



YEARS OF
MY YOUTH

W. D. HOWELLS

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WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

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PREFACE BY THE ILLUSTRATOR

WHENEVER I visit the region of a famous man's youth I have the feeling that I ought to discover there some clue to the secret of his greatness; for I cannot help fancying that the environment must have molded him and been an essential element in the development of his individuality and power. It was with such expectations that I recently went to Ohio, just as spring was verging into summer, to see the land where Mr. Howells spent the years of which he has made so frank and appealing a record in this volume. In the middle of the last century the State retained much of the crude primitiveness of the frontier, and I wondered what stimulus this could have offered in creating a genius so broad in his views and so sensitive to impressions, and in whose expression there is such fine imagination, humor, sympathy, and wisdom.

I began my journey in Mr. Howells's native State where he began his life's journey eighty years ago, at Martin's Ferry. The place is two miles up the Ohio River from Wheeling, West Virginia, on the western bank of the stream. By the water-side are big, ugly factories belching smoke and steam, and in their vicinity are railroad tracks, cinders, and other litter, and dingy, ramshackle buildings, among which are numerous forlorn little dwellings and occasional saloons. A sort of careless prosperity is in evidence, but not much of the charm of neatness, or concern for appearances. The rest of the town overspreads the steep slopes that border the river, and pushes back into the nooks among the adjacent upheaval of big hills. It is rather chaotic, but improves in quality the farther it

recedes from the smoke and din of the manufacturing strip along the river.

The small brick Howells house stood close to the stream, where grime and squalor most abound at present. However, the railroad was not there then, and Martin's Ferry was a village that had in some respects real rural attraction.

During the period of about twenty-five years which this book covers the Howells family lived in seven different places, many of them widely separated, but all within the confines of Ohio; and they seldom stayed long in any town without occupying more than one residence. Naturally, there have been marked changes in the aspect of most of the places where they dwelt. Perhaps Jefferson has changed least. In the old days it had six hundred inhabitants. Now it has three or four times that number, but it is still serenely rustic, and every one knows every one else, and the wide, tree-shadowed streets and the rich, gently rolling farm country that environ the town are delightful.

Hamilton, with which Mr. Howells has dealt so graphically in his *A Boy's Town*, has increased in population from two thousand to thirty-five thousand; Dayton from eleven thousand to one hundred and twenty-five thousand, and Columbus from eighteen thousand to nearly a quarter of a million. Of course, such a strenuous expansion means the obliteration of landmarks of the past. Besides, some of the places have been largely rebuilt after being nearly wiped off the map by floods.

On the other hand, the vicinity where Mr. Howells spent his *Year in a Log Cabin* is even more lonely than it was then. It had a name in the long ago—Eureka Mills. But fire, which in our country is an even more potent destroyer than floods of what men build, has razed the mills, the dam has crumbled, the mill-race is a dry ditch choked with weeds and brush, and the name is well-nigh forgotten. When I was there the only man-dwelling was a vacant house that stood

close to the site of the old log cabin. I might have thought the locality entirely deserted if it had not been for fences and cultivated fields and two cows grazing in a pasture. The only person whom I saw on the highway while I loitered about was a rural mail-carrier jogging along in his cart.

Round about were low, rounded hills, fertile and well-tilled for the most part, with here and there patches of woodland and occasional snug groups of farm buildings. It is a land flowing with milk and honey, wonderfully productive and prosperous, and charming in its luscious agricultural beauty. In Mr. Howells's youth it was wilder and more forested, but I fancy that the stream, with its wooded banks, must be essentially the same, and that the birds flitting and singing and the other wild creatures of fields and woods are like those of old.

Log houses, once so common in the Ohio country within the memory of its elderly people, are now rare, and I could learn of none within less than a dozen miles of Eureka Mills. But I found one on the outskirts of Jefferson which was intact and serviceable, though it no longer sheltered a family; and both Jefferson and Dayton have a log cabin preserved as a relic of the past.

