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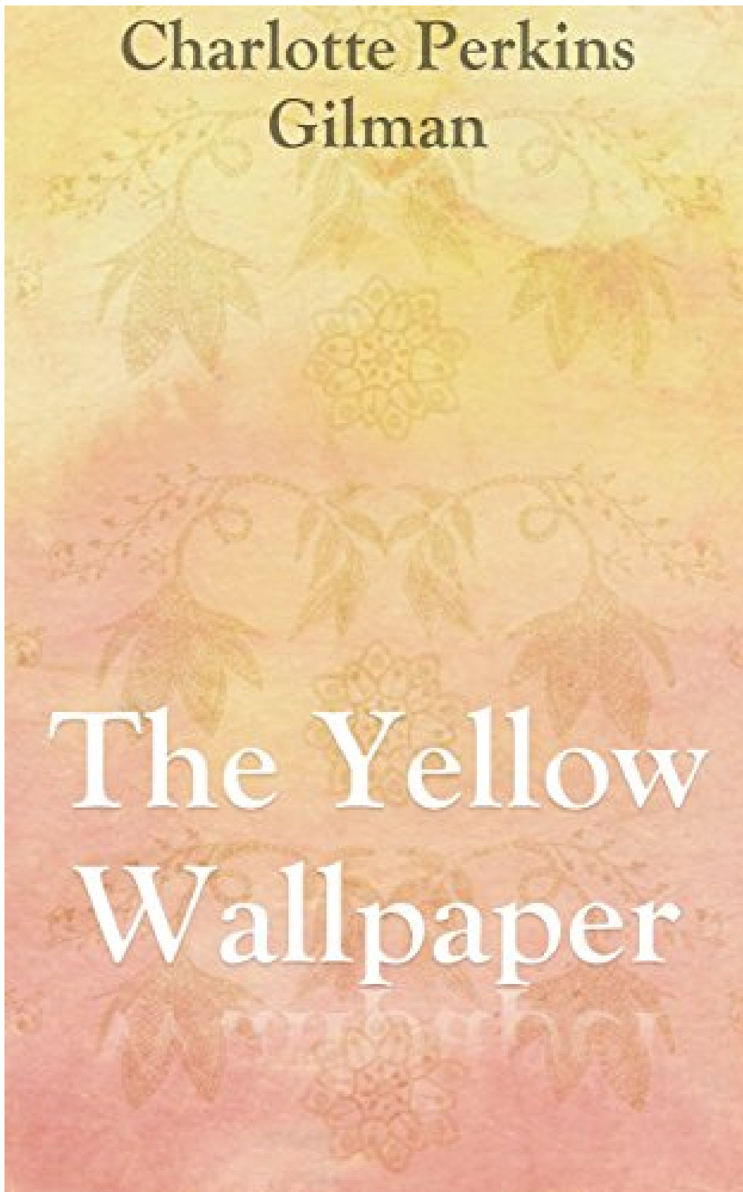

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Par Charlotte Perkins Gilman : The Yellow Wallpaper: Filibooks Classics (Illustrated) (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Yellow Wallpaper: Filibooks Classics (Illustrated) (English Edition):

Description : Description du produitSeven thought-provoking stories employ charm and humor to examine relations between the sexes from a feminist perspective. In addition to the title story, an 1892 classic that recounts a womans descent into madness, this collection includes "Cottagette," "Turned," "Mr. Peebles Heart," and more.

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Yellow Wallpaper is a short story by American author Charlotte Perkins Gilman.The story is widely regarded as an important early work in feminist literature. The story illustrates

