

my mother came to stay with me for the opening of the new Parliamentary session. Our mission was to induce some Member of Parliament to sponsor Votes for Women on one of the Friday afternoons set apart for the Second Reading of private Members' Bills, places for which were drawn by ballot. We were alone in this quest; not even the officials of the old National Union¹ were there. Keir Hardie, from the first, had promised us his place, but not another Member acceded to our pleading. Daily from the assembling to the rising of the House, often past midnight, we were there. Keir Hardie drew no place; the first twelve were pledged to other measures, but Bamford Slack, the holder of the thirteenth, agreed to take the Bill.

A thrill of life ran through the whole Suffrage movement, which had sunk into an almost moribund coma of hopelessness. That fact must always be given due emphasis when the history of the movement is reviewed.

The Bill had been set down for May 12th, the best place to be had, but only as Second Order of the day; the opponents could prevent it coming on at all by prolonging discussion on the First Order, a small utility proposition to compel road vehicles to carry a light behind as well as before. Keir Hardie had pulled every string he could to get it withdrawn. Mrs. Pankhurst was almost frenzied at the unimaginative folly

¹ The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, a federation resulting from the original Societies formed independently in various towns. Of this organization, once led by Lydia Becker, Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett was now the leader. It remained non-militant and opposed the militant W.S.P.U.

of men who could hold this "trumpery little measure" against the claimant need of womanhood in bonds.

On the fateful 12th, the Lobbies of Parliament were thronged with women, Suffragists from near and far, Lancashire textile workers, more than four hundred from the Co-operative Women's Guild, confident of success and mustered quite unofficially by an Australian, Nellie Alma Martel, who had run for the Commonwealth Parliament. Spurred to new eagerness by this responsive crowd, Mrs. Pankhurst saw through the "peep-hole," by which visitors may look into the House, uproarious legislators rolling in laughter at the absurdities by which the debate was being prolonged.

The Bill was talked out, of course. The placid representatives of the old National Union at once withdrew, but Mrs. Pankhurst would not mildly accept frustration; a meeting of protest must be held at the door of Parliament. She thrust forward Mrs. Elmy, senior in age and longest worker in the cause; but the police rudely jostled her and all of us down the steps. We gathered at the statue of Richard I, beside the House of Lords. The police inspector intervened. Where could we meet then; where could poor women voice their indignation? Mrs. Pankhurst demanded, with tremulant voice and blazing eyes, passionately feminine, proudly commanding. The police inspector hesitated, argued, led us to Broad Sanctuary by the Abbey Gates. Keir Hardie stepped into the ranks, taking the hand of old Mrs. Elmy. The little unnoticed meeting vainly demanded Government intervention to save the talked-out Bill. Yet a new note