Any place that has been Mr. Howells's home has reason to be proud of the fact, for he has long been recognized as the foremost of living American authors, and it seems safe to conclude that much of his work will have a permanent place in our literature. Yet I got the impression that, as a rule, the people in those Ohio communities with which he has been associated are unaware of his existence. Others, however, not only are familiar with his reputation, but regard him with enthusiasm and affection. At Columbus Rev. Washington Gladden, the most notable of all Ohio preachers, has made *Years of My Youth* the subject of a Sunday evening discourse; and it is particularly gratifying to find that *A Boy's Town* is a favorite book in Hamilton,

and that the Boy Scouts there call themselves the Boy's Town Brigade.

Hamilton, Dayton, and Columbus, in which places Mr. Howells spent so much of his youth, are all important centers of trade and manufacture where crowds and noisy traffic are ever present in the business sections, and where a maze of residence streets spread out into the country round about. At Hamilton, the only building I could discover associated with Mr. Howells was the Baptist church where he attended Sunday-school. But it is now a paint-shop, and the paint-man has adorned the entire front with a scenic sample of his art, which makes the structure more suggestive of a theater than a church. The Great Miami River flows through the town as of old, and the tall buildings, towers, and spires in the heart of the place are strikingly picturesque seen from some points of vantage along the banks of the stream. But the most charming feature of the past is the canal in which the boys used to swim and fish, and which, doubtless, still serves for the same purposes. It is no longer a thoroughfare for traffic, though the tow-path is used in part by trams and pedestrians.

Dayton had its canal, too, but this, like the one at Hamilton, has been abandoned, except as the mills make use of it.

At Columbus is what was the new State House in Mr. Howells's youth, the Medical College in which he roomed, and a sprinkling of quiet old residences that were there in his time. The college, which originally was a castle-like structure with an upthrust of towers and turrets, has had its sky-line somewhat straightened by the addition of an extra story; but this has only marred, without destroying, its characteristic quaintness.

Jefferson was the home of Mr. Howells's father for the most of his later life, and of his older brother, Joseph, whom the people there like to recall for his many fine qualities of

head and heart, and as the printer and editor of the “best weekly paper” ever published in Ashtabula County.

This brother is referred to again and again in the chapters that follow. His grave in the Jefferson cemetery has been marked with the “imposing-stone” that he used in his office. Here is the inscription written by the novelist and carved on the broad surface of the stone:

TO THE MEMORY OF
JOSEPH ALEXANDER HOWELLS

BORN AT ST. CLAIRSVILLE, OHIO, 1832
DIED AT AUBURNDALE, FLORIDA, 1912
AMERICAN CONSUL AT TURK’S ISLAND
FROM 1905 TO 1912
PRINTER AND THEN EDITOR,
HE IMPOSED IN PAGES ON THIS STONE,
WHICH HE DESIRED SHOULD MARK,
HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE,
THE TYPES OF THE ASHTABULA SENTINEL
FROM 1851 TO 1905
STONE, UPON WHICH WITH HANDS OF BOY AND MAN
HE FRAMED THE HISTORY OF HIS TIME UNTIL
WEEK AFTER WEEK THE VARYING RECORD RAN
TO ITS HALF-CENTURIED TALE OF WELL AND ILL.
REMEMBER, NOW, HOW TRUE THROUGH ALL THOSE
DAYS
HE WAS, FRIEND, BROTHER, HUSBAND, FATHER, SON,
FILL THE WHOLE LIMIT OF YOUR SPACE WITH
PRAISE,
THERE NEEDS NO ROOM FOR BLAME, BLAME THERE
WAS NONE
W. D. HOWELLS

One of the oddest things of which I heard on my trip was that Mr. Howells is credited with being born in more than

one place. A wealthy man has bought the property where the novelist dwelt in the family wanderings long after leaving Martin's Ferry. The owner and others in the region are convinced that their locality is Mr. Howells's first home. He was even considering erecting a birth-place for the distinguished author from some ruinous buildings on the premises. But I suppose the fact that a person is becoming legendary in his native region attests the genuineness and permanency of his fame.