attitudes in the 19th century toward women's health, both physical and mental.ExtraitTable of ContentsTitle PageCopyright PageAcknowledgementsIntroductionHERLANDCHAPTER I - A Not Unnatural EnterpriseCHAPTER II - Rash AdvancesCHAPTER III - A Peculiar ImprisonmentCHAPTER IV - Our VentureCHAPTER V - A Unique HistoryCHAPTER VI - Comparisons Are OdiousCHAPTER VII - Our Growing ModestyCHAPTER VIII - The Girls of HerlandCHAPTER IX - Our Relations and TheirsCHAPTER X - Their Religions and Our MarriagesCHAPTER XI - Our DifficultiesCHAPTER XII - ExpelledSHORT FICTIONThe UnexpectedThe Giant WistariaAn Extinct AngelThe Yellow Wall-PaperThe Rocking-ChairThrough ThisThe Boys and The ButterMrs. Beazleys DeedsTurnedOld WaterMaking a ChangeMrs. Elders IdeaThe Chair of EnglishBee WiseHis MotherDr. Clairs PlaceJoans DefenderThe VintageThe Unnatural MotherPOETRYOne Girl of ManyIn Duty BoundOn the PawtuxetShe Walketh Veiled and SleepingAn ObstacleSimilar CasesA ConservativeA MoonriseToo MuchTo the Young WifeBirthSeekingClosed DoorsThe PurposeLocked InsideThe ArtistMore Females of the SpeciesMatriatismEXPLANATORY AND TEXTUAL NOTESPENGUIN CLASSICSTHE YELLOW WALL-PAPER, HERLAND, AND SELECTED WRITINGSCHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN (1860-1935) was born in New England, a descendant of the prominent and influential Beecher family. Despite the affluence of her famous ancestors, she was born into poverty. Her father abandoned the family when she was a child, and she received just four years of formal education. At an early age she vowed never to marry, hoping instead to devote her life to public service. In 1882, however, at the age of twenty-one, she was introduced to Charles Walter Stetson (1858-1911), a handsome Providence, Rhode Island, artist, and the two were married in 1884. Charlotte Stetson became pregnant almost immediately after their marriage, gave birth to a daughter, and sank into a deep depression that lasted for several years. She eventually entered a sanitarium in Philadelphia to undergo the rest cure, a controversial treatment for nervous prostration, which forbade any type of physical activity or intellectual stimulation. After a month, she returned to her husband and child and subsequently suffered a nervous breakdown. In 1888, she left Stetson and moved with her daughter to California, where her recovery was swift. In the early 1890s, she began a career in writing and lecturing, and in 1892, she published the now-famous story The Yellow Wall-Paper. A volume of poems, In This Our World, followed a year later. In 1894, she relinquished custody of her young daughter to her ex-husband and endured public condemnation for her actions. In 1898, her most famous nonfiction book, Women and Economics, was published. With its publication, and its subsequent translation into seven languages, Gilman earned international acclaim. In 1900, she married her first cousin, George Houghton Gilman. Over the next thirty-five years, she wrote and published hundreds of stories and poems and more than a dozen books, including Concerning Children (1900), The Home: Its Work and Influence (1903), Human Work (1904), The Man Made World; Or, Our Androcentric Culture (1911), Moving the Mountain (1911), Herland (1915), With Her in Ourland (1916), His Religion and Hers: A Study of the Faith of Our Fathers and the Work of Our Mothers (1923), and The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography (1935). From 1909 to 1916 she singlehandedly wrote, edited, and published her own magazine, The Forerunner, in which the utopian romance Herland first appeared. In 1932, Gilman learned that she had inoperable breast cancer. Three years later, at the age of seventy-five, she committed suicide, intending her death to demonstrate her advocacy of euthanasia. In 1993, Gilman was named in a poll commissioned by the Siena Research Institute as the sixth most influential woman of the twentieth century. In 1994, she was inducted posthumously into the National Womens Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York.DENISE D. KNIGHT is professor of English at the State University of New York at Cortland, where she specializes in nineteenth-century American Literature. She is author of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Study of the Short Fiction and editor of The Later Poetry of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Abridged Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Yellow Wall-Paper and Selected Stories of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook. She is also the author of numerous articles, essays, and reviews on nineteenth-century American writers.Published by the Penguin GroupPenguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A.Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto,Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R ORL, EnglandPenguin Ireland, 25 St Stephens Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell,Victoria 3124, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre,Panchsheel Park, New Delhi - 110 017, IndiaPenguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North

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INTRODUCTION

Near the end of her autobiography, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) sardonically remarks that This is the womans century, the first chance for the mother of the world to rise to her full place, ... to remake humanity, to rebuild the suffering worldand the world waits while she powders her nose.1 Frustrated both by women who transformed themselves into sex objects for the pleasure of men and by societys gender-based double standard, Gilman created a fictional utopia, Herland (1915), where such frivolous items as face powder would be obsolete. Indeed, not only is Herland devoid of feminine vanity of any kind, its all-female inhabitants have created a peaceful, progressive, environmentally conscious country from which men have been absent for two thousand years. Rather than suffering deprivation, the women have thrived. Herland depicts a healthy, alternative view of women and demonstrates a degree of social reform that Gilman, caught in the conventional trappings of the turn-of-the-century patriarchal society, could envision only in her imagination.

Born Charlotte Anna Perkins in Hartford, Connecticut, on July 3, 1860, Gilman was the great-niece of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Toms Cabin (1852), and Henry Ward Beecher, the renowned minister. Despite her famous ancestry (her great-grandfather was the distinguished theologian Lyman Beecher), Gilman lived a troubled childhood. After her father abandoned the family, her mother, a part-time day-school teacher, was left to raise two children on her own. With only meager earnings, it was a precarious existence. During her adolescence, Gilman became a passionate rebel, defiantly rejecting the conventional roles deemed appropriate for late-nineteenth-century women. At the age of eighteen, she entered the Rhode Island School of Design, where she studied drawing and painting. By the time she was twenty she had decided to devote her life to public service. Although she had vowed never to marry, in January 1882 she met Rhode Island artist Charles Walter Stetson, who proposed marriage just two-and-a-half weeks later. Fearing that marriage would compromise her desire to work, Gilman quickly declined. In a letter to Stetson, Gilman tried to express her reservations: As much as I love you I love WORK better, I cannot make the two compatible.... I am meant to be useful strong, to help many and do my share in the worlds work, but not to be loved.2 Stetson persisted with marriage proposals for nearly two years, however, and despite serious misgivings on Gilmans part, they were married on May 2, 1884.

Within weeks after the wedding Gilman became pregnant and sank into a deep depression. Her daughter, Katharine Beecher Stetson, was born on March 23, 1885. Gilman recalled in her autobiography both the severity of her distress and the self-blame that she suffered:

Absolute incapacity. Absolute misery.... Prominent among the tumbling suggestions of a suffering brain was the thought, You did it yourself! You had health and strength and hope and glorious work before youand you threw it all away. You were called to serve humanity, and you cannot serve yourself. No good as a wife, no good as a mother, no good at anything. And you did it yourself! ... I would hold [the baby] close, and instead of love and happiness, feel only pain.... Nothing was more utterly bitter than this, that even motherhood brought no joy.3

In the spring of 1887, Gilman traveled to Philadelphia, where she underwent the rest cure from the leading nerve specialist, Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell. The treatment he prescribed required Gilman to live as domestic a life as possible, to have the baby with her at all times, and to never touch a pen, a paintbrush, or a pencil for the remainder of her life. Within months after returning home, she suffered a nervous breakdown. With the modicum of rational intelligence that remained, Gilman garnered the courage to reject Mitchells advice and to immerse herself again in her work. Her marriage could not survive under the strain of her resolve, however, and in the

