

another occupation, to stay in touch with friends, to develop artistic talents, or to experience the world. The changes spread slowly, however, and were more common in urban areas and well-to-do homes than on farms or in working-class tenements. Social expectations for upper-class women kept many of them idle and dependent on servants.

Middle-class women's usefulness as household producers declined before opportunities for education and meaningful careers opened up. Medicine and law became organized, standardized professions at the turn of the century, for example, but both of these highly paid fields excluded women (and many men). At the same time, medical treatments and legal procedures that responded to any of the dysfunctions of married life tended to directly and indirectly increase men's domination of women. The "rest cure," psychoanalysis, and other medical practices developed by professional men became common ways to treat women suffering from the illnesses and depression that may have resulted in part from their feelings of purposelessness and inactivity. A woman might find her desire to pursue a career diagnosed as an illness; her acts of self-determination or resistance might be prohibited, punished, or judged insane.

Well into the twentieth century, divorce was expensive and difficult and usually resulted in a clouded reputation for the woman (as it did for the divorced Charlotte Stetson before she married Gilman). Not until 1900 were some women able to sue successfully for divorce on the grounds of the husband's "mental cruelty"; previously they would have needed to prove that he was violent or had committed adultery.

## WOMEN WRITERS IN A CHANGING WORLD

In the United States and Europe, women's roles were slowly changing, however, thanks to the efforts of reform groups. Both Gilman and Glaspell participated in such efforts, on behalf of women and others, through their work with Heterodoxy, a New York group that advocated women's civil rights and suffrage. Gilman, in testimony before Congress on January 28, 1896, argued that extending the vote to women would

improve the race by improving the women. . . . You can not have as good a citizen, as good a class of people, where half the people are no part of the Government. . . . For unnumbered thousands of years women have suffered from repression. . . . And to debar any part of the race from its development is to carry along with society a dead weight, a part of the organism which is not living. . . . To give suffrage to this half of the race will develop it as it never has been developed before.<sup>1</sup>

Gilman and Glaspell both lived to see U.S. women gain the vote in 1920.

Especially after 1870, women began to gain access to higher education and to demand entrance to careers other than teaching, writing, or the arts. By the beginning of the twentieth century, some women pursued careers in nursing, social work, libraries, fashion, and business, though most were employed in lower-paid positions, as clerical or support staff rather than as managers. Writing had long been a way to earn a living for some educated women, but the spread of newspapers and mass-market magazines from the 1890s onward provided openings for a new kind of worker, the woman journalist.

1. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, testimony before Congress of the National American Woman Suffrage Association Committee on the Judiciary in Washington, DC, January 28, 1896. Originally published in *The Thin Our World* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1893), pp. 95–100.

## The Woman in Business —how big is her Future?

What few professional women have studied?

The Typewriter.  
Who built the first practical typewriter and employed for the first time on an 18

Remington!

Since 1874 Remington has introduced more than 2,000 different typewriters, and has been the leader in the world for more than 27 years.

Thanks to Remington, the office with the doors of opportunity, never has advanced so high in civilization.

A woman who used to depend on the private secretary and not advance to one of America's greatest occupations.

Another in a shortening moment of America's greatest profession.

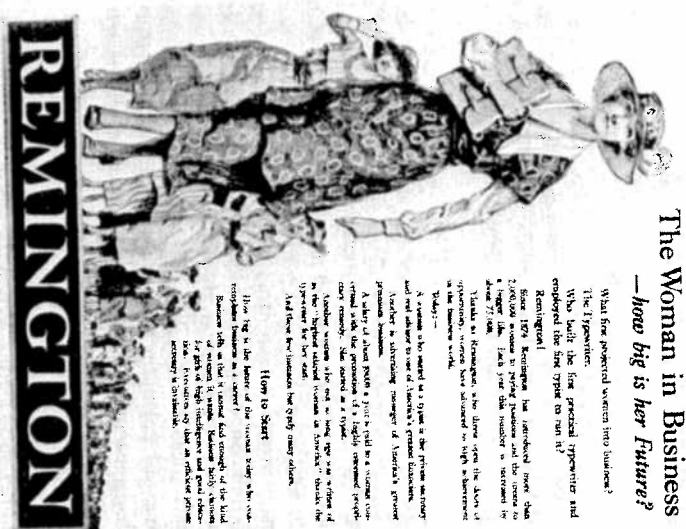
A lady of about 40 years of age, with her young daughter, is now a typewriter operator in a large city.

Another woman who has no longer any private secretary in the highest social circles of America's greatest cities.

And how many women have advanced to high positions in the world?

How to Start  
How big is the future of the woman who uses the typewriter?

Remington has a large stock of typewriters, and you can see them at the Remington Typewriter Co., 100 Broadway, New York City.



REMININGTON

Remington typewriter advertisement, 1919

Chopin, Gilman, and Glaspell, needing to earn a living, embraced such opportunities. Susan Glaspell began her journalism career after college, as a reporter in Iowa and covered a scandalous murder case similar to the one in her story "A Jury of Her Peers." These writers' careers and writings, including the works featured here, reflect both the expanding prospects and continuing limitations on women's lives in this transitional period.

## THREE STORIES

KATE CHOPIN  
(1850–1904)

The Story of an Hour



Katherine O'Flaherty was born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a Creole-Irish family that enjoyed a high place in society. Her father died when she was four, and Kate was raised by her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Very well read at a young

age, she received her formal education at the St. Louis Academy of the Sacred Heart. In 1870, she married Oscar Chopin, a Louisiana businessman, and lived with him in Natchitoches parish and New Orleans, where she became a close observer of Creole and Cajun life. Following her husband's sudden death in 1884, she returned to St. Louis, where she raised her six children and began her literary career. In slightly more than a decade she produced a substantial body of work, including the story collections *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *A Night in Acadie* (1897) and the classic novella *The Awakening* (1899), which was greeted with a storm of criticism for its frank treatment of female sexuality.

**K**nowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "Free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands faded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door!"

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.