What vital influence, if any, the Ohio country of Mr. Howells's youth had on his genius I am uncertain. The small cities and rustic villages, and the farmlands with their stump-dotted fields that were still being wrested from the wilderness of the abounding woods, all left their impress, no doubt, but I incline to the belief that his admirable quality and large place in the literature of our day might be the same, even if the environment had been radically different.

Clifton Johnson.

June, 1917.

YEARS OF MY YOUTH

I

IT is hard to know the child's own earliest recollections from the things it has been told of itself by those with whom its life began. They remember for it the past which it afterward seems to remember for itself; the wavering outline of its nature is shadowed against the background of family, and from this it imagines an individual existence which has not yet begun. The events then have the quality of things dreamt, not lived, and they remain of that impalpable and elusive quality in all the after years.

I

Of the facts which I must believe from the witness of others, is the fact that I was born on the 1st of March, 1837, at Martin's Ferry, Belmont County, Ohio. My father's name was William Cooper Howells, and my mother's was Mary Dean; they were married six years before my birth, and I was the second child in their family of eight. On my father's side my people were wholly Welsh, except his English grandmother, and on my mother's side wholly

German, except her Irish father, of whom it is mainly known that he knew how to win my grandmother Elizabeth Dock away from her very loving family, where they dwelt in great Pennsylvania-German comfort and prosperity on their farm near Harrisburg, to share with him the hardships of the wild country over the westward mountains. She was the favorite of her brothers and sisters, and the best-beloved of her mother, perhaps because she was the youngest; there is a shadowy legend that she went one evening to milk the cows, and did not return from following after her husband; but I cannot associate this romantic story with the ageing grandmother whom I tenderly loved when a child, and whom I still fondly remember. She spoke with a strong German accent, and she had her Luther Bible, for she never read English. Sometimes she came to visit my homesick mother after we went to live in southern Ohio; once I went with my mother to visit her in the little town where I was born, and of that visit I have the remembrance of her stopping me on the stairs, one morning when I had been out, and asking me in her German idiom and accent, "What fur a tay is it, child?"

I can reasonably suppose that it is because of the mixture of Welsh, German, and Irish in me that I feel myself so typically American, and that I am of the imaginative temperament which has enabled me all the conscious years of my life to see reality more iridescent and beautiful, or more lurid and terrible than any make-believe about reality. Among my father's people the first who left Wales was his great-grandfather. He established himself in London as a clock and watch maker, and I like to believe that it is his name which my tall clock, paneled in the lovely *chinoiserie* of Queen Anne's time, bears graven on its dial. Two sons followed him, and wrought at the same art, then almost a fine art, and one of them married in London and took his English wife back with him to Wales. His people were, so far as my actual knowledge goes, middle-

class Welsh, but the family is of such a remote antiquity as in its present dotage not to know what part of Wales it came from. As to our lineage a Welsh clergyman, a few years ago, noting the identity of name, invited me to the fond conjecture of descent from Hywel Dda, or Howel the Good, who became king of Wales about the time of Alfred the Great. He codified the laws or rather the customs of his realm, and produced one of the most interesting books I have read, and I have finally preferred him as an ancestor because he was the first literary man of our name. There was a time when I leaned toward the delightful James Howell, who wrote the *Familiar Letters* and many books in verse and prose, and was of several shades of politics in the difficult days of Charles and Oliver; but I was forced to relinquish him because he was never married. My father, for his part, when once questioned as to our origin, answered that so far as he could make out we derived from a blacksmith, whom he considered a good sort of ancestor, but he could not name him, and he must have been, whatever his merit, a person of extreme obscurity.

