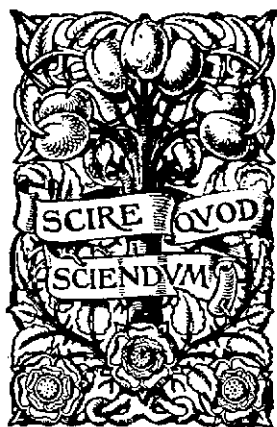


# WOMEN AND ECONOMICS

A Study of the Economic Relation  
Between Men and Women as a Factor  
in Social Evolution

By  
Charlotte Perkins Stetson



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## PROEM

*In dark and early ages, through the primal  
forests faring,  
Ere the soul came shining into prehistoric night,  
Twofold man was equal; they were comrades  
dear and daring,  
Living wild and free together in unreasoning  
delight.*

*Ere the soul was born and consciousness came  
slowly,  
Ere the soul was born, to man and woman, too,  
Ere he found the Tree of Knowledge, that awful  
tree and holy,  
Ere he knew he felt, and knew he knew.*

*Then said he to Pain, "I am wise now, and I  
know you!  
No more will I suffer while power and wisdom  
last!"*

*Then said he to Pleasure, "I am strong, and I  
will show you  
That the will of man can seize you,—aye, and  
hold you fast!"*

*Food he ate for pleasure, and wine he drank for  
gladness.*

*And woman? Ah, the woman! the crown of  
all delight!*

*His now,—he knew it! He was strong to  
madness*

*In that early dawning after prehistoric night.*

*His,—his forever! That glory sweet and ten-  
der!*

*Ah, but he would love her! And she should  
love but him!  
He would work and struggle for her, he would  
shelter and defend her,—  
She should never leave him, never, till their  
eyes in death were dim.*

*Close, close he bound her, that she should leave  
him never;  
Weak still he kept her, lest she be strong to flee;  
And the fainting flame of passion he kept alive  
forever  
With all the arts and forces of earth and sky  
and sea.*

*And, ah, the long journey! The slow and awful  
ages  
They have labored up together, blind and cripp-  
led, all astray!  
Through what a mighty volume, with a million  
shameful pages,  
From the freedom of the forests to the prisons of  
to-day!*

*Food he ate for pleasure, and it slew him with  
diseases!  
Wine he drank for gladness, and it led the way  
to crime!  
And woman? He will hold her,— he will have  
her when he pleases,—  
And he never once hath seen her since the pre-  
historic time!*

*Gone the friend and comrade of the day when  
life was younger,*

*She who rests and comforts, she who helps and saves.*

*Still he seeks her vainly, with a never-dying hunger ;*

*Alone beneath his tyrants, alone above his slaves !*

*Toiler, bent and weary with the load of thine own making !*

*Thou who art sad and lonely, though lonely all in vain !*

*Who hast sought to conquer Pleasure and have her for the taking,*

*And found that Pleasure only was another name for Pain —*

*Nature hath reclaimed thee, forgiving dispossession !*

*God hath not forgotten, though man doth still forget !*

*The woman-soul is rising, in despite of thy transgression—*

*Loose her now, and trust her ! She will love thee yet !*

*Love thee ? She will love thee as only freedom knoweth !*

*Love thee ? She will love thee while Love itself doth live !*

*Fear not the heart of woman ! No bitterness it showeth !*

*The ages of her sorrow have but taught her to forgive !*



## PREFACE

*This book is written to offer a simple and natural explanation of one of the most common and most perplexing problems of human life,—a problem which presents itself to almost every individual for practical solution, and which demands the most serious attention of the moralist, the physician, and the sociologist—*

*To show how some of the worst evils under which we suffer, evils long supposed to be inherent and ineradicable in our natures, are but the result of certain arbitrary conditions of our own adoption, and how, by removing those conditions, we may remove the evils resultant—*

*To point out how far we have already gone in the path of improvement, and how irresistibly the social forces of to-day are compelling us further, even without our knowledge and against our violent opposition,—an advance which may be greatly quickened by our recognition and assistance—*

*To reach in especial the thinking women of to-day, and urge upon them a new sense, not only of their social responsibility as individuals, but of their measureless racial importance as makers of men.*

*It is hoped also that the theory advanced will prove sufficiently suggestive to give rise to such further study and discussion as shall prove its error or establish its truth.*

CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON.