

Demon Rum by Marcia Whitney-Schenck

Presented December 7, 2015

The Chicago Literary Club

Dear friends, my brothers and sisters, in our fight to abolish liquor from our midst, welcome to the Chicago Central Chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union on December 7, 1895. I call this meeting to order with this gavel, a plain but powerful symbol of our desire to rid this country of the **depilating** ravages of alcohol. Our secretary is Priscilla Peterson, a graduate of the Evanston College for Ladies, who will be taking **copulatory** notes regarding our efforts to pass a constitutional amendment to rid this country of Demon Rum, once and for all. The purpose of this meeting is . . .

Excuse me, could you repeat that, Priscilla? That's right, ravage with a "r." Remember this simple slogan, Priscilla: "Drunken men are savages who ravage and damage."

Now as I was saying, the gavel symbolizes our new-found freedom to express our thoughts. A similar gavel rests in an exalted position in the headquarters of the WCTU at LaSalle and Monroe in Chicago, **(Slide 2)** a building, designed by architect Mr. John Wellborn Root, that demonstrates our seriousness in combating the evils of alcohol.

When people first became aware of the dangers of alcoholism back in the 1830s, the average American over the age of 15 consumed nearly seven gallons of alcohol a year. Then, in the aftermath of the Civil War, alcoholism continued to plague our society, with the influx of immigrants teeming into our cities from Italy, Germany, and my native country, Ireland. Of course, this scourge affected women, but without the legal right to vote they could do little to enforce sobriety. Fortunately, many men, thanks to the establishment of the Salvation Army in 1864 in England, became involved in the prohibition movement. The women did their part, but mostly as helpmates, serving tea and cookies at those meetings. (This reminds me, special thanks to Bertha Whitney and Pearl Schenck for bringing this evenings refreshments. Please help yourself to snicker-doodles and Dr. Welch's unfermented wine after the meeting.)

But back to my story . . . Women over time learned how to conduct meetings and speak in public, and, more importantly, they learned Robert's Rules of Order. This gavel represents women's rise to power. Whenever a man would say, we were out of order, we knew the rules and didn't hesitate to demand our rights. For example, the chair of the meeting is never to bang the gavel in an attempt to drown out a disorderly member but repeat vigorous tap at intervals, like this. Now it is from such simple beginnings, with women joining together with like-minded souls, that we organized the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in November 1874 in Cleveland, Ohio. Since then, we have been experiencing colossal support for our cause, numbering over 150,000 stout souls, making the WCTU the largest women's organization in America. **(Slide 3)**

Why have so many women chosen to join the WCTU? Many have stories like mine.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Matilda Bradley Carse. **(Slide 4)** My son was killed by a drunken wagon driver in 1874. Shortly thereafter, I joined the Chicago Central Chapter of the WCTU and became president four years later. If that didn't keep me busy enough, I established the WCTU newspaper *The Union Signal*, by selling stock to rich women. It has been **an arousing** success, employing over one hundred employees, mostly women, and is the largest women's paper in the world.

Of course, I will admit, not everyone has sung my praises. Some have criticized me for planning and financing the Temperance Temple, saying it has become a financial albatross.

Sisters and brothers, let's not be consumed by our petty differences but direct our efforts to doing good works. In this vein, I've devoted my indefatigable energies as the first woman to be appointed to the Chicago Board of Education. I am the founder of an organization to provide housing for working women during the World's Columbian Exposition, and the president of the Chicago Foundling's Home Aid Society during which time I raised thousands of dollars. I also organized Sunday schools, temperance reading rooms, two kindergartens, two industrial schools, and an employment bureau. *Don't worry, Priscilla, I'll give you a complete list of my accomplishments after the meeting. What? Priscilla, are you interrupting me again? You didn't catch the beginning of the sentence. Uh, here it is: it's "in this vein." That is spelled v-a-i-n.*

To continue: We must attack the causes of alcoholism. Just a stone's throw from this place, there are women who sew twelve shirts a day for seventy-five cents and from that must furnish their own thread. Children work twelve hours a day for a dollar a week. The factories are so cramped that I've been told that women must make short threads lest their needles poke their neighbors. Many women leap at the opportunity to earn six cents for four hours' work, as some husbands can't get work at all and, in their misery, drink away the little money that their wives earn. If a woman should steal something for her family, she is arrested by whom? Men. Tried by whom? Men. Sentenced by whom? Men. Taken to the Bridewell prison by men. This has to change, and it will change if women of all classes band together. It's high time that ladies of society stop calling on each other with their gilded calling cards, roll up their sleeves, and get to work. If they really looked at the wan women who who sew their clothes, they would march with us and demand better wages for both women and men.