fall of 1887, she and Stetson agreed to separate. In 1888, Gilman left with Katharine for Pasadena, California, where her recovery was swift. Freed from the constraints of marriage, she formally launched her career as a writer and lecturer, preaching about the marginalized status of women to increasingly large audiences.Over the course of her lifetime, Gilman proved to be enormously prolific, publishing some five hundred poems, nearly two hundred short stories, hundreds of essays, eight novels, and an autobiography. She also emerged as one of the key figures in the late-nineteenth-century womens movement. Her most famous story, The Yellow Wall-Paper, was published in 1892, followed by a book of poetry, In This Our World, a year later. The publication of her landmark feminist treatise Women and Economics (1898) quickly launched Gilman into the spotlight. At the heart of Women and Economics is Gilmans insistence that as long as women were economically dependent on men, they could never reach their full potential as human beings. Translated into seven languages, the book won Gilman international acclaim and established her as the authority on the relationship between female sexual oppression and economic dependence on men.With Gilmans public visibility increasing, changes in her personal life were inevitable. The extensive travel and long workdays made it difficult for her to find time for her young daughter. In 1894, she made the agonizing decision to relinquish custody of Katharine to Walter Stetson, whom she divorced the same year. Gilman was publicly condemned for her actions and branded an unnatural mother by her detractors. For his part, Stetson soon married Gilmans long-time friend, Grace Ellery Channing. With Katharine back East with Stetson and his new wife, Gilman resumed her work with renewed vigor.During her early years in California, Gilman read Edward Bellamys socialist-utopian romance, Looking Backward (1888). She was drawn to Bellamys emphasis on political, social, and economic equality and quickly became a convert to Nationalism, the movement spawned by Bellamys novel. Based on the principles of reform Darwinism, Nationalism reflected a belief in environmental determinism and embraced the view that society would evolve peacefully and progressively. It also promoted an end to capitalism and class distinctions and advanced the idea of the democratic improvement of the human race. Gilman was particularly attracted by the novels emphasis on womens rights and began actively advocating such social reforms as economic independence, the restructuring of the home and child-care practicesbased in part on social motherhood (a system that would enlist the skills of highly trained child-care professionals)and dress reform, all themes that would recur in her fictional utopias years later, most notably in Herland.In 1900, thirty-nine-year-old Charlotte Stetson married her first cousin, George Houghton Gilman, a Wall Street attorney. The couple settled in New York, and Gilman continued to write and lecture, often embarking on national lecture tours. In 1909, finding it increasingly difficult to secure an audience for her progressive views, she began her own monthly magazine, the Forerunner, which enjoyed a seven-year run. Like nearly all of her writing, the Forerunner was primarily didactic and featured short stories, serialized novels, essays, articles, fables and fantasies, satires and sermons, and comments and reviews.It was in the Forerunner that the utopian romance Herland originally appeared. Serialized in 1915, Herland was the perfect forum for illustrating Gilmans idealized vision of a world reformed. By satirizing sexism and inequality, Gilman effectively exposed the absurdities and limitations of patriarchal practices and institutions. One of Gilmans objectives throughout Herland, in fact, was to remind us that historically society has assumed that various traits are gender-specific (for example, that women are vulnerable and fearful), when, in reality, vulnerability and fear are human traits. Through an extended cultural analysis of the progressive, utopian Herland, Gilman demonstrates how much better the rest of the world could be if it, too, were free of the gender biases that preclude women from reaching their full potential.Herland begins with three young male American explorers discovering a remote country inhabited exclusively by women who reproduce parthenogenetically, giving birth only to daughters. The narrator, Vandyck Jennings, and his companions, Terry O. Nicholson and Jeff Margrave, hold traditional androcentric views of women, but once they arrive in Herland, their notions are quickly put to the test. While Jeff, a tender soul and hopeless romantic who worships women, anticipates finding something akin to a nunnery in this strange new land, the supremely egotistical and sexist Terry believes that Herland will fulfill his wildest fantasies with its population comprised of just Girls and Girls and Girls. Only Vandyck (also called Van), a sociologist by trade, is open-minded enough to reserve judgment. Still, while he prides himself on holding a middle ground between the two extremes represented by Jeff and Terry, his adherence to prevailing stereotypes is evident near the beginning of the novel when he remarks that this is a civilized country! There must be men.Soon after their arrival in Herland, the three explorers are captured and taken prisoner by a group of women. We were borne inside, struggling manfully, but held secure most womanfully, in spite of our best endeavors, Van remarks. Gilman humorously extends the role reversal after

