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The High Industrial Man

"What more is there to do, than to bring this new world of technology and growth forward?" Perhaps this sentence would summarize the feelings and intension of man in the late eighteen hundreds, or as it is also known, the late Victorian Period.

This intense period of growth, to which many of the ideas of our age are attributed, would have afforded the utmost dedication within the ranks of the industrial families as well as sacrifice of attributes of the foretime, which had to be replaced by the implementation of more appropriate pursuits. The face of the family was changing rapidly, but the remnants of the aristocracy of the earlier ages, however, was still present as a contributing factor.

The short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*, written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is an account of a woman, who describes her life within the confines of herself, and her family. Many references are made to her husband within the story. Although the preface to the short story within the literature book, within which the story is reprinted as a collection, contends the generalization that the men of the Victorian Age were neither affectionate, nor truly living in manor, this is represented to the contrary in many lines within the story. Contrary to the prejudice toward the Victorian man, the relationship between the woman and her husband, whose name is John, can be described as nothing but loving.

Women have struggled to climb the social ladder through many means throughout time as we know it. The prominent man, with his knowledge, and power, and especially wealth, is the target of many women in this world. Women strive to overcome the social boundaries which pervade every society. Some succeed, and are vaulted into the ranks of the elite, whereby they obtain the wealth and prestige they have sought. The large vacation house, with many amenities that the woman describes with delight and enjoyment, the nanny and caretakers, all are a direct provision of the man who she has chosen to love. Still today, more than one hundred years later, objects within the relationship have been viewed as a ranking tool for the amount of love between an man and a women. Thus, the most critical of the visually perceptive indicators regarding the amount of love a man of the Victorian Age has, for his wife, been more than successfully fulfilled.

Perhaps one of the strangest customs as seen in our day and age, country and culture, is the fact that many husbands and wives of the Victorian Era slept in separate beds. Generally known, to those who have maintained reading and literacy for a period of time, would be the presumption, that affection, especially physical affection, towards a wife or husband was unheard of, and actually never occurred. That there are three separate instances where physical affection plays a role in the story is astounding.

On three separate occasions, John takes the woman, his wife, into his arms, and consoles her. On one of these occasions, he amortizes her with sweet names. At another, John talks to her sweetly while giving her a hug. The third and

most compelling warms the cold of the Victorian fog victoriously as the woman is carried by her husband up the stairs of their place of her convalescence, where she is read to by him until she is tired (of it). The sentence which epitomizes the relationship states thusly: "It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so." (line 124)

One cannot fully comprehend or predict the outcome of how a man and a woman who come together as a family will change, grow, or develop in the following years. Analogies can however, be drawn from the known characteristics of human behavior, which will most likely remain in the genes of mankind for many generations into the future, just as the traits of relationships can be compared with relative equality backwards to the beginning of civilized man, and before.

The times of Queen Victoria and the Industrial Era demanded that the men of the family were considered to be stern, and dominating; as hard as the iron which was forging the future of mankind, and as acrid as the coal which smelted this metal of change. However, the tone of the dialogue demands that one read the true aura of human love that prevails.