

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

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

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

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

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

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