Just the other day, I met a Danish socialist named Laurence Gronlund. Now some of you might think a socialist is an anarchist, but Mr. Gronlund is very sensible for a socialist. Mr. Gronlund told me that few people read his academic books because they are so dull, but they will read Edward Bellamy's novel, *Looking Backward*. Mr. Bellamy picked the year 2000 and described the wonderful life that he envisions in 2000. He then traced American society back to 1887, so that Americans can see how miserable conditions are here and now. Mr. Bellamy adds a bit of spicy romance, just to sell the books, and I don't mind that at all, as long as people see that alcoholism is not the cause of our troubles, but the **mastication** of cruel, unfair working conditions.

Even Christians are not immune to indifference. I was told of a group of rich men studying the Bible in San Francisco. They extolled such passages as, "Servants, obey your masters," and "Wives be in subjection to your husbands," but balked when they read: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away" Thanks to the diligent intervention of our San Francisco chapter, the men are now studying social problems and the temperance question. They have reported that the Good Book is accurate in all respects with one unfortunate mistranslation. It has been

discovered by studying the ancient manuscripts that Jesus did not turn water into wine but wine into unfermented grape juice.

None of this awareness would have occurred if it hadn't been for my special guest who needs no introduction, although I will introduce her anyway. My introductions, according to my WCTU sister Felicia Gilmore, a recent graduate of Northwestern University, are noted for their (and I quote) "obfuscations and mendacities." I thank you, Felicia, for those kind words.

Tonight's guest is perhaps the best known woman in America in our decade of the 1880s. She has made a major contribution on every level of the WCTU. Much of the union's growth is due to her organizing talents. As national president of the WCTU, she has made hundreds of speeches and written countless articles and such practical WCTU literature, as *Hints and Helps*, a manual for local chapters. Every member of the Union knows her name. She has visited a thousand American towns and cities at least once and averaged a meeting a day for a ten-year stint. When the children of Chicago were asked to name two lion cubs at the Lincoln Park Zoo, they chose to honor Martha Washington, as well as our very own Frances Willard from Evanston, Illinois.

This evening Miss Willard will be interviewed by Byron Andrews, formerly of the Chicago Daily News. He has just returned from Mexico and Cuba where he served as the personal secretary to General Ulysses S. Grant. While waiting for our guests to come to the podium, we will be entertained with an edifying song. . . . **(Slide 5)**

- **Francis W: (Slide 6) Thank you, sister Mathilda, although I fail to find the song "Rum by Gum" in our approved song book. Nonetheless, I truly appreciate the opportunity to address the Chicago Central Chapter and direct my comments to Mr. Byron Andrews, formerly of the Chicago Daily News, a reporter who has handled the temperance question with sensitivity. So many newspapers have jeered my efforts to rid our nation of this terrible menace. People should own their own newspapers. At present, the situation reminds one of the method devised at the stockyard in Chicago by which the unsuspecting cattle from the prairies are decoyed by a serene-eyed ox rightly named Judas into the yards whence there is no return. This is precisely what the newspapers of the United States are doing. They are in a large degree subsidized by great corporations or by that greatest of all evil corporations, the political party. Newspapers make their money and their fame that way, and the unthinking masses follow on where they lead as if hypnotized, dazed, or distempered. Their influence is the most gigantic fraud to which current affairs bear witness. (Fifteenth Presidential Address, p. 199).**
- B.A.: I note your objections, and I can assure you that this newspaper reporter only seeks the truth. What were the circumstances that led you to live such a salubrious life as president of the WCTU? I understand that you not only do not imbibe but eat sparingly, mostly vegetables and fruit, as inspired by the teachings of Dr. Kellogg.