the men are rendered helpless by being chloroformed, undressed, and put to bed by their captors. When they awaken, they are disconcerted by the womens treatment of them not as men, but as human beings. Since gender roles are nonexistent in Herland, the frame of reference through which the men have historically identified themselves is no longer relevant.The members of this all-female nation are calm, grave, wise, wholly unafraid, evidently assured and determined. The primary means by which the women are distinguished from the female population at large, in fact, is through appearance and behavior. Because the country has been without men for so long, the Herlanders have had no reason to develop their sexual attributes. With no opposite sex to attract, the women have become the epitome of practicality, wearing comfortable tunics and short, carefree hair.Much of the humor in the novel is derived from Gilmans playful examination of accepted social and cultural practices, many of which are based on blind and often unconscious adherence to gender roles that have evolved over time. By demonstrating viable alternatives to traditional roles, Gilman asks readers to reevaluate their assumptions. In using a series of conversations between the male explorers and the women as a form of mutual discovery about their countries respective traditions and practices, Gilman exposes not only inherent gender biases but also social customs that make women look vain and foolish. For example, while the Herlanders wear hats only for protection from sun or cold, the men confess that American women wear them to look becoming. When the Herlanders ask if elaborately decorated hats are worn by both genders, the men are forced to admit that they are not. The women quickly learn that double standards are enormously pervasive outside of their country with respect to such things as hairstyles (long hair is considered feminine), marriage (wives assume their husbands last name), language (the term virgin applies only to women), employment practices (in some households only the men work), and the myth of man as protector of woman. Gilman also uses Herland as a forum for exposing her support of cremation, her indictment of the meat industry, her assertion that war is a male construct, her impatience with those who embrace the idea of immortality, and, most important, her views on child-rearing, which she also discusses at length in such works as Concerning Children (1900) and Women and Economics.Of the various reforms depicted in Herland, social motherhood was closest to Gilmans heart. In both the novel and in her own life, Gilman advocated a system in which the young child would be trained by professional caretakers and raised communally. Because not every woman has the talent, training, or experience to make her effective in child-rearing, Gilman argued, children who were raised by professional caretakers would be healthier, brighter, and better adjusted. Moreover, such a system would free the childs mother to engage in work outside of the home with remunerative benefits. (All of the women in Herland are actively engaged in one form of employment or another.)In Herland, motherhood is deified and children are the center and focus of the Herlanders existence. As Somel, Vans personal tutor, explains, Child-rearing has come to be with us a culture so profoundly studied, practiced with such subtlety and skill, that the more we love our children the less we are willing to trust that process to unskilled handseven our own. Indeed, the Herlander children, who have no surnames since they are all one family, are happy, bright, vigorous, and well-adjusted. Initially skeptical, Van becomes a convert to the Herlanders child-rearing methods by the novels end. After observing the practice at work over a period of months, he is forced to conclude that they have developed a perfect system of child-rearing, while the American system is highly flawed.Housekeeping is another subject that Gilman addresses in Herland. She realized that, in life, the home served vastly dichotomous functions for each separate gender, an issue she expounded on at length both in Women and Economics and in The Home (1903). For a man, it was a haven to retreat to after a long day at work; for a woman, it was a place of veritable enslavement, where from dawn until dusk she would be engaged in the most menial type of domestic labor. The solution Gilman proposes is to have the housekeeping, like the child-rearing, performed by trained professionals to minimize the isolation and mental myopia that housebound women are doomed to suffer.As for marriage, Gilman pairs each of the men in Herland with a mate, and each union has a markedly different outcome. Terry, who is alternately viewed as a womanizer (he believes in two kinds of womenthose he wanted and those he didnt) and a sexual predator (he was like a creature about to spring), marries Alima but is quickly expelled from Herland for attempting marital rape. Jeff and his wife Celis become the most absorbed of lovers and soon announce her pregnancy, an historical event that is celebrated by the entire country. And Van marries Ellador, who is confused by the notion that married people would desire to engage in sexual intercourse out of season. While she sympathizes with Vans wish to experience the sweetest, highest consummation of mutual love, she declines his advances until she is convinced that regular sexual relations are both proper and desirable.In the final analysis, Herland is at once a utopian romance, a satire, and a social reform novel. It served as a forum through which Gilman was able

