



Charlotte Anna Perkins Gilman

## THE HOUSEWIFE

*Here is the House to hold me — cradle of all the race;  
Here is my lord and my love, here are my children dear —  
Here is the House enclosing, the dear-loved dwelling place;  
Why should I ever weary for aught that I find not here?*

*Here for the hours of the day and the hours of the night;  
Bound with the bands of Duty, rivetted tight;  
Duty older than Adam — Duty that saw  
Acceptance utter and hopeless in the eyes of the serving squaw.*

*Food and the serving of food — that is my daylong care;  
What and when we shall eat, what and how we shall wear;  
Soiling and cleaning of things — that is my task in the main —  
Soil them and clean them and soil them — soil them and clean them again.*

*To work at my trade by the dozen and never a trade to know;  
To plan like a Chinese puzzle — fitting and changing so;  
To think of a thousand details, each in a thousand ways;  
For my own immediate people and a possible love and praise.*

*My mind is trodden in circles, tiresome, narrow and hard,  
Useful, commonplace, private — simply a small back-yard;  
And I the Mother of Nations! — Blind their struggle and vain! —  
I cover the earth with my children — each with a housewife's brain.*

