class audiences, more years than I cared to remember, and one might have taken her for a school-child still. It was Keir Hardie who had discovered and employed on the *Labour Leader* Casey's mordant irony. Subsequent editors of that paper had found his plebeian jests too inelegant for publication; Casey was driven back upon his fiddling, but he still yearned to express himself by the pen. He told me he had a notion that he ought to abandon music to write on the War, and "just satirise the whole thing."

"Dolly manages her harmonics very cleverly; what a child she looks!" Katherine O'Bruce cooed at my elbow.

R. C. Wallhead,¹ whom I first knew as a working decorator in Manchester, gave humorous improvisations in Lancashire dialect. He had grown to be a prominent man in the I.L.P. I wondered what had really drawn him into the movement. Was it the contact he had with the I.L.P. when Henry Cadness, the teacher of design at the Manchester

¹ Later M.P. for Merthyr Tydfil.

School of Art, introduced him to me as a manual assistant to aid in carrying out of the decorations for the Pankhurst Hall, Hightown, I had designed?

"That is a pathetic story on your front page," W. C. Anderson said to me. He was referring to the execution of the East London boy I had recounted in the *Dreadnought* that week. All the delegates were talking of it. Fenner Brockway reproduced it in the *Labour Leader*. A reader of that paper paid for the I.L.P. to reprint it as a free leaflet.

Snowden, with cold, keen eye, nut-cracker jaw and bulging forehead, hobbled in on his stick. His narrowness and acidity had long repelled me; but in those days he appeared to have shed the raucous uncouthness of his earlier period. True, he never seemed a Socialist in theory; but one fancied him mellowing and broadening to the type of an upright, incorruptible Quaker, frail of physique, sturdy of purpose, as though he were qualifying to wear the mantle of John Bright in his great attack on the Crimean War. Snowden never rose to that height, though the time was more hugely tragic than that which had inspired John Bright's lamentation: "The angel of death has been abroad through the land. You may almost hear the beating of his wings."¹

Ethel Snowden, who once had seemed like a caged bird in her marriage, chafing under her husband's infirmities and his brusquerie, now fair, plump and forty, had discovered his merit since the War. Wearing him, as it seemed, like a choice orchid, she declared herself "aided by a noble husband," and perorated: "I pray from the bottom of my heart that the War will soon be over." She came nearer to popularity with the rank and file Labour folk than she had ever been, though one of the zealous I.L.P.-ers grumbled: "When she is speaking in public she is like a cat walking on hot bricks—always afraid of offending the other class." She spoke to me affably: "You must have very able helpers, dear. Philip says your paper is about the best on our side."

I knew that the *Dreadnought* had one virtue: it was in touch with life—not made up in an office from Press cuttings, like most of the propaganda sheets.

MacDonald was there, erect and debonair, a drawing-room favourite rather than a Labour leader, he would seem to the passing observer; talking elegantly, with his Scots accent many people found charming; speaking so eloquently, as many considered, and at such length. He was really in the heyday of his popularity, had he but known it; for never again would comrades so zealously cheer him. Yet, even now, his temporising struck a chill to the heart of their warmth. I was anxious to think well of him. Despite his political gyrations and very obvious weakness, I appreciated the stand against the War he had taken, however imperfectly; I desired very heartily to unite in solidarity and comradeship in those ranks so hardly pressed; yet I could never overcome my distrust of him; he woke it within me perpetually by his tortuous strategy. To go by the straight road to a clear-cut objective seemed impossible to him. He must always be travelling roundabout, with so much concession to the

¹ House of Commons, 23rd February, 1855.

Our East End speakers were received with a running fire of disparaging gibes and interruptions.

Mrs. Pascoe, for all her poverty, a matron of sternest virtue, of iron self-respect, was shouted down by the crowd of well-dressed women. Indignantly she faced them, her little black bonnet gone awry in her distress, her worn hands tightly clasped. "I cannot go on," she protested, "till the ladies will let me speak!"

The W.S.P.U. members led the fray against us, declaring that any talk of a wider franchise would be disastrous to the votes for women cause. I was sore-hearted for our East End mothers and young factory girls, assailed thus rudely. I was bruised in spirit by this littleness and myopia of view. I had not expected this hostility, above all not this bitterness. In the *Dreadnought* that week I had published reports of their work, contributed by themselves from most of the suffrage societies; all had been thus invited and I had given the addresses of those which had not sent reports. Our members took the strife at once more philosophically and more furiously than I. Our "Poplar girls," the Lagsdings and the Watts's, who worked at Morton's biscuit factory in Millwall, surveyed the interrupters with curling lips and scornful eyes, jeering: "It is a pity we are not well educated like them!"

