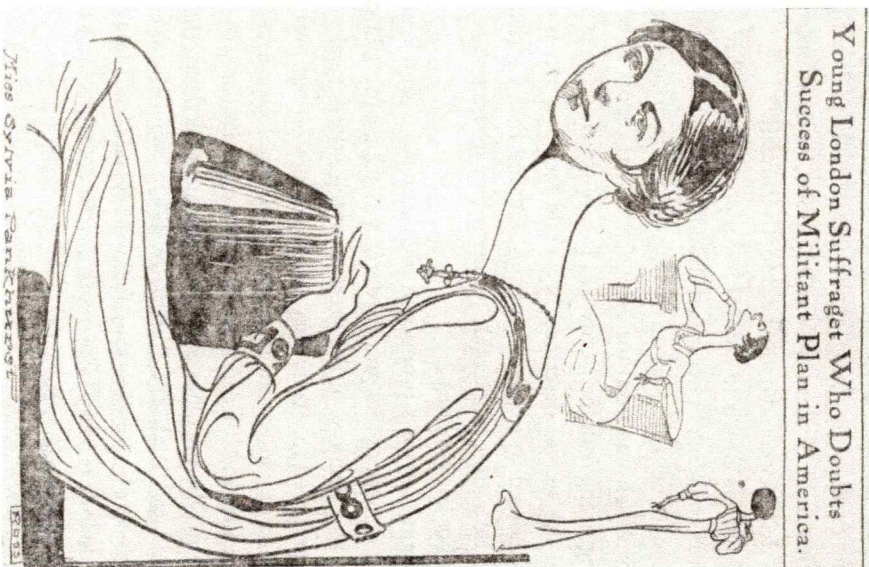


entered my room. Seeing it, I capitulated immediately, but the Press men and women did not entirely relent.⁶⁹

On 20 January, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published three cartoons of Sylvia as an angular, flat-chested figure in a variety of attention-seeking poses above a purported interview with 'Miss Emaline Sylvia Pankhurst'. Evidently confusing her first initial (for Estelle) with an erroneous spelling of her mother's name, this surely was a mistake that would have been corrected in the course of a genuine interview. The publica-



2. These mocking caricatures of Sylvia Pankhurst were published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on 20 January 1911 after she declined to speak to the press. (Courtesy of the *Chicago Tribune* and newspapers.com)

tion triumphantly announced that though '[f]or seven or eight hours she insisted that she "had more important business than to talk to the newspapers"' she had now relented. Described as 'a sharp contrast' to her vivacious mother, Sylvia was portrayed as a 'willowy' figure who spoke 'in a drawing, languid tone'.⁷⁰ The *Tribune's* insinuation of self-indulgence on Sylvia's part would certainly have horrified her and was perhaps the trigger for her capitulation.

Henceforward, as Sylvia recalled, there was a partial change in tone. On 22 January, the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* published a long interview with Sylvia accompanied with photographs and with a more lifelike and animated caricature. The interview was conducted by Belle Squire, herself a suffragist whose book *The Woman Suffrage Movement in America* was published that year. Sylvia's sympathetic interviewer expressed her own 'admiration and sincere regard' for her subject, whose artistic successes and stories of the campaign she enthusiastically relayed. In the course of the interview, Squire recalled *The Convert*, the popular novel about the British suffragettes by the actress, writer and WSPU member Elizabeth Robins. Published in Britain and America, *The Convert* brought the characters and events of the movement to life and shaped the expectations of American audiences. Squire was anxious to know if Sylvia was 'really the original' of the character Ernestine Blunt, as she had been told.⁷¹ The most charismatic and talented of all the suffragette characters, Blunt was clearly modelled on Christabel. Sylvia denied the parallel, identifying herself instead as the model for the character Cynthia Chisholm, described as 'a gentle-seeming creature, carelessly dressed, grave and simple – [who] faced the mob with evident trepidation, a few notes, to which she never referred, in her shaking hand'.⁷² Squire, however, would not be dissuaded: 'looking at Sylvia Pankhurst, I thought it not unlikely that she might play the part of Ernestine Blount [sic] with ease'.⁷³

The *Tribune* qualified this friendly coverage, however, by printing a more hostile article directly below the interview which recalled comments Sylvia had made towards the beginning of her tour on her first experience of a sleeper train. Travelling from New York to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sylvia had failed to find the dining car and had enjoyed little sleep because, as she told reporters, she had been shocked to find her berth separated only by a curtain from the other passengers. Gleeefully imagining all the indignities Sylvia might have been exposed to, the journalist mocked the contrast between her vaunted suffragette heroism whilst 'to sleep unprotected in an American sleeping car berth,