



The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography (Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography)

By Charlotte Perkins Gilman

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Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1869-1935) was one of the leading intellectuals of the American women's movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Moving beyond the struggle for suffrage, Gilman confronted an even larger problem—economic and social discrimination against women. Her book, *Women and Economics*, published in 1898, was repeatedly printed and translated into seven languages. She was a tireless traveler, lecturer, and writer and is perhaps best known for her dramatic short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper." Gilman's autobiography gives us access to the life of a remarkable and courageous woman.

Originally published in 1935, soon after Gilman's death, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* has been out of print for several years. This edition includes a new introduction by Gilman's noted biographer, Anne J. Lane.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Gilman (1869-1935), a leader of the women's movement, is best known for her autobiographical short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," about a trapped housewife who goes mad, and her treatise "Women and Economics." This autobiography was completed in 1935, when Gilman's reputation was waning and she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. Her last chapter is both a farewell and an argument for euthanasia; shortly after completing it she committed suicide. Long out of print, this volume documents Gilman's unhappy childhood with a mother who could not show affection, then her failed attempt at marriage and motherhood, which drove her to a breakdown and, subsequently, divorce. Gilman describes her long career as a social activist, writer and lecturer, during which she suffered continuing bouts of depression. Although one wishes for a more candid insight into her remarkable life, Gilman's views on women's equality, marriage, birth control and sex education are provocative and contemporary. This is a valuable contribution to understanding an important feminist thinker. Lane is the author of the biography *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. Photos.

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Review

"As years passed and continuous writing and speaking developed the various lines of thought I was following, my work grew in importance but lost in market value. . . . Theodore Dreiser looked gloomily at me over his desk and said: 'You should consider more what the editors want.' Of course I should have . . . but if one writes to express important truths, needed yet unpopular, the market is necessarily limited."—Charlotte Perkins Gilman

"With the emerging awareness of autobiographies by famous women and how they differ from those by men, it is time for *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* to become a permanent addition to the literature. The outline of Gilman's unconventional life, as usually given in reference works and headnotes to her fiction, provides little insight into the brave, vivacious personality that radiates from her autobiography."—Nancy Engbretsen Schaumburger, *Belles Lettres*

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