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Private & Confidential.

1st August 1913.

Laurence Housman Esq.,
C/o The Editor,
"Daily Herald",
Victoria House, 21 Tudor Street,
London, E.C.

Dear Sir,

re Your article in to-day's "Daily Herald"
on the Case of Mrs. Mary Wyan.

"Mrs. Wyan" is my wife, and assumed this name purely in the interests of our youngest child, aged 10, and of our fellow-residents in the Co-operative-Housekeeping Society here.

I am proud that our two elder children, aged 21 and 17, share with me my wife's principles, although unfortunately we cannot provide the same pluck, nor endure the same suffering. There is no ground for the suggestions contained in Mr. McKenna's answer in the House of Commons a day or two ago, that one difference between the cases of Mrs. Wyan and the other ladies you name in your article, was that "they were not Militants habitually engaged in criminal methods".

I beg to enclose copies of only one or two letters forming a small part of recent correspondence on this case.

To Laurence Housman Esq.

1. 8. 13.

The only Militant act for which Mrs. Wyan has been convicted, or even charged, ~~one~~ (to the best of my knowledge and belief) has ever committed, was, under the influence of ~~one~~ of the ladies you name, to break a Government window in March 1912. For this act, and so that she might henceforth "cry quits" , she at the time paid the legal penalty by serving her full sentence in Holloway.

It was only by a legal quibble that, for this act, she was ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ committed to the Sessions, and suffered a greater penalty.

Moreover, in addition to thus being quits, the cost of damage done has since, as I think, on another legal quibble been paid in currency.

On behalf of Mrs. Wyan, and of her relatives, I beg to thank you for your article.

I feel however that I must , after recently working day and night with some friends in fighting this case, take the earliest opportunity of explaining to you in confidence that Mrs. Wyan has since yesterday taken food under the following circumstances. Recent events have followed each other so very rapidly, and seem to indicate so many confusions in official departments. I had therefore, after seeing my wife for the first time in the Infirmary

To Laurence Housman Esq.

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yesterday to decide what should be my personal action and decision after considering the problem depending on the following, among other considerations.

- (a) I and our elder children are in a complete agreement with my wife's views on Woman's Suffrage.
- (b) My wife's chief interest and almost only pleasure in life is to promote in every way possible the training and efficiency of her children.
- (c) The elder children are now beginning to reward her for her previous care, and the younger one particularly still needs its continuance.
- (d) Can she best serve the future, by (d.1.) paying the death penalty as a protest against "Liberal" (sic) coercion? or (d.2.) admitting a technical defeat in her present protest against an unsupported charge by now taking food, and thus placing the authorities in a dilemma as to whether she is at the present moment under their authority, or whether she is out on license?

As a result I did my best yesterday to persuade my wife to take food, and I have reason to believe that she is not now continuing a hunger-strike.

Lord Robert Cecil K.C. and Mr. Wedgwood have taken considerable trouble in this case, and in order that I may inform them of the situation up-to-date I have ventured to send to them (in strict confidence) a copy of this letter to you.

I am sure you will understand me when I say that the mental torture and physical exhaustion involved in the administration of this doubly damned "Cat & Mouse Act" is shared by many who have not the privilege of enduring the still greater torture of hunger-striking.

Yours faithfully,

T. Smithies Taylor
Capt.