

circa 6 Jan '13

Cope

My dear Miss Fenney
 By the time this reaches you
 I suppose you, as well as I, will know what
 sentences will have been passed on my
 daughter & her comrades. I want to call
 your attention to the new ^{that was perpetrated} ~~plot~~ ^{victims}
 on our womanhood yesterday in the
 Court - & which I think should be known
 throughout ~~the length & breadth~~ the land
 as a fresh incentive in our struggle for
 Liberty & Justice. An order was made by the
 Court - that - no woman was to be admitted
 to the suffragette trials and I can speak
 for Miss Mitchell & my daughter two of
 the weakest & most - helpless of women,
 that - they had to face a Court - crowded
 with men & without - one friendly ~~and~~
 woman who alone could understand
 & give them strength. I am told that -
 my daughter made a very dignified
 speech in justifying the necessity of
 militancy, but - I wonder that - she was able
 to say a word under such an ordeal.
 I enclosed a cheque for £ 50 as a protest
 against this new barbarity & I feel sure

every fresh act of oppression will make
make women more anxious to do
to suffer to gain freedom for their
sex. My daughter made up her mind
to adopt the hunger strike immediately
she was found guilty so I have no
doubt that she refused food yesterday
as soon as she entered Holloway Gaol.
I want to ask you to agitate with

all the machinery of our Union &
to urge the other Unions to do the
same, to prevent her being possibly
fed for I fear such an outrage on
her highly strung, sensitive nature
will result - in nervous break down
that may reduce her to life long
helplessness. A sudden stroke, during
lecturing when she was a baby, paraly-
sised the whole of her body & it was
some years before she entirely regained
the use of her arms - the spine & legs
only partially recovered. I feel sure
therefore that - if the medical men &

women, favourable to our cause, understand the gravity of her case. They will at once make such representations to the Home Secretary & the Governor & doctor of the goal ^{to avert} catastrophe that all would deplore. It will be impossible to keep Miss Mitchell long in prison. She has dreadfull spinal disease as well as other internal troubles. The doctor ~~has~~ ^{has} written to the authorities & described her condition so that I think she must soon be discharged. She does not hunger strike as she knows it would cause her death.

I think our cause could be advanced if at the present juncture some good speakers were to the Brimsmead Pianos & Manufacturing Coy. Row Road Hendon Town and after explaining to the men the meaning of our militancy, get them to sign a petition for ~~Mr. May's release~~ and the abolition of ~~factory~~ ^{factory} forcible feeding. My father was John Brimsmead the founder of

the firm which ^{has} ~~it now~~ been turned
into a company. As I am a large
shareholder it would be very hard - to
me to appear in this matter but my
duty so should take of coercion
but - I feel sure the men would be
only too glad of their own free will,
to do something for the grand -
daughter of the market they held
in the deepest reverence & love.

Yours very sincerely

B. C. Billingham