There is no record of the time when my great-grandfather with his brothers went to London and fixed there as watchmakers. My tall clock, which bears our name on its dial, has no date, and I can only imagine their London epoch to have begun about the middle of the eighteenth century. Being Welsh, they were no doubt musical, and I like to cherish the tradition of singing and playing women in our line, and a somehow cousinship with the famous Parepa. But this is very uncertain; what is certain is that when my great-grandfather went back to Wales he fixed himself in the little town of Hay, where he began the manufacture of Welsh flannels, a fabric still esteemed for its many virtues, and greatly prospered. When I visited Hay in 1883 (my father always call it, after the old fashion, The Hay, which was the right version of its Norman name of La Haye), three of his mills were yet standing, and one of

them was working, very modestly, on the sloping bank of the lovely river Wye. Another had sunk to be a stable, but the third, in the spirit of our New World lives, had become a bookstore and printing-office, a well-preserved stone edifice of four or five stories, such as there was not the like of, probably, in the whole of Wales when Hywel Dda was king. My great-grandfather was apparently an excellent business man, but I am afraid I must own (reluctantly, with my Celtic prejudice) that literature, or the love of it, came into our family with the English girl whom he married in London. She was, at least, a reader of the fiction of the day, if I may judge from the high-colored style of the now pathetically faded letter which she wrote to reproach a daughter who had made a runaway match and fled to America. So many people then used to make runaway matches; but when very late in the lives of these eloping lovers I once saw them, an old man and woman, at our house in Columbus, they hardly looked their youthful adventure, even to the fancy of a boy beginning to unrealize life. The reader may care to learn that they were the ancestors of Vaughan Kester, the very gifted young novelist, who came into popular recognition almost in the hour of his most untimely death, and of his brother Paul Kester, the playwright.

II

My great-grandfather became "a Friend by Convincement," as the Quakers called the Friends not born in their Society; but I do not know whether it was before or after his convincement that he sailed to Philadelphia with a stock of his Welsh flannels, which he sold to such advantage that a dramatic family tradition represents him

wheeling the proceeds in a barrel of silver down the street to the vessel which brought him and which took him away. That was in the time of Washington's second Presidency, and Washington strongly advised his staying in the country and setting up his manufacture here; but he was prospering in Wales, and why should he come to America even at the suggestion of Washington? It is another family tradition that he complied so far as to purchase a vast acreage of land on the Potomac, including the site of our present capital, as some of his descendants in each generation have believed, without the means of expropriating the nation from its unlawful holdings. This would have been the more difficult as he never took a deed of his land, and he certainly never came back to America; yet he seems always to have been haunted by the allurements of it which my grandfather felt so potently that after twice visiting the country he came over a third time and cast his lot here.

He was already married, when with his young wife and my father a year old he sailed from London in 1808. Perhaps because they were chased by a French privateer, they speedily arrived in Boston after a voyage of only twenty-one days. In the memoir which my father wrote for his family, and which was published after his death, he tells that my grandmother formed the highest opinion of Boston, mainly, he surmises, from the very intelligent behavior of the young ladies in making a pet of her baby at the boarding-house where she stayed while her husband began going about wherever people wished his skill in setting up woolen-mills. The young ladies taught her little one to walk; and many years afterward, say fifty, when I saw her for the last time in a village of northwestern Ohio, she said "the Bostonians were very nice people," so faithfully had she cherished, through a thousand vicissitudes, the kind memory of that first sojourn in America.

I do not think she quite realized the pitch of greatness at which I had arrived in writing for the *Atlantic Monthly*, the renowned periodical then recently founded in Boston, or the fame of the poets whom I had met there the year before. I suspect that she was never of the literary taste of my English great-grandmother; but her father had been a school-teacher, and she had been carefully educated by the uncle and aunt to whom she was left at her parents' early death. They were Friends, but she never formally joined the Society, though worshiping with them; she was, like her husband, middle-class Welsh, and as long as they lived they both misplaced their aspirates. If I add that her maiden name was Thomas, and that her father's name was John Thomas, I think I have sufficiently attested her pure Cymric origin. So far as I know there was no mixture of Saxon blood on her side; but her people, like most of the border Welsh, spoke the languages of both races; and very late in my father's life, he mentioned casually, as old people will mention interesting things, that he remembered his father and mother speaking Welsh together. Of the two she remained the fonder of their native country, and in that last visit I paid her she said, after half a century of exile, "We do so and so at home, and you do so and so here." I can see her now, the gentlest of little Quaker ladies, with her white fichu crossed on her breast; and I hesitate attributing to her my immemorial knowledge that the Welsh were never conquered, but were tricked into union with the English by having one of their princes born, as it were surreptitiously, in Wales; it must have been my father who told me this and amused himself with my childish race-pride in the fact. She gave me an illustrated *Tour of Wales*, having among its steel engravings the picture of a Norman castle where, by favor of a cousin who was the housekeeper, she had slept one night when a girl; but in America she had slept oftener in log cabins, which my grandfather satisfied his devoted unworldliness in making his earthly tabernacles. She