- **Francis W. (Slide 7)** Sir, I'm sure your readers are more interested in what I believe than what I eat. But given the subject, there is one activity that I heartily espouse and that is riding a bike. I recently wrote a book entitled "How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle." An English naval officer once said to me, "You women have no idea of the new realm of happiness which the bicycle has opened to us men." Already I knew well enough that tens of thousands who could never afford to own, feed, and stable a horse, had by this bright invention enjoyed the swiftness of motion which is perhaps the most fascinating feature of material life. I had often mentioned in my temperance writings that the bicycle was perhaps our strongest ally in winning young men away from public houses . . . because the skill required in handling it obliges those who mount their bikes to keep clear heads and steady hands.
- B.A. I've had the pleasure to read your charming book about how you learned to ride a bicycle at the age of 53. You had to create a suitable bicycling costume, and you spent fifteen minutes a day for a period of three months practicing pedaling, and mounting and dismounting. But to return to the subject that is closest to your heart. You've had to overcome multiple obstacles. You were born on a farm near Rochester, New York. Your parents eventually purchased land near Janesville, Wisconsin, and became relatively prosperous. They then moved to Evanston, so you and your sister could study at the North Western Female College, but then your beautiful beloved sister died of tuberculosis at the age of 19. You became engaged to an ambitious Methodist preacher Charles Henry Fowler . . .
- **Francis W. I broke off the engagement. "For a woman to marry a man whom she does not love, is to make one man as good in her sight, as another; hence it is prostitution . . . if I go alone and hungry to my grave, and spinster is written on my tombstone, I will at least stand before God in the next life, and tell him that I am guiltless of the crime that attends a marriage of convenience."**
- B.A. But, of course, that had unfortunate consequences for you when Rev. Fowler became the second president of Northwestern University and made it impossible for you as Dean of Women to do your duties.
- **Francis W. But it is only then that I found my life work. My brother died at an early age, having dissipated the family fortune from his gambling and drinking. I've been coping with my two nephews, both alcoholics, and I'm also financially responsible for my mother. I had to work.**
- B. A. **(Slide 8)** And that is when you became involved in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1874, as the first corresponding secretary. You were elected president in 1879, a position that you've

held ever since. I understand that you not only attack the effects of drinking but also the causes of alcoholism. Am I right in saying that you believe that intemperance does not cause poverty but that inhumane working conditions is the cause of intemperance? And that reformers should work on all three causes at once -- temperance, labor and women's rights?

- **Francis W. Correct. "In the 1890s, American has become the dumping ground for European cities. Today we have a hundred thousand anarchists among us in this country, as many as the entire regular army of the United States. It has been truly said that the explosion of just a little nitroglycerine under a few water mains would make our great city uninhabitable. The multiplication of inventions, the enormous accumulations of capital and the octopus grip of the Trusts render our wage earners uneasy. Any day a new machine may make the work of scores of men superfluous. There are seven million young men in America today, of whom over five million never darken a church door. We spend fifteen hundred million a year for liquor and tobacco--ten times as much as for education and religion. We have seventy thousand criminals, and while our population doubles every twenty-five years, the number of criminals doubles every ten.**

B. A. But what is the solution to society's ills?

Francis W. Simple! The women must have the vote. Not all of my colleagues at the WCTU support me on this issue, but women have no legal rights. If a woman's husband is a drunkard and drinks up the family's wages, there is nothing she can do about it. Not only do we need a constitutional amendment to allow women to vote, but we need another one to outlaw the sale and distribution of liquor. Mark my words, there will come a day when women will vote and men won't drink. Keep in mind my motto, "Do everything!" Now with that, I must be getting back to Rest Cottage in Evanston, where my mother and trusted assistant Anna Gordon are waiting for me. Mr. Andrews, it has been a pleasure to talk with you. I want to leave a little care package for your current employer General Ulysses Grant. It contains several tracts, including my personal favorite, "Questions on Temperance, with Bible Answers" and a WCTU pledge card. Confidentially, I must leave before the next guest. I approve of her intent, but not her methods. As much as I dislike saloons, I would never chop one up.