When the resolution was put only Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and the Women's International League voted with us. Our proposal was hopelessly defeated. Yet the time-spirit was with our demand, the old proposals to enfranchise a million or so of widows and spinsters would never carry. We had stirred the other societies to feel some need for combined action. It was decided to elect a committee, call another conference, send a deputation to the Government. I resigned the secretaryship, and got our Federation to appoint another delegate, feeling it wise to let the representatives of the other societies go their way without me for a while. Our organisation had a work to do in the country no other would undertake: Manhood Suffrage must and would come; opinion must be prepared to accept Womanhood Suffrage. We must get as broad a measure as we could.

We had a woman workers' petition going the round of the munition factories, declaring that if a woman could cast a shell she could cast a vote. Katie Manicom, organising for the Workers' Union in the Southern Counties, whom we had trained as an organiser in our Federation, Alice MacLennan¹ in the Manchester district, Mrs. Leigh Rothwell, organising for the National Union of Women Workers, the Labour Councillors, Taylor and Dollan in Glasgow, and numbers of others up and down the country, as well as our own W.S.F. branches in Scotland, the North of

¹ Alice MacLennan was the first woman in the Manchester area to be a party to an agreement in the engineering trade between employers and employed. Her great activities were suddenly cut short by a terrible accident. A fire broke out in the Lime Street Hotel, where she was staying. In attempting to escape, she fell through a glass roof, and was terribly hurt. With one leg gone, and other serious disabilities, she bravely returned to her work when she emerged from the hospital.

England, the Midlands, and the South, were getting these forms into the factories. We had a resolution calling on the Government to enfranchise every adult woman and man steadily circulating amongst the Trade Unions. It was passed by hundreds of branches each week, and sent to the Government.

In the spring of 1916 rumours that the Government would shortly deal with the franchise became more insistent. Mrs. Fawcett emerged from her war silence, with a letter to Asquith, suggesting that women might be included in any forthcoming Franchise Bill. Asquith replied that "if and when" it might be necessary to undertake franchise legislation, the considerations in support of women's enfranchisement would be "fully and impartially weighed without any prejudgment from the controversies of the past." Those words were vague; but they might indicate an advance. One could not be sure of it, yet I had regarded our old opponent, Asquith, as preparing to capitulate since our East End deputation had interviewed him in the weeks before the War.

The Times predicted the introduction of a measure to enfranchise the soldiers and sailors after Whitsuntide. I got W. C. Anderson to ask whether women would be included. Bonar Law, on the Government's behalf, refused to answer. I wrote to all the suffrage societies and many prominent suffragists appealing to them to concentrate their energy and attention on the situation. In the Federation we redoubled our activities, in meetings and demonstrations, in inducing the Labour organisations to demand, not a mere Registration Bill, but a Franchise Bill to include the whole people. The United Suffragists and others joined in the pressure for women, if not specifically for all women.

I felt that the moment had come for new action. One morning I woke with the thought: "Call another conference, and invite industrial and co-operative organisations, as well as the suffrage societies to counterbalance the stubborn Old Guard." It was clear to my mind that another effort must be made to create a representative Adult Suffrage Council, and that it could be done with success if the basis of representation were enlarged. I broached the matter to Smyth. To my surprise she opposed me: "Why should we always have the labour and expense of every new move which is made? See how we are burdened: Peace, anti-Conscription, Tribunals, Wages, Suffrage—distress work, political work—always something new—we have scarcely finished with one conference, demonstration, exhibition before another is on our hands; often we are preparing for several big functions at once! Get one of the other societies to call it! We can't afford it!"

I could have overcome her objections; but my heart smote me in regard to finance. She was often coming to the rescue, paying this debt or that for the Federation, making a loan to round the week's expense, and then writing it off, as something which never could be repaid. We were raising at headquarters about £7,000 a year apart from donations in kind, which were substantial, and the incomes of the branches; but the sum was too small for our numerous activities. I reflected that there might be wisdom in getting another society to move. I was on the executive of the Women's

International League; I would propose the conference there. I did so. The idea was accepted. The conference met in June. Several societies, which had opposed Adult Suffrage in January, now supported it. An executive was formed. The initiators of the Women's International League, trained in the compromise school of Mrs. Fawcett's society, assumed the official positions on this committee also; it was natural, as they had been conveners; that is the way of politics. I knew them to be but timid converts, and presently, seeing their disposition to compromise, I endeavoured to strengthen the position by calling a conference of industrial organisations in August, which formed an Adult Suffrage Joint Committee with Fred Bramley as chairman and Dr. Salter (afterwards Labour M.P. for Bermondsey) as treasurer. Smyth raised no objection this time. She was as apprehensive as I, that the new Adult Suffrage Council I had taken the initiative in creating, would abandon the adult suffrage pass. "If only I had not stopped you calling the conference!" she repined. I told her it was probably best as it was.

