

New Series  
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# The Howellsian

## A Message from the Editor

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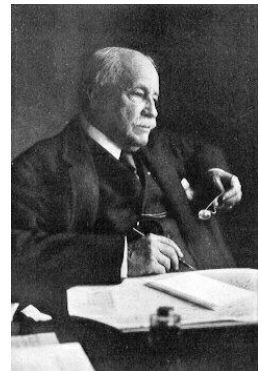
The William Dean Howells Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the University of Delaware in publishing *The Howellsian*.

Although we can hardly believe that winter is nearly over because so little time seems to have passed since we mailed out the Autumn issue of *The Howellsian* last fall, we're already looking toward San Francisco. The ALA conference will be held May 25-28, again at the Hyatt Regency in Embarcadero Center, where the William Dean Howells Society will next meet. A program arranged by Claudia Stokes, printed below, will be presented. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Following our editorial message, this issue of *The Howellsian* includes: 1) the 2006 program for the Society's two sessions at the forthcoming ALA conference, 2) the announcement of an inaugural prize to be awarded annually by the Society beginning this year, 3) an essay by Patrick K. Dooley (Saint Bonaventure Univ): "William Dean Howells and Harold Frederic," 4)

information by Donna Campbell on the Society's web site, and 5) recent criticism on W. D. Howells.

Sanford E. Marovitz, *Editor*



William Dean Howells in 1907

## Annual Howells Essay Prize to be Awarded

As announced last fall, this year for the first time, an annual prize will be awarded by the William Dean Howells Society for the best paper on Howells presented at the ALA conference. The winning paper may have been presented in any session on the program of the annual ALA conference, including but not limited to a panel sponsored by the Society.

Presenters wishing to enter their papers must submit them or revisions of them by September 1 to the current program chair, Claudia Stokes, who will coordinate the judging. The papers will be judged by members of the Executive Committee of the Society, who have the option of appointing additional readers as necessary.

The prize will include a cash award of \$75 and an accompanying certificate testifying that the named winner has been awarded "The William Dean Howells Society Prize for the Best Paper Presented at the American Literature Association Conference in 2006" with the date to change each year in accord with the date of the conference. The winner will be announced in the fall issue of *The Howellsian*, and the prize for this year's paper will be officially awarded in 2007 at the next annual ALA conference.

## Howells Society Business



W. D. Howells  
Picture courtesy of Mark Goodburn

### Two Howells Panels for ALA 2006

Last fall Claudia Stokes announced in a Call for Papers (to be submitted by 1/8/06) that the topics for the two Howells panels to be scheduled for the 2006 ALA conference are: 1) "Howells and Women" and 2) "The Unexpected Howells." From the proposals received through the deadline date, she has arranged the following two programs:

#### HOWELLS AND WOMEN, Claudia Stokes, *Chair*

1. **Michael Anesko**, Penn State University, "Guilt by Dissociation; or, the Merciless Quality of *The Quality of Mercy*."
2. **Robert Davidson**, Cal State, Chico, "The Gifted Women: Realism, the Canon, and Howells' *Heroines of Fiction*"
3. **Darrin Doyle**, University of Cincinnati, "Tears (Not So) Idle Tears: Empathy and Imagination in *The Rise of Silas Lapham*"

#### THE UNEXPECTED HOWELLS, Sanford E. Marovitz, *Chair*

1. **Jason Potts**, Johns Hopkins University, "What gountry has a poor man got?": Inequality and Individualism in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*"
2. **Mischa Renfroe**, Middle Tennessee State University, "Contractual Obligation and Necessity in William Dean Howells' *A Modern Instance*"
3. **Lance Rubin**, Arapahoe Community College, "'His Apparation' and the Spectre of Communism"

### New Howells-l Discussion List

The howells-l list, which used to be at howells-l@gonzaga.edu, has been replaced by a new and moderated discussion list, howells-l@listproc.wsu.edu. Its focus will still be announcements about events, calls for papers, queries, and discussion about W. D. Howells.

Having a moderated list means that no spam will get through to your e-mail box. Also, no archives will be available on the web, so you need not worry about spammers getting your e-mail address from the archives.

Important: No e-mail addresses from the former howells-l list (howells-l@gonzaga.edu) have been retained, so you will have to sign up again if you want to send and receive messages.

