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THE McCLURE PUBLICATIONS

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send home some thrust, shrivelling criticism in the caustic
taste of her wit; intolerant of opposition, burying objections
under weight of controverting fact; reconciling the
objector by an imperturbable good-humor; often harnessing
him to the Movement by virtue of her own complete-
ness of dedication.

WE saw her "full face" in the early raids on West-
minster, those called with an audacious irony:
"Going on Deputation to the Prime Minister,"—much
as a wanderer might go to the door of a cell and ask the
prisoner, "will you kindly come out, sir, and be hanged."

One sees again the face under a hat awry, yet every
flower, or end of ribbon, showing flag-like where was the
thickest of the fight and where the straight way lay—
the way to the rudest publicity for matters never so
fully stated before.

One sees her facing the police, stopped by them, pro-
testing, always with self-possession and with apparent
expectation of succeeding in the impossible errand.

Profile, this time, as she rises in the dock. A half
sheet of paper in her hand with its three or four notes;
the stylus of her firm hand poised as it is pinned to
the yoke of her gown. You see her lifting that face to
the perplexed Jury, to the scandalsized Judge. "Come,"
she seems to say, "let us reason together."

She is complimented from the bench upon her able
advocacy, and sent to prison.

She seems to have had her fill of such compliments.

No one must suppose that she wears always the mili-
tant face. I think of the one I saw flushed with fever,
lying on a sofa in a Yorkshire Hotel. I had just heard
her speak in the market place—speak with strange
patience in the teeth of ignorance and insult, speak to an
audience I wondered she would care about convincing.
She was ill at the time, struggling with a cold that would
have extinguished most people. I had watched her
standing for an hour in the windy market place, had
listened to her clouded voice, growing hoarser as she
explained to the foolish, and endured the drunken.

HALF an hour after, she lay in my room with closed
eyes and fever-bright cheeks, while her mother went
out to buy quinine, or what not. Had this not
been our first meeting I should have known better than
to waste breath urging her to stay on the sofa all the
evening. She had, I knew, no meeting of her own, but
up she stands and we three go to a man’s political gath-
ering. The girl I had thought fit only for bed, rises in
her place and attacks a scheme advocated by the man,
 afterwards her (and all women’s) good friend, George
Lansbury. That night he was explaining the need of
an appropriation for poor boys’ school games and ath-
etics—in the name of the betterment of the race. He
found no fault with, he even defended, the grotesquely
smaller provision proposed for the benefit of poor girls
(and presumably for the benefit of such little share as
they might conceivably have in that matter—of bettering
the race). Suddenly the girl was on her feet by my side,
hardly audible at first, through the fog of her stifling cold,
but still able hotly to denounce Mr. Lansbury for not
protesting against unfair discrimination in favor of
physical training for the stronger sex. He, poor man,
astonished, a little injured, feeling apparently that he
had done rather well (considering the strength of con-
servative opposition to get any appropriation whatso-
ever), modestly looking, as I thought, for congratula-
tion—to find himself hauled over the coals, and baited and
trounced by this little girl with the hoarse voice.

I rather think that was the first time Mr. Lansbury
ever saw Christabel "full face." Little enough in any
case could he have dreamed then, that he would listen
to that voice till it should lead him and his children to
prison.


digized by google.
Another time I see her lying in the shade of a cypress tree in a Sussex garden—a lissome, relaxed figure in an apple-green gown. In the dark eyes none of the fire we had seen burning on Westminster raids, but a light that seemed more a childish gladness of spirit.

She lies there and gives and takes chat with a schoolboy. He, not a being of easy enthusiasms, is soon among Christabel's friends. They sit side by side, she showing him some illustrations in the Sphere. An Anti-militant, struck by the tableau, drew me aside—"I've watched her for two days. I have the very strongest feeling there must be some mistake. That little schoolgirl can't be making all this trouble."

That was the opinion in the adjacent village, though obviously shaken by her ringing up the London Headquarters office to insist that the Mayor of Dublin should be held to the promise that had been extracted from him—heaven knows how—the amazing promise to make an official visit to London in order to exercise an ancient and forgotten right, unused for centuries, to plead before the bar of the House of Commons. The plea in this case was of course: "Give women a share in citizenship"—and Christabel in Sussex pulled the strings that brought the Chiefe Civic dignitary out of Dublin and drew him over the Irish Sea to stand in his mayoral robes and insignia before the English Commons—adjudging them "do justice to women!"

