

Mrs. Carry A. Nation: 1846-1911 model for to-day's women?

Today's females want equality. Well, there were women a long time ago who felt the same way. But they expressed themselves a bit differently. George Orr examines one of them.

The woman of today is proud (and terrified) of the equality she holds among men. Her smug attitudes and affectations make her feel that her generation has at last thrown off the apron-string shackles of the back-room Bessy.

She feels that she has come of age at last, and is damn proud of it.

But there was an example for them to follow, whether they

know it or not. And had they followed this example, mankind would be flat on its back today.

Carry A. Nation, the female John Brown of American Prohibition, was born on November 25, 1846, a bad day for distillers everywhere. And until she passed on to better drier places in 1911, she was the originator of much varied but well-organized civil disobedience (a "shit disturber", as it were).



Her family background influenced her adult life. Her mother, for example, died fully convinced that she was the real Queen Victoria.

By her own confession, Carry was built like a tank, and when the fit was on her, she chewed rugs. On four distinct occasions, she confronted the Saviour of Us All and twice wrestled Satan himself to the ground.

She turned down lucrative offers to play professional baseball, to wrestle grizzly bears on stage, and to bounce "rowdies" from saloons.

By today's standards, she was a prude. She frowned most vocally on any form of alcohol, masturbation, dancing, tobacco, fornication, the practice of law, the Masonic Lodge, and the Republican Party.

It was Mrs. Nation (she was married twice) and her little toy metal hatchet that first blazed the trail for what later became the "Revolt of the Skirts". She took her hatchet to saloons; others took their parasols to public parks and rallies and clamoured

for the right of females to vote.

Prohibition and Female Suffrage became the Siamese Twin panaceas of the American Progressives. They believed that their reforms would rid the nation of what she called the filthy alliance between the pub-keepers and politicians that was sending the country to Hell.

Reaction to her vociferous screechings was nothing if not entertaining. In Dundee, Scotland, she was pelted with eggs. In Topeka, Kansas, she was doused with seltzer bottles, and Molotov cocktails. In another town in the same state, she was half killed by a mob of annoyed prostitutes.

Twice she barely escaped being lynched.

Her goal in life, that she admirably reached, was to be known as the Defender of the Home. Like other extreme reformers, she was against the use of alcohol. To her, the Demon Rum was the ruination of homes and families. Her first husband was a doctor whom she left because of his alcoholic over-indulgence.

To rid the world of booze, she would enter a saloon, hop up on the nearest convenient anything, preach a short succinct sermon on the evils of drink, tobacco, dancing, masturbation, and other like sins.

Then it was down off the table and onward to the bottles behind the bar. She was usually accompanied by a band of like-minded sidekicks, who would haul out their hatchets, and smash bottles and drinkers alike until their holy rage had been satiated.

Scourge of Saloons everywhere, she had a soft spot in her heart for the sinners she was perpetually trying to save. She once said that "saloon-keepers and harlots have a much better chance of heaven than the hypocrites who are in church." But she never mentioned if they would want to go to the Heaven she pictured.

The entire nation was not behind her, as you might have guessed. In 1901, she was sentenced 19 times in eight cities to 166 days behind bars. But the

better knitting circles everywhere supported her, and were usually good for a spot of bail money. On her one trip to Canada, she took her hatchet to lead a raid on the saloon and bar of the Hotel Belmont in Cape Breton Island, and was promptly arrested at the request of a terrified bartender.

Like extremists throughout history, she was a complete screwball. Finding her own grandson tending bar in one of Chicago's grossest dives, she thrashed him soundly.

But her movement suffered from the same malady that all over-anxious social reformers ache from. They could never control the thought they they should branch out from their own general style of reform into a world-clinching crusade.

In each town they visited, Mrs. Nation, and the lunatic fringe that followed her could always be counted on to stage a show that would damn everything from the town drunk to the mayor's moustache.

This method of attack lost her more friends than it won, but it did gain to her side others who shared her aims.

A suffragette in England, who had followed Carry for years, became so insensed with the carryings-on of Prime Minister Asquith that in 1912 she took a sharp bead on the man and nearly removed his head with her hatchet.

The hatchet became the symbol of the Nation movement. Acting on behalf of her god, "as a bulldog running along at the feet of Christ, barking (and biting) at what he doesn't like", she wielded the hatchet as more than a symbol.

But she was by no means a hard woman.

She was known to love negroes, Jews, and small children. And she always paid her debts.

Carry Nation fought men throughout her entire life, and her boldness could be an inspiration to today's females.

Take heart girls. But leave the hatchet in the woodland.

EDITOR FOR EXCALIBUR

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Rea . by Mel

Who am I?

Philosophy is a very difficult subject. I didn't know what I was (dealing with till I met Rea). Rea is real not an allusion. She looks like Buffy St. Marie and believes in the Comte-A.J. Ayer (air)-positivist school of thought. I Kant understand why.

She is at Brandeis doing a Ph.d. (Pappa has dough) in guess what. I build apartments and try to remember that she hates Proust.

She doesn't believe in G-d. She says a lá Alitzer-Hamilton that the word "G-d" cannot be defined.

I believe in G-d. I say a lá Abraham Joshua

Heschel that he cannot be rationally proven. He Kant be!

"Who cares?" says you.

"Be a kind (care) and alter (aware) person" say I.

We phone each other long distance, but her long black hair, her piercing eyes, her analytic mind cannot come through the phone.

We used to eat sandwiches in Queen's Park, or I'd watch her sew in the lobby of the U of T girl's dorm. Why did she leave Smith College? I never asked. Most people spend their junior year abroad. She chose my Alma Mater in T.O. We fought bitterly over the theological cot (cosmological, ontological, teleological). Like I say she cares and is aware. I wish I were.

We used to go to restaurants on Spadina or the Collonade. She didn't understand math (does any girl?), so we talked about the lensmaker (Spinoza) and the librarian (Leibnitz), but seldom meditated "rationally" on Descartes.

She won every argument.

Rea-reality-remembrances in time past.

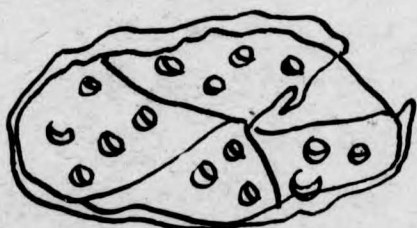
"La recherche du Temps Perdu"

I guess Neitzsche would have "Locke'd at Rea as a "Hume'an.

Oh I forgot she was born in "Berkeley" California.

Mel is currently wandering the halls of York and hopes everyone has a good reading (skiing) week. (Mel is an occasional Excalibur writer who writes on people he has known (among other things).

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