herself was not, I think, a devout person; she had her spiritual life in his, and followed his varying fortunes, from richer to poorer, with a tacit adherence to what he believed, whether the mild doctrine of Quakerism or the fervid Methodism for which he never quite relinquished it.

He seems to have come to America with money enough to lose a good deal in his removals from Boston to Poughkeepsie, from Poughkeepsie to New York City, from New York to Virginia, and from Virginia to eastern Ohio, where he ended in such adversity on his farm that he was glad to accept the charge of a woolen-mill in Steubenville. He knew the business thoroughly and he had set up mills for others in his various sojourns, following the line of least resistance among the Quaker settlements opened to him by the letters he had brought from Wales. He even went to the new capital, Washington, in a hope of manufacturing in Virginia held out to him by a nephew of President Madison, but it failed him to his heavy cost; and in Ohio, his farming experiments, which he renewed in a few years on giving up that mill at Steubenville, were alike disastrous. After more than enough of them he rested for a while in Wheeling, West Virginia, where my father met my mother, and they were married.

They then continued the family wanderings in his own search for the chance of earning a living in what seems to have been a very grudging country, even to industry so willing as his. He had now become a printer, and not that only, but a publisher, for he had already begun and ended the issue of a monthly magazine called *The Gleaner*, made up, as its name implied, chiefly of selections; his sister helped him as editor, and some old bound volumes of its few numbers show their joint work to have been done with good taste in the preferences of their day. He married upon the expectation of affluence from the publication of a work on *The Rise, Progress and Downfall of Aristocracy*, which almost immediately preceded the ruin of the enthusiastic

author and of my father with him, if he indeed could have experienced further loss in his entire want of money. He did not lose heart, and he was presently living contentedly on three hundred dollars a year as foreman of a newspaper office in St. Clairville, Ohio. But his health gave way, and a little later, for the sake of the outdoor employment, he took up the trade of house-painter; and he was working at this in Wheeling when my grandfather Dean suggested his buying a lot and building a house in Martin's Ferry, just across the Ohio River. The lot must have been bought on credit, and he built mainly with his own capable hands a small brick house of one story and two rooms with a lean-to. In this house I was born, and my father and mother were very happy there; they never owned another house until their children helped them work and pay for it a quarter of a century afterward, though throughout this long time they made us a home inexpressibly dear to me still.

My father now began to read medicine, but during the course of a winter's lectures at Cincinnati (where he worked as a printer meanwhile), his health again gave way and he returned to Martin's Ferry. When I was three years old, my grandmother Dean's eldest brother, William Dock, came to visit her. He was the beloved patriarch of a family which I am glad to claim my kindred and was a best type of his Pennsylvania-German race. He had prospered on through a life of kindness and good deeds; he was so rich that he had driven in his own



The Ohio River at Wheeling, West Virginia. Mr. Howells's father worked in Wheeling before he moved across the river to Martin's Ferry

carriage from Harrisburg, over the mountains, and he now asked my father to drive with him across the state of Ohio. When they arrived in Dayton, my father went on by canal to Hamilton, where he found friends to help him buy the Whig newspaper which he had only just paid for when he sold it eight years later.

