

wealthy supporter Lucia Blount, who was said to have 'generously sent her gardener early in the morning to arrange them'.<sup>38</sup> Elegant clothes took on considerable importance at such events and, despite her own meagre financial resources, Sylvia evidently experienced some pressure to outwardly conform by acquiring at least one evening dress. She spoke in a yellow satin gown at the Carnegie Lyceum in New York, and in her letter to Emmeline Pethick Lawrence about her speech at the Iowa State House she relayed the pressure exerted on her to change her attire, possibly to the same dress worn at the Lyceum: 'The ladies of Des Moines had insisted that I must not wear ordinary clothes, but must go in my cream coloured silk evening frock with its long trailing skirt. It seemed strange to me, but I did as I was bid.'<sup>39</sup>

Needless to say, this was a wildly impractical imposition on a speaker travelling alone for thousands of miles. After arriving in St John in Canada, where she was to speak to an evening 'party of ladies' and to lecture in the Opera House, Sylvia found 'the dress I had to wear at the meeting was creased, as I was a very bad packer'.<sup>40</sup>

Sylvia clearly became frustrated with the lecture tours' attendant elitist gatherings. She complained to Hardie about a group of suffragists taking her to 'a stupid play' and Chapter 8 records her discomfort at the flirtatious Valentine's Day party she attended in Tennessee.<sup>41</sup> When an interviewer in Kansas asked if she 'ever had time for a girl's fun, parties, for instance', Sylvia responded with a laugh 'Oh, I announced to my mother when I was ten years old that I wasn't going to accept any invitations to parties'.<sup>42</sup> It was reported that at the Women's Dining Club in that city she expressed her opinion that: "Bridge, balls, dinners - I think the women who give their lives to such things as that ought to be swept off the face of the earth," and Miss Pankhurst's face flushed, and her blue eyes sparkled - and she said: "I would love to be one of those to do the sweeping."<sup>43</sup>

Sylvia's means of escaping the bridge, balls and dinners brigade was ironically provided by the lecturing agency itself. On arriving for the 1912 tour she was dismayed to discover the lack of bookings, complaining to Hardie that even these were spread so far across the country she worried that 'I shall not do very much more than pay expenses out of this trip'.<sup>44</sup> The fact that Sylvia travelled so much, crisscrossing the country on routes with little geographical coherence, was due to most of the bookings being secured haphazardly after she arrived. Hardie, who was familiar with America from his aforementioned tours, considered

the 1911 tour route to be 'clearly impossible', and it was evident to Sylvia that the 1912 tour would be filled with 'long long journeys for a single meeting'.<sup>45</sup> Sylvia blamed Feakins for having 'pressed' her to come so soon after her mother's second lecture tour (Sylvia arrived on 11 January only five days after Emmeline sailed for England), which had diminished interest in Pankhurst bookings - on one of those long train journeys Sylvia passed through Indianapolis, 'where I spoke last year but where this year they have had mother and so don't want me'.<sup>46</sup> One consequence of the threadbare schedule was Sylvia's decision to 'manage things a bit myself', leading her to spend a week in Milwaukee, a city which had a socialist administration.<sup>47</sup> Upon arrival she 'very definitely' informed the local suffragists 'that I was not going to spend any time at theatres or concerts and that as little time as possible would I spend at social functions and that I must have time to study as far as possible the institutions and general conditions of Milwaukee'.<sup>48</sup>

She also decided to go to the South, which took her to Tennessee. Her explanation of her decision to Hardie reveals, amidst a mix of motivations, her interest in radical, social exploration:

I have determined to go South where no one ever goes much where mother did not go and where above all things there is much much to do. Awful conditions of labour for women and children especially children and everything generally backward moreover it is warm there and the country beautiful I am told.<sup>49</sup>

This book emerges primarily from Sylvia's 1912 tour, in particular the parts she organised herself; there is no mention of a single elegant function from the 1911 tour while the trips to Milwaukee and Tennessee are covered in three of the eight chapters and form some of the most important and extensive material that Sylvia wrote on America.

Despite her more active role in shaping her own tour, Sylvia remained reliant upon sympathetic hosts to guide her around the local institutions, such as prisons, factories and colleges, which she was so eager to explore. Sylvia's hosts frequently chose local institutions with the expectation of winning her approval. It is striking, then, that her opinions were often at variance with those of her hosts. In this text, Sylvia criticises the implementation of the new Taylorist scientific compartmentalisation of workers' jobs, the preparation of Native American students for factory work, and the top-down implementation of reform - all of which had