to demonstrate the majority of her reform theories at work. Its sequel, With Her in Ourland (1916), follows Van and Ellador after they leave Herland and travel the world during the Great War. At the conclusion of the novel, the disillusioned pair returns to the utopian Herland, which offers a sanctuary from the disease-infested, poverty-stricken, and decidedly inequitable masculine world.Despite the fact that Gilman became enticed by the social reform movement in the 1890s, she did not begin writing social reform fiction on a regular basis until the Forerunner was launched in 1909. By contrast, her early fictionthose works written in the 1890srange from ghost stories to humorous tales to autobiographical fiction.One of her earliest published stories, The Unexpected (1890), centers around the character of Edouard Charpentier, a struggling, Europeanized American artiste living in Paris, who is fickle, pretentious, and humorously melodramatic in his love for Marie, a distant cousin he discovers on a trip to the States. After knowing her a week, courting her a month, and being married to her a fortnight, Edouard suspects his wife of committing adultery. While the storys denouement is somewhat predictable, the first-person male narration is entertaining and Edouard delightfully whimsical.The Giant Wistaria (1891) is a remarkable piece of fiction comprised of two connected stories set a hundred years apart. In it, Gilman weaves an intriguing tale of illegitimate birth, repressed sexuality, female rebellion, physical and emotional abuse, and murder-suicide. The giant wisteria vine, a major symbol in the story, is both emblematic of maternal sacrifice and a grotesque reminder of the suffering of women who are literally and metaphorically silenced by the patriarchy.An Extinct Angel (1891) is a clever satirical tale examining the history of the angel in the house, a metaphor for the perfect wife and doting mother who adheres to the tenets of true womanhood. Presented as a fairy tale but with a subtext rooted in historical fact, Gilman alludes to the rule of thumb and other forms of violence affecting women bound by the cult of domesticity. An Extinct Angel effectively illustrates Gilmans view that domestic servility is both unhealthy and potentially dangerous.It is, of course, The Yellow Wall-Paper (1892) for which Gilman is best remembered. The story has received more critical acclaim than any of her other work. In artistry and execution, it is superior to any of her other literary works. Yet critics have disagreed vehemently over the meaning of the story, variously arguing the significance of everything from linguistic cues to psychoanalytic interpretations to historiographical readings.Based upon Gilman and her own breakdown, the storys protagonist is slowly driven mad by her physician husband while undergoing the rest-cure treatment for nervous prostration. Gilman uses the symbol of madness as a powerful metaphor in the story. Madness manifested as progressive incipient insanity and madness manifested as extreme and repressed anger at female bondage become dichotomous components of the protagonists condition.The opening of The Yellow Wall-Paper quickly establishes the narrators circumstances. She is spending the summer in an isolated mansion with her husband, John, a well-respected physician whose character is defined by pragmatism and reason. The narrator is suffering from an illness, which John downplays as a a temporary nervous depression. As part of her treatment, she is forbidden to work, a remedy with which she strenuously disagrees. Writing of any kind is prohibited, since John has cautioned her not to give way to fancy in the least. But the narrator is convinced that writing might prove therapeutic, and, despite Johns admonitions, she keeps a secret diary.The diary entries reveal much about the narrators state of mind. She is apparently suffering a severe form of postpartum depression, a condition neither acknowledged by John nor by the late-nineteenth-century medical community of which he is a part. So extreme is the narrators depression that the care of the new baby has been assumed by a nursemaid.Deprived of the freedom to write openly, the narrator gradually shifts her attention to the wallpaper in the attic nursery where she spends most of her time. She soon begins to detect a subpattern that crystallizes into the image of a woman attempting to escape from behind the wallpaper, which also appears to the narrator to have prisonlike bars. As the entrapped woman becomes increasingly desperate to escape, the narrator comes to her aid. Eventually, the narrators own identity becomes merged with that of the entrapped woman, and she begins to collaborate in her own escape. At the end of the story, John breaks into the locked room, discovers his wife crawling on the floor, and faints right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!While some critics have hailed the narrator as a feminist heroine, others have seen in her a maternal failure coupled with a morbid fear of female sexuality. Some have viewed the story as an exemplar of the silencing of women writers in nineteenth-century America; others have focused on the gothic elements, comparing the story to those by Edgar Allan Poe.The conclusion of the story, too, has been variously read as a victory and as a defeat. Those who argue that the narrator triumphs cite Johns appearance in her room (he has been reduced to an impotent lump on the floor) as evidence for their point of view. It is worth noting, however, that John is still obstructing the narrator at the storys end by physically blocking her path so that she has to creep over