We pressed on with our work, a conference of Labour organisations in Leicester, public demonstrations in Newcastle, Leeds, Bradford, Birmingham, Sheffield, Portsmouth; we had branches in these, and other towns now. Mrs. Boyce was pioneering for us in Glasgow, and had all the Labour organisations there supporting an adult suffrage demonstration on Glasgow Green. Lansbury and I went up to speak at it. There was a tremendous crowd.

On July 13th, 1916, Asquith announced a Select Committee to consider franchise and registration. Carson protested against such delay in granting the vote to soldiers and sailors, declaring it a "perfect scandal." Six days later the Government motion for a Select Committee was introduced. Its reception was so hostile that it was withdrawn. Herbert Samuel, who moved it on the Government's behalf, deprecated raising the franchise issue in this, or any form, because women's suffrage and other difficult matters would be involved. Carson responded with a gibe:

"What is a munition worker, what is a woman, who is a woman, and should a woman have a vote, and all the rest of it."

Women's chance of enfranchisement seemed precarious indeed! To make matters worse, Mrs. Fawcett, on behalf of her National Union of Suffrage Societies, issued a manifesto:

"If the proposed new register is limited to reinstating on the roll of voters those men now serving their country in the Navy or Army, or who have lost their qualifications through not fulfilling the conditions of residence which the present electoral law enforces, we should not raise, or attempt to raise, the consideration of our claims."

In our view this was folly of the most egregious sort. We protested:

"If there is time to make changes in franchise or registration, there is time to give votes to all."

The foremost Liberal organ, the *Manchester Guardian*, was advocating Manhood Suffrage, and assuming the postponement of women's suffrage until after the War. I wrote to object; the Editor answered:

"It is a question between urging the Government to do something

they may conceivably be persuaded to do, and something it is impossible to believe this Government, at this juncture, would think of doing."

Margaret Ashton, a veteran suffragist and pillar of Liberalism in Manchester, declared the *Guardian's* attitude "astounding." Its attitude was but too common, however, in Party political circles.

On August 16th Asquith announced that a General Election would again be avoided by a Bill to prolong the Parliament; and that a Registration Bill would be introduced, to prevent the disfranchisement of those who had been voters before the War through change of residence for munition work or service in the Army or Navy. The military authorities objected to men voting at the Front, so voting in the trenches would not be allowed. As to women, Asquith declared they had an unanswerable claim to be included in the extension of the franchise. He could not think that the House would deny this. For himself he added: "I say frankly I cannot deny their claim."

It was a striking *volte face*, though I had expected it. More amazing was the reply of Commander Bellairs, an anti-suffragist of old standing, who averred that Mrs. Pankhurst and her W.S.P.U. had called him out of the House to repudiate Asquith's statement about the women's claim, and to insist that votes for soldiers and sailors must take precedence of votes for women.

"They express the utmost anxiety that the soldiers and sailors shall be given the vote . . . they authorise me to say that they will not allow themselves to be used to prevent the soldiers and sailors from being given the vote."¹

I read these words in the Official Parliamentary Report with consternation that so complete an abandonment of convictions which had appeared so passionate had been possible. Many people refused to believe the statement authorised; but, in due course, it was reproduced in the *Britannia*, with solemn confirmation.

The answer to those who were deserting the votes-for-women cause for that of enfranchising the men in the trenches, was: *Votes for All*. We raised that challenge a week later at the Euston Theatre, under the auspices of our Adult Suffrage Joint Committee, with a crowd of speakers, representing working-class interests. Shortly afterwards the spectacle was witnessed of Mrs. Pankhurst, supported by life-long anti-suffragists like Leo Maxse, holding a Queen's Hall meeting to demand votes for the fighting men. She protested that Asquith had "used the men to dish the women," and now was trying to "use the women to dish the men." She declared "in the name of women" that they were ready to make any sacrifice in order that the sacrifices already made should not be in vain.²

On August 21st Lord Crewe, moving the Bill to postpone all elections for eight months longer, observed that if the franchise were to be extended on the score of war service, women's claims must be considered. Lord Cromer, as usual, raised the anti-suffrage standard, and demanded a definite pledge that the Government would not put votes for women into

¹ Official Parliamentary Report.

² *Britannia*, October 6th, 1916.