messages from supporters throughout the land. The mood was high when the ceremony came to a conclusion with the singing of a 19th century utopian song. A stanza from “A Hundred Years Hence” provides a taste of the cheerful rally’s vision of the world in 1976:

Then woman, man’s partner, man’s equal shall stand,  
While beauty and harmony govern the land, To think for oneself will be no offense, The world will be thinking a hundred years hence.4

A Human Link

Almost a half century passed between the centennial and the ratification of women’s suffrage in 1920; another fifty years, before the campaign was launched for national acceptance of the Equal Rights Amendment. In light of this passage of time, the endurance of the feminist commitment to feasible change is surely remarkable. Among the women of the earlier generation of feminism was one whom we see as a veritable human link between that first effort and the 20th century movement. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was only an adolescent at the time of the centennial but before her thirtieth birthday she had begun a career which was to win her acclaim among her contemporaries of the women’s movement. Author of more than twenty feminist books, including the translation of her best known work—*Women and Economics* (1898)—into seven languages, this distant relative of the Beecher family lived and wrote into the third decade of our century.

Charlotte Gilman described herself as a sociologist, a student of social evolution, but we claim her today as a visionary who looked beyond her circumstances into a future which goes beyond this generation’s reality. In that time to come, which she perceived as inevitable, society would be equitable, balanced and healthy. Men, women and children would be related to one another without the onus of power and role-fixity. Her perspective on family life, individual and social health, nutrition, childcare and urban planning provides a rich source for those of us in quest of plans and visions for the immediate future.

The prolific writing of Gilman, including the sole responsibility for the publication of a monthly woman’s journal (*The Forerunner*, 1909–1917) which she wrote, edited and distributed without assistance, trace a movement away from the patriarchal home to an open association of intelligent, engrossed people. From the Victorian scene of domestic dependence to a globally interdependent and responsible society, we see women emerge

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4 Ibid., p. 39.