him.When asked why she wrote The Yellow Wall-Paper, Gilman insisted that her objective was to convince Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell of the error of his ways4 in treating nervous prostration. In following his prescription, Gilman reflects, I ... came so near the borderline of utter mental ruin that I could see over.5 When she allegedly heard many years later that Mitchell had read the story and subsequently changed his treatment of nervous prostration, Gilman was pleased. If that is a fact, she wrote, I have not lived in vain.6 The Rocking-Chair (1893) is another story replete with gothic elements, including the specter of a beautiful young woman, a rocking chair that mysteriously walks across the room, and the disclosure of a coffinlike chamber. Like The Giant Wistaria, The Rocking-Chair culminates with the discovery of a brutal death.The narrator of another early story, Through This (1893), is hauntingly reminiscent of the deeply disturbed protagonist in The Yellow Wall-Paper. Through This chronicles a day in the life of a young wife and mother immersed in the cult of domesticity. She subordinates her own needs to those of her husband and children so that they will grow strong and happy. The unrelenting demands of her duties, however, leave her exhausted and unhappy, despite her protests to the contrary. Like the narrator in The Yellow Wall-Paper, the protagonist in Through This is mesmerized by the colors that creep up and down her bedroom walls. Both stories deftly demonstrate the potential cost to women who subordinate their own needs to those of others.A story with Christian overtones, The Boys and The Butter (1910), is actually a reflection of Gilmans thoughts on the indignities that can be suffered by children at the hands of cruel and thoughtless adults. Rarely one to miss an opportunity to instill a moral, Gilman adds a plot twist that restores the faith of the children and publicly humiliates the self-righteous aunt who has caused them to suffer.A recurring theme in Gilmans fiction is that of women who desperately struggle for the autonomy and freedom that is restricted in an androcentric society. In Mrs. Beazleys Deeds (1911), the protagonist, Maria, lives under the thumb of her tyrannical husband William, who espouses the philosophy, Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands. William coerces Maria into signing over nearly all the deeds to a large tract of land inherited from her late father. To further assert his control, William arranges to keep a boarder, giving Maria virtually no advance notice. The boarder, Miss Lawrence, is a bright, dynamic, and sympathetic attorney who convinces Mrs. Beazley to leave her husband for the sake of the children. When she is advised of her legal rights, Mrs. Beazley starts to get a clearer vision of her personal rights as well; she recognizes the emotional costs of her husbands domination and triumphs at the end of the story.The story Turned (1911) examines the themes of adultery, female victimization, and sisterhood. When Mrs. Marion Marroner, a former college professor, discovers that her eighteen-year-old domestic servant, Gerta, has been impregnated by Marroners husband, she is initially consumed by jealousy and outrage. After the initial shock wears off, however, Mrs. Marroner begins to see Gerta for what she is: a helpless victim of her husbands exploitation. She vows to stand by Gerta and her child, and at the storys conclusion, the two women stand united before the duplicitous Mr. Marroner.Old Water (1911) weaves the elements of dreams, fate, and dja vu into a tale of mystery and intrigue. Pendexter, a famous poet, is overzealous in his pursuit of a friends vibrant young daughter. As she struggles to repel his sexual advances during a moonlit stroll, the two lose their footing and tumble off of a cliff into the lake below. She survives; he does not. Gilman leaves the ending ambiguous, and the question of whether Pendexters death was the result of accidental drowning or murder is left unanswered.In Making a Change (1911), Gilman once again pairs an older woman counselor with a younger woman and combines her advocacy of day-care centers and social motherhood with her call for economic independence. The storys protagonist, Julia Gordins, is a young wife and mother who discovers that abandoning her career as a musician to become a full-time, housebound caretaker for her infant son involves such a forfeiture of her self that suicide seems to offer the only means of escape. Julias mother-in-law discovers her intentions in time to prevent the suicide, and the two women together effect a solution to the crisis. Without telling Julias husband, they conspire to have Julia return to work outside of the home while her mother-in-law indulges her own desires by opening a baby-garden on the roof of their apartment building. The change engenders a positive outcome on a number of levels. Not only is Franks mother providing a valuable community service, but, more important, the restructuring of the environment has freed Julia to return to the musical world which was her livelihood prior to marriage.Another happy ending is seen in Mrs. Elders Idea (1912) after a compromise is struck between the decidedly mismatched Grace Elder and her husband, Herbert. When Herbert announces one day that he has sold his business, his city-loving wife is horrified to learn that he has purchased a farm. Grace perceives life on a farm as analogous to penal servitude, and there arises in her a slow, boiling flood of long-suppressed rebellion. She begins to formulate a plan, and within a few weeks she announces that she is moving to Boston to become a professional buyer. She assures her husband, however,