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B.A. Thank you, Miss Willard. Indeed our next guest is as controversial as Miss Willard is respected. none other than Carrie A. Nation. Prior to Mrs. Nation's appearance, in which she will recite her doggerel verse,

I've asked a few members of the audience if they would express their views, which have been previously been published in Mrs. Nation's rag, *The Smasher's Mail*.

1. Mrs. Nation, if you are feeling well you had better go back to Kansas and pick goose feathers out of turkeys for a while because Chicago people won't stand for any of your monkey doodle business."
Chicago, Feb. 14, 1901.
2. If your Hatchet Home Protectors wish me to abandon my business of dealing in intoxicating liquors, I would be only too willing and glad to do so, if you would come here and make me a fair offer for my lease, stock, and fixtures. Unfortunately, I do not know any other trade or profession, and I am now too old to learn any and I have a large family to support." *D. L. Frank, 267 W. Madison, Chicago, Feb. 6, 1901*
3. Mrs. Carrie Nation, I was very much pleased this morning to see by the Dallas News that you were still confined in jail, I think at present it is the fittest place for you. As to your statement that the Lord put you there, I don't know but you are correct. I rather think He got tired of your cavorting around and concluded that in jail was the suitable place. *from E. K. Morrison, Hillsboro, Texas.*
4. Dear Madam: I wish you success on your efforts to wipe out of existence the saloons of Kansas. When you are through with your work there, I wish you would destroy the saloon in the capital at Washington D.C. and also the saloon kept in Mrs. McKinley's Building in Canton, Ohio. *A sympathizer from San Francisco, Feb. 6, 1901*
5. God bless you, Carrie A Nation!

Carrie A. Nation approaches the podium.

Carrie: Mr. Andrews, When you plucked me from the hereafter, I was under the illusion that I had the opportunity to address a chapter meeting of the WCTU which often scorned my efforts during my life. You may have tricked old Frannie, but not me. I can easily see this isn't the late 1800s but somewhere in the future.

B.A. How did you know?

Carrie: I had to check my hatchet with the security desk, and the only thing I could find is this worthless souvenir from 1907 on E-Bay. Say what is that I see in the back? Is that a bar?

Audience member: No, no, it's a barn.

Carrie, thoughtfully: Hmmm, there is only one difference between a bar and a barn, the word barn ends with "n" but they are both for beasts.

B.A. Yes, well, back to the issue at hand. Many members of the WCTU are upset that you have capitalized on your fame by selling miniature hatchets. I understand you started out throwing stones. Then your husband suggested you should get a hatchet. You said, 'That is the most sensible thing you have said since I married you.'

Carrie: Sure, I sell hatchets, but so what? Ole Fannie Willard sometimes combines her money and the WCTU money all in one purse and calls it her own. I bet you didn't report on that, did you? While they are talking over their snicker-doodles and grape juice, I'm the one who is closing saloons.

B.A. But many believe the WCTU shouldn't be in the business of destroying property.

Carrie: They're concerned about destroying furniture. I'm concerned about whiskey which destroys lives and families. I ask you, which is more important?

B.A. Some have hinted that you are mentally ill, given your family history of mental problems.

Carrie: Who is mentally ill? I'd say men who drink up their wages and leave their women and children destitute are the ones who got rabid squirrels in their heads.

B.A. It is Miss Willard's viewpoint that alcohol is not the problem but the symptom and that if we eradicate poverty and poor working conditions, the addiction to liquor will disappear.

Carrie: That will happen when the cows jump over the moon. I've done a little research during my brief time here. I like this Google just as much as E-Bay. In the United States, there are an estimated 23 million people addicted to alcohol and drugs. Every day, almost 30 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. Now not everyone who lives in poverty or had a bad day becomes an addict. Each individual made a decision on his or her own to take a drug or to drink. America is a nation of addicts. And look what is happening in your own city, innocent people shot like sitting ducks. You need ole Carrie here to clean things up.

B.A. How many saloons did you smash in your lifetime?

