

# **YEARS OF MY YOUTH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649180523

Years of my youth by W. D. Howells

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**W. D. HOWELLS**

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HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK

*W. D. Howells*

# YEARS OF MY YOUTH

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HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
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## YEARS OF MY YOUTH

### I

**I**T 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