
**Recollections of Life in
Ohio, from 1813 to 1840**

Howells William Cooper

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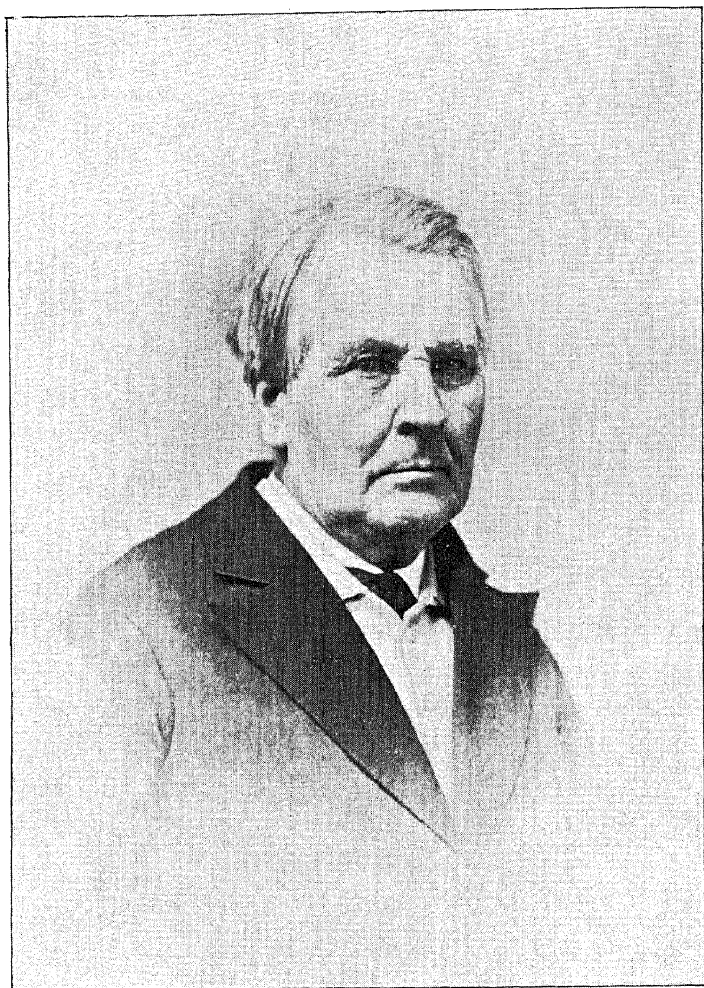
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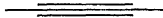
RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE
IN OHIO,

FROM 1813 TO 1840,

BY
WILLIAM COOPER HOWELLS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HIS SON,

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.



CINCINNATI:
THE ROBERT CLARKE COMPANY,
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INTRODUCTION.

It was at my suggestion that my father began, ten or twelve years ago, to set down the facts of his early life. At first the record was meant for his family only, but when I came to read it over I found it so full of experiences and observations of general interest, that I urged him to continue it, with a view to its final publication, and yet keep it as simple and informal as he had originally intended. This will account for its appearance and character in the present shape. He was never able to finish it, and the work of revision fell to me after his death. In doing this work I felt that the value of his reminiscences to the public was, of course, in the perspective they afforded of times and conditions long past away, and I have tried to free them from all personalities not essential to this.

Necessarily, however, they remain very personal, as far as the writer and his immediate family are concerned. These, indeed, constitute the background of a picture, which could not have had due relief without them. A middle-class English family, coming to Ohio early in the

century, could see the primitive American life more or less from the outside. They would be in it, but not of it; and their point of view would have distinct advantages for the study of its peculiarities. My father was always a very close and critical observer, both of nature and of human nature, and I may say that he was equally a lover of both. When I first began to make my observations of him, I used to think, with that wisdom of youth which we are not so sure of later, that he was easily deceived in people; but I have since come to see that he understood quite well the character of such people, and that what he trusted in them was human nature, which in the long run did not deceive him. There was that in him which appealed to the better qualities of those he came in contact with, and made them wish to be as good as he thought them capable of being. He was not a poet in the artistic sense, but he was a poet in his view of life, the universe, creation; and his dream of it included man, as well as the woods and fields and their citizenship. His first emotion concerning every form of life was sympathetic; he wished to get upon common ground with every person and with every thing.

But he had the philosophic rather than the imaginative temperament, and what he sometimes thought he wished to do in literature and in art (for he used, when young, to write verse and to draw), he would probably not have done if he had enjoyed all those opportunities