

en he said—very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"
 "I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"
 And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so
 often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in. He
 stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane? And I've pulled off
 most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my
 path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

1892

Why I Wrote "The Yellow Wallpaper"?

Many and many a reader has asked that. When the story first came out, in
 the *New England Magazine* about 1891,² a Boston physician made protest in
The Transcript. Such a story ought not to be written, he said; it was enough to
 drive anyone mad to read it.

Another physician, in Kansas I think, wrote to say that it was the best
 description of incipient insanity he had ever seen, and—begging my pardon—
 had I been there?

Now the story of the story is this:

For many years I suffered from a severe and continuous nervous breakdown
 tending to melancholia—and beyond. During about the third year of this trou-
 ble I went, in devout faith and some faint stir of hope, to a noted specialist³ in
 nervous diseases, the best known in the country. This wise man put me to bed
 and applied the rest cure, to which a still good physique responded so promptly
 that he concluded there was nothing much the matter with me, and sent me
 home with solemn advice to "live as domestic a life as far as possible," to "have
 but two hours' intellectual life a day," and "never to touch pen, brush or pencil
 again as long as I lived." This was in 1887.

I went home and obeyed those directions for some three months, and came
 so near the border line of utter mental ruin that I could see over.

Then, using the remnants of intelligence that remained, and helped by a
 wise friend,⁴ I cast the noted specialist's advice to the winds and went to work
 again—work, the normal life of every human being; work, in which is joy and
 growth and service, without which one is a pauper and a parasite; ultimately
 recovering some measure of power.

Being naturally moved to rejoicing by this narrow escape, I wrote *The Yellow
 Wallpaper*, with its embellishments and additions to carry out the ideal (I never
 had hallucinations or objections to my mural decorations) and sent a copy to
 the physician who so nearly drove me mad. He never acknowledged it.

1. First published in the *Forerunner* (October 1913),
 the source of the present text.

2. The correct date is January 1892.

3. Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914), a specialist in nerve
 diseases (and a novelist) who popularized the "rest cure"
 for women.

4. This is almost certainly the writer Grace Channing
 (1862-1937). Channing and Gilman had been friends
 since they were teenagers; in 1894, after Gilman and
 Charles Stetson were divorced, Channing and Stetson
 married.

The little book is valued by alienists⁵ and as a good specimen of one kind of
 literature. It has to my knowledge saved one woman from a similar fate—and
 terrifying her family that they let her out into normal activity and she recovered.

But the best result is this. Many years later I was told that the great specialist
 had admitted to friends of his that he had altered his treatment of neurasthenia
 since reading *The Yellow Wallpaper*.

It was not intended to drive people crazy, but to save people from being
 driven crazy, and it worked.

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5. Those who treat diseases of the mind.

JANE ADDAMS

1860-1935

Henry Adams believed that the sudden acceleration of change in the late nine-
 teenth century disqualified him from a vocation, but Jane Addams came to see
 that the rapid shifts in material and social circumstances after the Civil War pro-
 vided her the opportunity for a uniquely distinguished career. Perhaps more than
 any other writer of her generation, Jane Addams accepted the realities of industrial-
 ization, urbanization, immigration, and international armed conflict and sought
 to do something about them—through her daily life at her settlement house in
 Chicago, as a speaker in wide demand, and as a prolific author of articles and
 books. She was a social reformer, settlement house founder, and peace activist; she
 was also a writer of uncommon grace, subtlety, clarity, and power.

Addams was born in Cedarville, Illinois, on September 6, 1860, the eighth of
 nine children. Her mother died when she was two years old; especially after her
 mother's death Addams was very close to her father, a successful businessman and
 community leader who served eight terms as a state senator. He was also a friend
 of Abraham Lincoln and a forceful advocate of the abolition of slavery. The early
 chapters of her autobiography, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910), make it clear
 that no small part of her ambition was to live as exemplary a life of compassionate
 service as she believed her father and Lincoln had lived. She also wished to dem-
 onstrate to the world that a woman could lead a life of public service on her own
 terms and in her own way. Addams not only sought to proclaim, promote, and
 dramatize ethical ideals but managed to live them and thus has served as an inspi-
 ration and as a practical model for thousands of young women and men.

Addams followed her two older sisters in enrolling at the Rockford (Illinois)
 Female Seminary in 1877. She graduated at the head of her class in 1881 and
 received her degree the following year. Her father had died the year she completed
 her seminary studies, and although she was materially secure and had the support
 of her family, the next several years were difficult ones for her, as the "Snare of
 Preparation" chapter from *Twenty Years at Hull-House* makes so painfully clear.
 Much of the time ill, bored, and depressed, aware vaguely of a "sense of futility,
 of misdirected energy," Addams recalls for us her growing conviction that the edu-
 cation of young women had resulted in their losing "that old healthful reaction
 resulting in activity from the mere presence of suffering or of helplessness." Young
 women's minds had been cultivated at the expense of their moral instincts, she