We have in London a great music hall whose name, the Pavilion, was long associated solely with the most frivolous form of variety entertainment. This hall has been crowded to its capacity, year in, year out, at the Monday suffrage meetings, and not only by those interested in the women's movement. We have seen the boxes there filled with the gilded youth turning their backs on the stage and talking among themselves on those Monday afternoons, just as they are in the habit of doing during the less diverting "turns" at night. We have seen at Christabel Pankhurst's standing up to speak, all those backs turn, and the faces of the men crane over the box, curious, alert, responsive to as much as they understood—to the life and youth and valor of her, if nothing more—nudging one another at some hit: seizing her points, laughing with her at her enemies, applauding her impassioned attacks upon the government with as much enthusiasm as though she were a Russian dancer.

And when Christabel Pankhurst's "turn" was over we have seen the entire party rise and leave the hall.

The Christabel these young gentlemen thought such good fun was the Christabel who, already for some years, had been trudging up and down the country, going through mud and rain, holding little obscure meetings in stuffy rooms; the Christabel who was the first to brave the horrors of the unreformed Holloway; the Christabel who gave the flower of her youth to make votes for women the most vital issue of the day.

Had you called to see Miss Pankhurst?—so had all these sitting in the entry room. At last you stood in her little office. The only room she had of all the many in use by the Union was a sort of passage.

A big desk occupied a good share of the space. On a swivel chair, a little person writing an editorial. One window, two doors, and in and out of these doors a constant procession—girls with armfuls of literature, girls with letters, girls with telegrams, girls and women hurrying through one way or another no matter who was there, or what was being said, written, or thought out. In the heart of that hurly-burly all the most vital business of the Union was shaped and launched, up to the hour when she left that night just in time to escape the clutches of an exasperated government.

In the great new building in the Kingsway, Christabel has her more comfortable quarters. She has never occupied them, never seen them.

When the W.S.P.U. Fund had rolled up its staggering sum, to women's innocent surprise, the more financial prosperity of the Union bred in the breasts of politicians a respect they had never shown towards the principles of justice, or the spectacle of devotion to an ideal. The Fund became also a source of envy and all uncharitableness in certain adherents of causes less generously supported.

The air grew thick with vague suspicion and open charges that the Pankhursts were feathering their nests. They were living extravagantly on the fat of the land. Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Sylvia lived enough of their time in prison to take the point out of any application of the charge to them. So it was often referred to the Pankhurst who was constrained to live on the fat of "the pleasant land of France."
Coming down from the mountains of Savoy I dropped in one evening on the exiled Organizer. I found her in the luxury she had then for months been steeped in—living on pension in a third-class hotel in a town on the coast.

One room served the controlling spirit of the rich Union—one room to sleep in and to work in. That narrow bed-chamber on the top floor—no lift—reached only by climbing endless stairs, that place of meager, dingy furnishing, constituted not only the luxury of her personal establishment, but served as editor’s office for the Union paper—the real Headquarters of the Movement. Out of that little room went forth the energy which, if it was not responsible for keeping the question of Woman Suffrage intensely alive, did certainly control and guide the more militant forces.

TALKING till late into the night, we spoke of a woman whose latitude of view in matters of sex relation had given much offense both to Suffragists and Antis. Christabel had no love for the theme, but she pitied the woman—explained her as a doctor diagnoses disease.

Her attitude to the subject reminded me of another midnight talk a year or so before. She had come down into the south of England for a little rest and I was remorseful at letting her sit up so late. I offered her a novel to take to bed. Yes, she would like a novel. She took the one I offered and with a gesture of distaste gave it back. “I began it,” she said, “but I couldn’t stomach those scenes between the wife and the husband.” I had not myself read the book, which had not long been out. Miss Pankhurst described cursorily, with an effect of haste to be done with it, a certain scene which, along with the critics’ comment on its “strength,” and Maupassant-like veracity, the world in general had swallowed without blinking.

At sight of Christabel Pankhurst’s loathing, I remembered the unblushing utilitarian she is. Whatever expresses the views she shares she will applaud, however little literate the effort may be. However well done, what runs counter to her views she sees no merit in. In fact she cannot “see” it at all.

So I urged the right of the artist (and the author in question is one) to treat of any and everything under heaven. In any case, as Christabel could not deny, scenes far more risqué had been written by men of repute. Whereupon she jumped down my throat. That was precisely the trouble, she said, with this woman-writer. She was trying to go one better—or worse—than men. Men have some excuse. They have to invent. They know very little about women. But “women must stop going to men for information about their own sex.”

I had long known that many women, and not a few men, accustomed to look upon themselves as fastidious in matters touching sex dignity recognized in Christabel Pankhurst an unconscious critic of their meaner standards.

Not only is the mind of this young woman constitutionally incapable of making a base use of unsavory topics, she is (not deliberately, but inevitably, because so was she created,) a touchstone of moral soundness.

If I were told that, leaving out the politician and speaking of the essential woman, I must give in two words the sum of eight years’ knowledge—I would, out of all the resources of the dictionary, content myself with saying that Christabel Pankhurst’s outstanding quality is a valiant purity.