



Wild Unrest: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Making of "The Yellow Wall-Paper"

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz

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In *Wild Unrest*, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz offers a vivid portrait of Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the 1880s, drawing new connections between the author's life and work and illuminating the predicament of women then and now. Horowitz draws on a treasure trove of primary sources to explore the nature of 19th-century nervous illness and to illuminate the making of Gilman's famous short story, "The Yellow Wall-Paper": Gilman's journals and letters, which closely track her daily life and the reading that most influenced her; the voluminous diaries of her husband, Walter Stetson; and the writings, published and unpublished of S. Weir Mitchell, whose rest cure dominated the treatment of female "hysteria" in late 19th-century America. Horowitz argues that these sources ultimately reveal that Gilman's great story emerged more from emotions rooted in the confinement and tensions of her unhappy marriage than from distress following Mitchell's rest cure. Hailed by *The Boston Globe* as "an engaging portrait of the woman and her times," *Wild Unrest* adds immeasurably to our understanding of Charlotte Perkins Gilman as well as the literary and personal sources behind "The Yellow Wall-Paper."

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