

Transcription of letter from Catherine Blair to Dr James Devon, 26th February
1914

Hopingmains
Gladsmuir
26.2.14

Dear Dr Devon,

Now what have you gained? You kept your prisoner, till you ruined her health pro[ably]. tem[porarily]. but had you any right legally or morally to injure the health of a patient – a prisoner? Now Dr Devon own up. You were wrong. Your business is to detain your prisoners. I grant you that you tried to forcibly feed her with the result that you had to let her go just as soon practically as if you'd just let her starve. i.e. you tortured her [and] hurt her by way of a preventative – [and] is that your business? Is it not the business of the Government of the country to prevent crime? When I was at school we used to hear lectures from Dr. Andrew Wilson on "Health" [and] one of his sayings was "a prison is the model of a healthy home"!

I think you should represent the authorities that you've done your best [and] failed – That they'd better try to remove the cause of the disease instead of any longer pottering trying to hide the symptoms. You can't stop militancy [and] fire raising by even killing Ethel Moorhead, [and] I think it is high time it was stopped. If life is endangered (as it is more than likely it will be, if the government goes on in its brutal [and] insane policy of arresting [and] imprisoning Mrs Pankhurst) then the Gov[ernment] itself will bear the blame – along with the tools of the Government who look on [and] open-eyed see this state of things go on. I wish you'd represent this to the Master of Polwarth [and] Mr. Crombie also. It is high time the master took part in this "good work". It really would be good work.

Now, honest infi[.], wasn't it a huge mistake to start forcible feeding?

Yours very truly,
C. Blair

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