that he will always be welcome in her new home. Gilman demonstrates that a commuter marriage can work, especially when two half-homes are more satisfying than one whole home with an unhappy wife withering in discontent.Scandal informs The Chair of English (1913), a story that hinges on the themes of deception, blackmail, and the misuse of power. Dr. Irwin Manchester, the chair of the English department, is an unscrupulous man who fabricates a story about a colleagues infidelity, hoping to force the colleagues resignation so that he might secure the vacant post for a relative. Gilmans protagonist, Mona Beale, is a wise and intelligent woman who confronts the devious Manchester after catching him in his own web of deceit. She retaliates with her own form of blackmail and forces him to vacate his chairmanship under the threat of exposure.While the representation of the ideal is obvious in Herland and in other works featuring utopian landscapes, the impact of Gilmanian idealism spills over, perhaps more subtly, into much of her short fiction as well. Among those stories depicting utopian communities, Bee Wise (1913) is perhaps her best. Like Herland, Bee Wise provides the perfect forum for illustrating her idealized vision of a world reformed. The story focuses on a group of enterprising women who establish two utopian communities in California. These communities contain many of the same amenities as those described in Herland, such as sensible clothing, baby-gardens, and kitchenless homes. The story serves as yet another treatise-in-miniature of Gilmans life philosophy: that work is the first duty of every human being.A power struggle is one of several themes in His Mother (1914), a story centering on a middle-aged policewoman, Mrs. Martin, and her son, Jack. As a procurer of young prostitutes, Jack epitomizes everything his mother repudiates. At the conclusion of the story, Jacks mother is forced to arrest her son for trafficking in prostitution. If the ending is melodramatic, Gilmans message is not. The story expresses her views not only on the exploitation of the innocent, but also on the powerful issue of maternal guilt. We are left with an image of Mrs. Martin still trying to expiate Jacks crimes by spending a long life in trying to do good enough to make up for her own share in his evil.Dr. Clairs Place (1915) presents an alternative to the conventional rest cure treatment that Gilman describes in The Yellow Wall-Paper. In this story, Octavia Welch is an archetypal death-in-life character who is contemplating suicide after battling nervous prostration for many years. A casual acquaintance gently persuades her to see Dr. Willy Clair, a woman who has opened a sanitarium specializing in the treatment of nervous disorders. Unlike the rest cure, Dr. Clairs treatment of chronic depression requires both physical and mental activity on the part of the patient. The themes in Dr. Clairs Place are similar to those in many of Gilmans stories : The issues of control, empowerment, and work are of paramount importance, as they were in Gilmans own life.Joans Defender (1916) is a story with androgynistic overtones and is mildly reminiscent of Herland. Joan, a petulant child, is rescued from a destructive and hostile home environment by a kindly uncle. When they arrive at his ranch, Joan discovers that because all of her cousins wear the same short hairstyle and loose trousers, she is hard-pressed to discern the boys from the girls. In this gender-neutral environment, similar to that described in Herland, Joan thrives. The formerly whiny, whimpering girl is transformed into a bright, cheerful, and self-sufficent child.Venereal disease is the subject of The Vintage (1916), a deftly sketched story and one of Gilmans most moving. At the heart of The Vintage is Gilmans reminder that venereal disease transcends class and afflicts people from all walks of life. She chooses as her victim/heroine a member of a proud and aristocratic Southern family, Leslie Vauremont Barrington Montroy, whose husband infects her with with syphilis. The surprise ending is poignantly rendered. When the truth is revealed, the couples young son, who is also infected, rises to incredible levels of altruism to console his grieving father.Gilman uses the story The Unnatural Mother (1916) to expose the hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness of people who villified her for relinquishing custody of her daughter Katharine to her ex-husband and his new wife in 1894. Significantly, the story was published three times during Gilmans life.Esther Greenwood, the protagonist, is a healthy, free-spirited woman who is ostracized by the community because of her unconventional and liberal child-rearing techniques, which the townspeople deem inappropriate.The communitys criticisms are drawn from Gilmans own experiences, as she candidly acknowledged in her autobiography. The good mamas of Pasadena were extremely critical of my methods.... They thought it scandalous that I should so frankly teach [Katharine] the simple facts of sex and allow her to play bare-footed in the ... California sunshine.... For all this I was harshly blamed, accused of neglecting my child. 7Gilman uses The Unnatural Mother to respond to her detractors by depicting Esther Greenwood as a martyred heroine. Esther sacrifices her life to save fifteen hundred townspeople, including her daughter, yet they still continue to pass judgment on her actions and consider her an unnatural mother.In addition to fiction, Gilman was a poet, publishing her first volume of verse, In This Our World, in 1893. During her lifetime, in fact, she was better known as a poet than as a fiction writer. Although she enjoyed reading the

lyrical works of such poets as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Rudyard Kipling, Jean Ingelow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Gilmans poetry, like her fiction, tended to be heavily didactic.Gilmans strongest poetry was her satirical verse. Her most famous poem, Similar Cases (1890), a satire on social conservatism, was praised by numerous critics, including William Dean Howells. In addition to satirical work, however, Gilman also wrote occasional verse, political and philosophical poetry, nature verse, poems about womens oppression, and works advancing her belief in the inevitability of progress. The selections in this edition offer a sampling of Gilmans range as a poet.In January 1932, Charlotte Perkins Gilman learned that she had inoperable breast cancer. Her work ethic still intact, she tried to maintain as normal a life as possible, lecturing on occasion and publishing in newspapers and magazines. Then, in 1934, Houghton Gilman died very suddenly after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage, and later that year Gilman returned to Pasadena to be near her daughter and grandchildren. She was joined there by her old friend Grace Channing, who had herself been widowed for many years. On the night of August 17, 1935, just weeks after her seventy-fifth birthday, Gilman ended her life by inhaling chloroform. She died quickly and peacefully. Like the Herlander women who thought that personal immortality was a singularly foolish idea, Gilman had no fears about dying and no interest in the afterlife. Rather, she was concerned with making an impact while she was hereby engaging the intellect, engendering discussion, and examining alternative ways of viewing the world. Doubtless she would be pleased to know that works such as Herland have reached a whole new generation of readers and continue today to stimulate thought and dialogue.DENISE D. 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