Carrie: Don't remember them all but I whacked my way through Kiowa, Enterprise, Danville, Winfield, Topeka, Wichita, and Leavenworth, Kansas, and then I moved on to Washington, D.C., Rochester, N.Y. and San Francisco. One time I rolled a keg of whiskey onto the street, opened it with a hatchet, and set it

on fire. Beside the bars and kegs, I broke up mirrors, stools, and tables. I got arrested more than 30 times.

B.A. I see from your newspaper *Smashers' Mail*, that people even composed verse about you.

Carrie: I like this one the best:

We'll break the brandy bottles and we'll spill the liquor, too
Now swing the trusty hatchets as we fight the battle through

Then may you come out victorious
and your name become notorious
account of your breaking down
the whiskey traffic in your town.

Uh, just a minute, I got a cell phone call while I'm here to keep me in touch with my scout Mabel. Yeah,, Mabel, where are you? Jack's Sports Bar. Where is that? Cicero? What is a sports bar? Men sit around, drink and watch football. So, what are they drinking? Just a minute, let me write this down: Coors, Miller's Lite, Budweiser, -- slow down -- uh huh -- New Belgium Fat Tire -- odd name -- Sam Adams Boston Lager -- wait till I get a hold of this Mr. Samuel Adams. We'll have a word, yes, indeed. What? Is that right? They are all getting tight? Oh, Mabel, this sounds serious . . . And they're even talking about their tight ends. I'll be right down. Sorry, folks, gotta go. Just got a short time here on earth and as Fannie Willard says, "Do everything." Right, Mabel, don't do anything till I get there.

B.A.: The president of the local chapter Mathilda Bradley Carse will close this meeting of the WCTU for this evening. She will give practical ideas on how you can abolish demon rum from our midst. It has been a pleasure to be a part of this meeting. Unfortunately, I must leave to catch a train to Washington DC to start a newspaper there. And, here, she is Miss Carse.

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Mathilda: The purpose of this meeting is to encourage you to . . . *what is that, Priscilla? Is Carry A. Nation her real name? No, it's a synonym. (From the audience, pseudonym.) Uh, that's right, cinnamon.* Well, Mrs. Nation certainly has a livid imagination. Now, as I was saying, here is what you can do to help the cause. Stand on the street corners and hand out tracts that are listed on your information sheets. One thousand tracts only cost \$4. Secondly, help women get the vote. Once we get the vote, we'll first vote

saloons out of each district, and then we'll demand that there be an eighteenth constitutional amendment, which would ban the production, transportation and sale of alcohol, and then we'll take over the world. *What is that, Priscilla? What are the first seventeen amendments? Yes, I do know! I will quote word for word: therefore, notwithstanding, nonetheless, however, thereby, herein, and whatever! There is one amendment that I know very well: Freedom of speech which guarantees freedom of expression to anyone who has the gavel. No, Priscilla, no, no. What you are doing is not free speech but disturbing the peace. You resign? Fine anyone who wishes to apply for the secretary position of the Chicago chapter, please see me at the snicker doodle table at the conclusion of this meeting.*

Getting back to our business at hand, if we all work together, we will force the government to pass the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Let's all do our part and we'll win! Finally, I ask each of you to stand and take the WCTU pledge. (Someone help that man in the back get to his feet.)

I _____ do hereby solemnly pledge and bind myself to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, as a beverage during the remainder of my life. Lord Help Me. I made this pledge to God and to the Christian Women of the Temperance Union in Illinois State on December 7th, 1895.

Thank you each and every one of you. I love ending with the pledge because I always get a standing ovation. This concludes the December meeting of the Chicago Central Chapter of the WCTU. Just a reminder, next month we'll be hearing Miss Jane Addams speak about the plague of drink in the immigrant population. Meeting dismissed. We will reconvene at the snicker-doodle table. (Bang the gavel.)

Demon Rum

In this dramatization, the principals would not have met together at the same meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Chicago. Nonetheless, the information accurately depicts the forces behind the prohibition movement that led to the ill-fated Eighteenth Amendment that made illegal the production, transport, and sale of alcohol (though not the consumption or private possession). The

amendment was ratified Jan. 16, 1919. It is one of the ironies of history that Evanston became famous for the home of Frances Willard, the driving force for prohibition, and Chicago for its aftermath, forever tarred by the excesses of bootlegging and violence.