III

Of the first three years of my life which preceded this removal there is very little that I can honestly claim to remember. The things that I seem to remember are seeing from the window of our little house, when I woke one morning, a peach-tree in bloom; and again seeing from the steamboat which was carrying our family to Cincinnati, a man drowning in the river. But these visions, both of them very distinct, might very well have been the effect of

hearing the things spoken of by my elders, though I am surest of the peach-tree in bloom as an authentic memory.

This time, so happy for my father and mother, was scarcely less happy because of its uncertainties. My young aunts lived with their now widowed mother not far from us; as the latest comer, I was in much request among them, of course; and my father was hardly less in favor with the whole family from his acceptable habit of finding a joke in everything. He supplied the place of son to my grandmother in the absence of my young uncles, then away most of their time on the river which they followed from the humblest beginnings on keel-boats to the proudest endings as pilots and captains and owners of steamboats. In those early days when they returned from the river they brought their earnings to their mother in gold coins, which they called Yellow Boys, and which she kept in a bowl in the cupboard, where I seem so vividly to have seen them, that I cannot quite believe I did not. These good sons were all Democrats except the youngest, but they finally became of my father's anti-slavery Whig faith in politics, and I believe they were as glad to have their home in a free state as my father's family, who had now left Wheeling, and were settled in southwestern Ohio.

There were not many slaves in Wheeling, but it was a sort of entrepôt where the negroes were collected and embarked for the plantations down the river, in their doom to the death-in-life of the far South. My grandfather Howells had, in the anti-slavery tradition of his motherland, made himself so little desired among his Virginian fellow-citizens that I have heard his removal from Wheeling was distinctly favored by public sentiment; and afterward, on the farm he bought in Ohio, his fences and corn-cribs suffered from the pro-slavery convictions of his neighbors. But he was dwelling in safety and prosperity among the drugs and books which were his merchandise in the store where I began to remember him in my earliest days at

Hamilton. He seemed to me a very old man, and I noticed with the keen observance of a child how the muscles sagged at the sides of his chin and how his under lip, which I did not know I had inherited from him, projected. His clothes, which had long ceased to be drab in color, were of a Quaker formality in cut; his black hat followed this world's fashion in color, but was broad in the brim and very low-crowned, which added somehow in my young sense to the reproving sadness of his presence. He had black Welsh eyes and was of the low stature of his race; my grandmother was blue-eyed; she was little, too; but my aunt, their only surviving daughter, with his black eyes, was among their taller children. She was born several years after their settlement in America, but she loyally misused her aspirates as they did, and, never marrying, was of a life-long devotion to them. They first lived over the drug-store, after the fashion of shopkeepers in England; I am aware of my grandfather soon afterward having a pretty house and a large garden quite away from the store, but he always lived more simply than his means obliged. Amidst the rude experiences of their backwoods years, the family had continued gentle in their thoughts and tastes, though my grandfather shared with poetry his passion for religion, and in my later boyhood when I had begun to print my verses, he wrote me a letter solemnly praising them, but adjuring me to devote my gifts to the service of my Maker, which I had so little notion of doing in a selfish ideal of my own glory.

Most of his father's fortune had somehow gone to other sons, but, whether rich or poor, their generation seemed to be of a like religiosity. One of them lived in worldly state at Bristol before coming to America, and was probably of a piety not so insupportable as I found him in the memoir which he wrote of his second wife, when I came to read it the other day. Him I never saw, but from time to time there was one or other of his many sons employed in my

grandfather's store, whom I remember blithe spirits, disposed to seize whatever chance of a joke life offered them, such as selling Young's *Night Thoughts* to a customer who had whispered his wish for an improper book. Some of my father's younger brothers were of a like cheerfulness with these lively cousins, and of the same aptness for laughter. One was a physician, another a dentist, another in a neighboring town a druggist, another yet a speculative adventurer in the regions to the southward: he came back from his commercial forays once with so many half-dollars that when spread out they covered the whole surface of our dining-table; but I am quite unable to report what negotiation they were the spoil of. There was a far cousin who was a painter, and left (possibly as a pledge of indebtedness) with my dentist uncle after a sojourn among us a picture which I early prized as a masterpiece, and still remember as the charming head of a girl shadowed by the fan she held over it. I never saw the painter, but I recall, from my father's singing them, the lines of a "doleful ballad" which he left behind him as well as the picture:

A thief will steal from you all that you have,

But an unfaithful lover will bring you to your grave.