#### **To SUBSCRIBE:**

1. Send a message to listproc@listproc.wsu.edu. Leave the subject line blank.
2. Write this in the message space: **subscribe howells-l Firstname Lastname**

Note that howells-l has a lower-case L and not a numeral one. Instead of "Firstname Lastname," write your first name and last name.

#### **To POST A MESSAGE:**

To post a message to the howells-l list, send your messages to **howells-l@listproc.wsu.edu**

#### **To UNSUBSCRIBE:**

To unsubscribe from the list, send this message to listproc@listproc.wsu.edu: **unsubscribe howells-l**

You can also ask to be added to howells-l by sending a request to campbelld@wsu.edu.

## William Dean Howells and Harold Frederic

Patrick K. Dooley  
St. Bonaventure University

"I hope that when you next see the big man, Mr. Howells, you will not forget the messages of admiration, gratitude and fealty which I submit to you for him. I am a Howells man to the end of the war" (Harold Frederic to Hamlin Garland, 12 May 1897 [Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 454-455]).

The received opinions are that Harold Frederic was strongly influenced by William Dean Howells's prescriptions regarding realistic fiction and that Howells thought highly of Frederic's work. However correct these judgments are—and there seems to be no doubt that they are sound—there is surprisingly little empirical and biographical evidence to support these claims.

Here is what the record shows: Frederic met Howells early in December 1890 on one of his short vacations trips back to America; Frederic wrote three letters to Howells; there are no letters from Howells to Frederic; of course, Howells probably answered Frederic's letters but no such letters are included in the six volumes of Howells's letters published in the ongoing Howells edition. Four additional letters, two by Howells and two by Frederic—the letter to Garland noted in the epigraph above, and another to his publisher—contain valuable insight on their relationship. Beyond their limited personal contact and letters, their critical commentary on each other's works provides several interesting details on their relationship.

In many ways, theirs was a story of missed opportunities. Though Frederic lived in Boston from 1873 to 1875 when Howells served as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, it appears Frederic was unaware of Howells's important editorial position and his influential views on realistic fiction. Frederic was employed retouching photographic negatives, a detour on his way toward journalism and novel writing. In 1875 at the age of twenty Frederic moved back to his native city of Utica, New York, to begin his newspaper career, first with the *Utica Herald* and later with the *Utica Daily Observer*. Robert Myers's biography of Frederic notes that he took a variety of jobs as he worked his way up an appointment as editor of the *Daily Observer* in May 1880: "His change in status is reflected in the Utica directories. In 1875 he is listed as 'Harold Frederic, proofreader'; in 1878 he is listed as 'Harold Frederic, reporter'; by 1879 the listing has changed to 'Harold Frederic, journalist' " (Myers 13). It is in this last capacity that he directly engages the work of Howells as a literary critic. Of sixteen columns Frederic wrote for the *Daily Observer* between 1877 and 1881 three discuss Howells.

In the first, "New Books," appearing on 16 December 1878 and dealing with Edward Eggleston's *Roxy* (1878), Frederic argues that "it is not time for the 'Great American Novel' " because our best authors are still "at work on our foundations," capturing local color:

To them Cooper has contributed his studies of American character in the New York settlement a century ago; John Neal has done the same for the New England colonists; Mrs. Stowe has painted certain phases of modern Massachusetts life with rare fidelity; Bret Harte has portrayed to the life the strange developments of human nature which the Pacific slope presents; Henry James, Jr., and William Dean Howells have given us delicate studies of American society as it exists in its upper strata. (2)

Six months later on 12 May 1879, Frederic opens his short review of Howells's *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879) by saying that "his latest story deserves even warmer praise than his earlier works evoked. It is by far the best of his productions" ("New Books" 12 May 1879: 2). Frederic's main point makes plain that he is conversant with Howells's norms for realistic fiction—naturalness in setting, character and diction:

Its lack of pretense is its charm. . . . Mr. Howells places before us a little study of a half-dozen people, who meet in the most natural manner, who play their part in the quiet drama like honest creatures of flesh and blood. . . . More than this, the author paints scenery and surroundings with a touch so light and delicate, yet withal effective, that we find exquisite delight in his pictures, while scarcely realizing

## W. D. Howells and Harold Frederic, continued

that they are works of art and not of nature. . . he makes his people's conversation—though nothing beyond the natural talk of chance acquaintance—tell the story to us. ("New Books" 12 May 1879: 2)

Frederic's third and last early piece of literary criticism on Howells, published on 12 July 1880, both defends and commends *The Undiscovered Country* (1880). Beginning with the observation that it has been fashionable to "decry" the serialized version of the story appearing in the *Atlantic* "as the weakest of his efforts in the field of fiction" ("New Books" 12 July 1880: 2), Frederic insists that its verisimilitude measures up to the hallmark of good fiction: "It is only a plain, unvarnished tale, depending solely for a hold on the reader upon its masterly characterization, its perfect English, and its tranquil charm of mental and physical analysis and description" ("New Books" 12 July 1880: 2).