Matilda Bradley Carse became an activist after her son was killed in 1874 by a drunk wagon driver. She joined the Chicago Central Christian Woman's Temperance Union with the aim of eliminating alcohol consumption. In 1878 she became the president of the Chicago Central Christian Woman's Temperance Union. Thanks to her leadership, it was one of WCTU's most successful chapter. In 1880 she helped organize the [Woman's Temperance Publishing Association](#), selling the stock to rich women. That same year she also started *The Signal*; three years later it merged with another newspaper to become *The Union Signal*, the most important women's newspaper of its time.

The **Chicago Daily News** was an afternoon daily newspaper published between 1876 and 1978. **Byron Andrews** (1852-1910) was one of the first reporters. After a stint with the Chicago Daily News, he accompanied General Ulysses S. Grant on his foreign travels and became editor and co-publisher of the *National Tribune* of Washington, D. C. which served as an organ for the Grand Army of the Republic, eventually evolving into its modern version, *Stars and Stripes*.

Carrie A. Nation (Carry a Nation for Prohibition), was born Carrie Amelia Moore was born into a poor Kentucky family, plagued by financial setbacks and mental illnesses. In 1865, she married Dr. Charles Gloyd, a physician who died within a year of their marriage from the effects of alcoholism. She remarried David A. Nation, a minister and a journalist, 19 years her senior. She started the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Frustrated with the lack of enforcement of Kansas's ban on liquor, she collected rocks, otherwise termed "smashers", and attacked Dobson's Saloon on June 7th, 1900. After she led a raid in [Wichita](#) her husband joked that she should use a [hatchet](#) next time for maximum damage. Nation replied, "That is the most sensible thing you have said since I married you." The couple divorced in 1901. Carrie started her smashing career after Frances Willard's death. The letters for and against her activities were taken from her own newspaper, *The Smasher's Mail*, Topeka, Kansas, March 23, 1901 (Archives of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.) She died June 9, 1911.

Additional notes: I doubt Miss Carse had a proclivity to be a Miss Malaprop, but this sort of humor amuses me because I'm guilty of malapropisms! I incorporated several malapropisms in the text: depilating for debilitating, copulatory for copious, rousing for arousing, and mastication for manifestation. and vivid for livid.

Tracts available for distribution (Hurry, get yours today.)

The following tracts can be purchased from the National Temperance Society and Publication House, New York, at the rate of \$4 per 1,000: I Don't Care for It. 64. Why Sign the Pledge? 137. Alcohol in the Kitchen. 140. Shall We use Wine and Beer? 145. Our Method of Saloon Visiting.

Rum by Gum

We're coming, we're coming, our brave little band
On the right side of temperance we do take our stand
We don't use tobacco, because we do think

The people who use it are likely to drink
 Away, away with rum by gum, with rum by gum, with rum by gum
 Away, away with rum by gum, the song of the temperance union

We never eat fruit cake because it has rum
 And one little taste turns a man to a bum
 Oh, can you imagine a sorrier sight
 Than a man eating fruit cake until he gets tight

We never eat cookies because they have yeast
 And one little bite turns a man to a beast
 Oh, can you imagine a sadder disgrace
 Than a man in the gutter with crumbs on his face

I _____ do hereby solemnly pledge and bind myself to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors, as a beverage during the remainder of my life. Lord Help Me. I made this pledge to God and to the Christian Women of the Temperance Union in Illinois State on December 7th, 1895.

Sources: Frances Willard's responses are excerpted from *Let Something Good Be Said: Speeches and Writings of Frances E. Willard* and *How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle*. Other biographical information came from *Frances Willard: A Biography* by Ruth Bordin. Information about Carrie Amelia Moore Nation came from her own newspaper *Smashers' Mail* and other sources in the archives of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Material for Byron Andrews: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byron_Andrews. Mathilda Bradley Carse: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathilda_Carse The Frances Willard House is located at 1730 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, IL., 60201. Currently closed for renovation, it will reopen in the spring.