

INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST SHOP

TO possess the only international feminist literature shop in the world is the proud boast of Miss Sime Seruya, whose sign hangs out in Adam Street, London, England, just off the Strand, not far from Charing Cross station. In spacious green-painted premises I found this picturesque little lady with the picturesque name, surrounded by her cosmopolitan cargo of books, papers, badges—everything imaginable in fact connected with the feminist movement from every country under the sun.

"Yes, we even have the 'Antis' here," said Miss Seruya, in showing me round her shop, indicating some books and leaflets of the Anti-Suffrage League. "In fact, my chief aim is to make my shop a depot for everything connected with the feminist movement, not to limit it to suffrage, which, after all, though a very important item, is only an item in the movement."

"At present, as you see, it is chiefly a book and paper shop, but I want to enlarge its sphere to other things in time. I mean to have a bureau for specialists in women's employments, both of arts and crafts, and also to have a show-room for craftswomen's work of all sorts."

Papers and magazines in almost every European language lay on the counter, one a German monthly,

movement now. I did at first, and got put in prison twice for it, the first time, for taking part in a deputation and the second time, two years after, for not taking part in a deputation."

"How was that?"

"A deputation to the Prime Minister in Downing Street was organized one day, and a journalist and myself were standing on the other side of the street watching it. Suddenly a policeman, who knew me and had a grudge against me, came up and arrested us both. Eventually we were brought into court, where I learned from the policeman that I was one of the organizers of the deputation, was a prominent member of the league, and had a petition in my hand. This was all news to me, because, as a matter of fact, owing to ill-health and being extremely busy over some private affairs which required all my attention at that time, I had had nothing to do with the league for some months, but it is useless to say anything in the police courts here. In this case I got six weeks' imprisonment for doing nothing at all, whereas those who took part in the deputation got only a fortnight."

"In the first case, I was one of the women of the deputation. We got to Downing Street, and I am quite sure if any policeman had requested



A London shop run in the interests of the Feminist movement.

called "Frauen Zukunft," containing an excellent translation of Bernard Shaw's "Misalliance." Another was a weekly sheet for servants rejoicing in the name of "Tjenestepigernes Blad," issued in Copenhagen; a third with the high-sounding title of "Jus Suffragii," is the monthly organ of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, its last two pages filled with "feminist" news from Seattle, California, Kansas, Oregon and several other places, and signed by Ida Husted Harper, of New York.

The most prominent object in the shop is a magnificent banner which stands over the staircase right opposite the door as you go in. It is the banner of Miss Seruya's society, the International Suffrage Society, and shows a fine portrait of John Stuart Mill, the first man to advocate women's suffrage, worked on a green ground. The stairs lead to a fine room below which can be hired for meetings, concerts or small plays.

"Of course, you are a member of one of the leading suffragist associations?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "I belong to the Women's Freedom League, though I do not take any active part in their

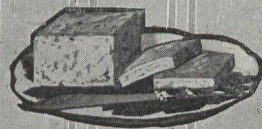
me to move on, I should have done so from mere force of habit. But the first thing I knew was a terrific blow across the chest from a policeman's arm, and I hit back, naturally; that's my nature. The scene in court was distinctly a humorous one. The policeman and I were confronted in court; I am quite short, as you see; my 'victim' was a more than usually large policeman. His description of the incident was that I doubled up my fist and hit him a tremendous blow in the face! What I really did was to push my muff, which contained a book, up into his face; to have hit him a blow was absolutely impossible."

Miss Seruya owes her uncommon name to the fact that she is Portuguese, having been born in Lisbon, but she came to England at the age of eight and has lived here ever since.

That she possesses originality was shown by a placard in her window to which she drew my attention as I was leaving. A weekly paper had brought out an article that week entitled "Why Suffragettes are Unpopular." Miss Seruya copied this title on a board and wrote underneath, "Are They?"



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