The next documentable item in the Howells-Frederic relationship is a glowing letter Frederic wrote to Howells from London on 5 May 1885 regarding the British reaction to the serialized installments of *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). The first two paragraphs of this three-paragraph letter warrant quotation in full:

At a private dinner here last evening, confined to some dozen professional men of whom I was the only American, the talk turned upon "The Rise of Silas Lapham," and the expressions of delight in it and of admiration for it were so cordial and warm that I yield to the temptation to write to you about them. The guests were mostly men of distinction—artists, writers, scientists and so on—and were certainly all men of fine discernment in literature. They talked a long time, upon many subjects, but upon nothing else was there nearly so much unanimity expressed or feeling shown, as upon the proposition that in choice shading of character, in deftness of analysis of motives and feelings, and in the quality of life in dialogue, the work marked a distinct advance step in fiction.

They were not able to understand as well as I do, I think, how much more there is in the story—to realize that it means the scrutiny of a master turned for almost the first time upon what is the most distinctive phase of American folk-life, but their praise was good to hear, all the same. (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 58).

It is hard to imagine a stronger endorsement than the close of Frederic's letter where he exclaims that "justice [was] done by Englishmen to the chief of American novelists" (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 58). Though, as already noted, it is highly unlikely that Howells did not answer such a complimentary letter, apparently none was preserved.

In 1888, a short piece of fiction, "The Editor and the Schoolma'am," that Frederic placed in the *New York Times* dramatizes a debate over Howells's principles of literary realism affirming the "dean's" gentle, sunnier-aspect realism while rejecting the grinding pessimism of the Russians Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.

Two years later, Frederic made his third and last visit to the United States. During the summer of 1890 Frederic orchestrated a meeting with Howells, anticipating a warm endorsement of his work, especially his third novel, *The Lawton Girl* (1880). He must have been very disappointed by the "Editor's Study" column in the October 1890 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* where Howells briefly commented on all three of Frederic's then published novels. Though Howells tries to soften the blow and save some of the day, it is hard to undo the tone of the opening sentence: "A fresh instance of the fatuity of the historical novel as far as the portrayal of character goes is Mr. Harold Frederic's story, *In the Valley*" (800). Even Howells's generous comments that the novel is "uncommonly well written, and the whole *mis-en-scène* has verity and importance," is quickly tempered with his criticism that Frederic's characters are not real-life persons but amateurs and actors (800).

Still Frederic must have been gratified to hear, albeit belatedly, Howells's enthusiastic commendation of his earlier works: "It is a loss not to have known till now two books so robust, so sound, so honest as *Seth's Brother's Wife* and *The Lawton Girl*. They have to do with country, village, and minor city life in central New York and they touch it at a great many points, both on the surface and below it. . . . Mr. Frederic shows himself acquainted with the deeps as well as the shallows of human nature" ("Editor's" 800-01). Reserving his highest praise for Frederic's sure handle of political life in upstate New York, Howells continues: "But what seems to us the newest and best things in his story of *Seth's*

## W. D. Howells and Harold Frederic, continued

*Brother's Wife* are his dramatic studies of local politics and politicians" ("Editor's" 801), noting correctly that Frederic's earlier journalistic apprenticeship served him well in this regard. Howells ends with an unequivocally supportive commentary on Frederic's grasp of farm life: "it is so true that as you read you can almost smell the earthy sent of the shut-up country parlors; and the sordid dullness of those joyless existences lies heavy on the heart" ("Editor's" 801).