The uncle who was a physician, when he left off the practice of medicine about his eightieth year, took up the art of sculpture; he may have always had a taste for it, and his knowledge of anatomy would have helped qualify him for it. He modeled from photographs a head of my father admirably like and full of character, the really extraordinary witness of a gift latent till then through a long life devoted to other things.

We children had our preference among these Howells uncles, but we did not care for any of them so much as for our Dean uncles, who now and then found their way up to Hamilton from Cincinnati when their steamboats lay there in their trips from Pittsburg. They were all very jovial; and one of the younger among them could play the violin, not

less acceptably because he played by ear and not by art. Of the youngest and best-loved I am lastingly aware in his coming late one night and of my creeping down-stairs from my sleep to sit in his lap and hear his talk with my father and mother, while his bursts of laughter agreeably shook my small person. I dare say these uncles used to bring us gifts from that steamboating world of theirs which seemed to us of a splendor not less than what I should now call oriental when we sometimes visited them at Cincinnati, and came away bulging in every pocket with the more portable of the dainties we had been feasting upon. In the most signal of these visits, as I once sat between my father and my Uncle William, for whom I was named, on the hurricane roof of his boat, he took a silver half-dollar from his pocket and put it warm in my hand, with a quizzical look into my eyes. The sight of such unexampled riches stopped my breath for the moment, but I made out to ask, "Is it for me?" and he nodded his head smilingly up and down; then, for my experience had hitherto been of fippenny-bits yielded by my father after long reasoning, I asked, "Is it good?" and remained puzzled to know why they laughed so together; it must have been years before I understood.

These uncles had grown up in a slave state, and they thought, without thinking, that slavery must be right; but once when an abolition lecturer was denied public hearing at Martin's Ferry, they said he should speak in their mother's house; and there, much unaware, I heard my first and last abolition lecture, barely escaping with my life, for one of the objections urged by the mob outside was a stone hurled through the window, where my mother sat with me in her arms. At my Uncle William's house in the years after the Civil War, my father and he began talking of old times, and he told how, when a boy on a keel-boat, tied up to a Mississippi shore, he had seen an overseer steal upon a black girl loitering at her work, and wind his blacksnake-whip round her body, naked except for the one cotton

garment she wore. "When I heard that colored female screech," he said, and the old-fashioned word female, used for compassionate respectfulness, remains with me, "and saw her jump, I knew that there must be something wrong in slavery." Perhaps the sense of this had been in his mind when he determined with his brothers that the abolition lecturer should be heard in their mother's house.

She sometimes came to visit us in Hamilton, to break the homesick separations from her which my mother suffered through for so many years, and her visits were times of high holiday for us children. I should be interested now to know what she and my Welsh grandmother made of each other, but I believe they were good friends, though probably not mutually very intelligible. My mother's young sisters, who also came on welcome visits, were always joking with my father and helping my mother at her work; but I cannot suppose that there was much common ground between them and my grandfather's family except in their common Methodism. For me, I adored them; and if the truth must be told, though I had every reason to love my Welsh grandmother, I had a peculiar tenderness for my Pennsylvania-Dutch grandmother, with her German accent and her caressing ways. My grandfather, indeed, could have recognized no difference among heirs of equal complicity in Adam's sin; and in the situation such as it was, I lived blissfully unborn to all things of life outside of my home. I can recur to the time only as a dream of love and loving, and though I came out of it no longer a little child, but a boy struggling tooth and nail for my place among other boys, I must still recur to the ten or eleven years passed in Hamilton as the gladdest of all my years. They may have been even gladder than they now seem, because the incidents which embody happiness had then the novelty which such incidents lose from their recurrence; while the facts of unhappiness, no matter how often they repeat themselves, seem throughout life an