

# March of the Women

Music by Ethel Smyth; words by Cicely Hamilton

Classical composer Ethel Smyth wrote *The March of the Women* (1910) shortly after she joined the Women's Social and Political Union, the most militant of the suffragist organisations. The song was first performed in public on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1911, by the Suffrage Choir, at a ceremony held on Pall Mall, to celebrate a release of activists from prison. Emmeline Pankhurst introduced the song as the WSPU's official anthem, replacing *The Women's Marseillaise*.

Shout, shout, up with your song!  
Cry with the wind, for the dawn is breaking;  
March, march, swing you along,  
Wide blows our banner, and hope is waking.  
Song with its story, dreams with their glory  
Lo! they call, and glad is their word!  
Loud and louder it swells,  
Thunder of freedom, the voice of the Lord!

Long, long—we in the past  
Cowered in dread from the light of heaven,  
Strong, strong—stand we at last,  
Fearless in faith and with sight new given.  
Strength with its beauty, Life with its duty,  
(Hear the voice, oh hear and obey!)  
These, these—beckon us on!  
Open your eyes to the blaze of day.

Comrades—ye who have dared  
First in the battle to strive and sorrow!  
Scorned, spurned—nought have ye cared,  
Raising your eyes to a wider morrow,  
Ways that are weary, days that are dreary,  
Toil and pain by faith ye have borne;  
Hail, hail—victors ye stand,  
Wearing the wreath that the brave have worn!

Life, strife—those two are one,  
Naught can ye win but by faith and daring.  
On, on—that ye have done  
But for the work of today preparing.  
Firm in reliance, laugh a defiance,  
(Laugh in hope, for sure is the end)  
March, march—many as one,  
Shoulder to shoulder and friend to friend.