Howells's 11 July 1890 letter to Sylvester Baxter reveals that he had just finished reading all three of Frederic's novels and that he had already formulated the central thrust of the positive elements of his soon-to-appear review: "Have you read Harold Frederic's novels? Very good central New York county life, done with roughness but force and full of an indirect groping toward the new economic as well as artistic truth" (Leitz 286). Then, too, on 26 October just after the *Harper's* "Editor Study" column appeared, Howells wrote to Theodore Roosevelt that "John Hay once said one of those things to me about the ways and tricks of politicians which illumined my life-long knowledge of them, as one knows them in the country, and so I was able to recognize the truth of Frederic's picture when I saw it" (Leitz 294).<sup>1</sup>

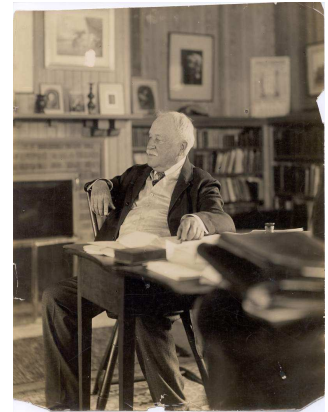
Undeterred by Howells's critical remarks on *The Lawton Girl*, Frederic called upon Howells in early December 1890. His follow-up letter to Howells, sent from New York on 11 December just before Frederic returned to England indicates that he, at least, thought their meeting had been a friendly, even a frank, exchange of views by near-equals:

I find myself on the eve of departure—I sail early Saturday morning—without having been able to realize that fascinating dream of a second visit to Boston.

Yet I do not like to go without saying to you that I shall carry away to London no other recollection of my visit equal in value to the memory of my call upon you. I am richer for having come to know you—and the stronger for having gained a closer insight into your beliefs and feelings. It by no means follows that I see all things as you do, or that the work I am going to do will wholly please you, but I am sure both the vision and the performance will be helped by the fact of my knowing you. (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 269-270)

For nearly six year thereafter, the Howells-Frederic relationship was in abeyance. On 26 January 1896 Howells responded to Stephen Crane's New Year's greeting, saying that he was enjoying Crane's "English Triumphs" (Wortham 123). This, of course, was a direct reference to Frederic's article, "Stephen Crane's Triumph," describing the runaway success in England of *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895); Frederic's piece had appeared in the *New York Times* the very day Howells penned his note to Crane. Not even a month later, on 16 February 1896, the *New York Times* published Frederic's note, "Novels Read in London: Superiority of the Work Done by William Dean Howells," with its favorable comments on *A Boy's Town* (1890) and *The Quality of Mercy* (1892).

In May 1896 Frederic wrote to D. Appleton, the New York representative of his English publisher, John Lane, asking editor George W. Sheldon to send complimentary copies of *March Hares* (1896) to three people who had been influential in his life: his



W. D. Howells in his study  
Picture courtesy of Mark Goodburn



## W. D. Howells and Harold Frederic, continued

mother, Mrs. Frances De Motte;<sup>2</sup> the Reverend Edward Aloysius Terry, a priest from the Albany diocese, Frederic's close friend who was the real-life prototype for Father Vincent Forbes in *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896); and William Dean Howells.

An aside by Frederic in his contribution to "How to Write a Short Story: A Symposium" in the 5 March 1897 *Bookman* gives his final direct comment on Howells. Robert Barr was the first author to address the symposium, and his suggestions had mostly to do with the length of a good short story. Frederic followed, noting that Barr "mentions Mr. Howells and Mr. Henry James as masters of the short story—but he would have been at a standstill if he had tried to cite any tale by either of them that did not exceed six thousand words" (45). Frederic avers, however, that length is not so much an issue, when one reads "Mr. Howells's incomparably beautiful *A Parting and a Meeting*" ("How" 45).

Important indirect testimony of Howells's impact on Frederic can be found in the letter from Frederic to Hamlin Garland, dated 12 May 1897, already noted above, and the same year from the other direction in Howells's article, "My Favorite Novelist and His Best Book," in the April 1897 issue of *Munsey's Magazine*. Howells's piece inaugurated, the editors explain, "a series of articles in which the leading literary men of the day will discuss a question interesting to all readers" ("My" 18). Howells's fairly protracted response cites a host of authors and their works that had been his favorites since his twenties. Eventually, however, Howells gets to his estimate of his contemporaries, saying,

I will tell you of some novels I have been recently reading, and like very much. I like "The Damnation of Theron Ware." I think that a very well imagined book. It treats of middle New York State life at the present day, such as Mr. Frederic had treated before, in "Seth's Brother's Wife," and in "The Lawton Girl." I was particularly interested in the book, for when you get to the end, although you have carried a hazy notion in your mind of the sort of man *Ware* was, you fully realize, for the first time, that the author has never for a moment represented him anywhere to you as a good or honest man, or as anything but a very selfish man. ("My" 23-24).

More than a year and a half would pass before Frederic was crippled by an ultimately fatal stroke; he died on 19 October 1898, not unaware of Howells's high praise and admiration for his finest work that had become a best seller in both American and England. The final sentence of Frederic's third and final letter to Howells, poignantly reveals a final missed opportunity: "You never told me whether you hated 'Illumination' as much as I feared" (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 475).<sup>3</sup>

Overall, this third letter, dated 16 June 1898 from Surrey, glows with admiration for Howells and gives indirect evidence of Howells's high opinion of Frederic. The occasion for the letter was in response to Howells's proposal that Frederic be invited "to join the special class . . . of the Social Science Association" (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 474). Frederic gushes, "[w]ith you I will belong to any hose-company or target-shoot that takes your fancy—and be happy" (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 474). Frederic then expresses his disappointment that he had missed seeing Howells when he had been in England. Next he misremembers their only meeting, at first thinking it had been twelve years earlier and then remarking, "[o]r no, it must be ten years instead—1888—for I was in Boston only a few hours in 1886"—actually it had been in December 1890 (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 474). He closed by asking Howells to meet with him when he comes to England the next time. Frederic's plea is both sincere and generous:

But in any case, you come to this side, and why mayn't I know of it when you do? There is no man in either hemisphere that I would rather meet, and listen to, and harangue in my modest young turn, than you. It is true that years seem not to matter to you. It seems that you grow younger in spirit and buoyant hopefulness as time slips by. I, alas, have no such fairy help. I get frankly older all the while—so that presently I shall be appealing to you as a venerable person to spare me something of consideration out of your boundless and exuberant stores of energy, sweetness and gaiety. (Fortenberry, Garner, and Woodward 475)

The final printed piece in the Howells-Frederic relationship was Howells's "American Letter: Problems of Existence in Fiction," that appeared in the 17 June 1899 issue of the London periodical *Literature*. In rebuttal to the view "that

## W. D. Howells and Harold Frederic, continued

American novels are full of clever details, witty conversation, and delicate touches, without at all allowing that the wolfish problems of existence are never grasped and handled firmly in them," Howells cites Henry Blake Fuller, William Payne and Robert Herrick (637). He then adds to his argument with the mention of two of his favorites of the younger generation whom he had encouraged and inspired: "There are the books of Mr. Stephen Crane and the books of Harold Frederic, especially, 'The Damnation of Theron Ware'" ("American" 637).

In conclusion, there can be little doubt that Frederic was deeply influenced by Howells and that Howells thought Frederic a young, gifted, popular, and powerful exponent of his vision of realism. Beyond the direct and indirect evidence of their relationship as just rehearsed, the significant linkage between the two writers has to do with their shared sense of the centrality of commerce in American society. Frederic recognized the heads-above excellence of Howells's best and most influential novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* with its celebration of the cliché that "the business of America is business." Frederic's literary tribute to Howells's masterpiece was his posthumously published business novel, *The Marketplace* (1899). In one of his earliest publications, "Protestant America" appearing in the *Index* on 18 November 1875, twenty-year-old Frederic argued that it is essential for "a wise, true man" to achieve "mastery of the rudiments of a business education" (549). Thus, even if Howells may not have been the initial inspiration for Frederic's sense of the importance of business affairs, Howells's example and encouragement and importantly, his view of the moral and social calling of a novelist, were with Frederic at the end.

### Notes

1. In the notes to this letter from Howells to Roosevelt, Leitz offers a fascinating excerpt of an earlier letter Roosevelt wrote to Howells about this installment of the "Editor's Study": "Politics being rather my hobby I was much pleased to see you mention appreciatively the political portions of 'Seth's Brother's Wife', by Harold Frederick. I have always esteemed them particularly good, for they are curiously true to life" (qtd. on 295).

2. In an interview with Frederic published in the *Idler* in November 1894, Robert Sherard notes, "It is touching to hear this big and burly man, who has fought so keenly with the world, speak with such reverence of his mother: 'My mother is a most remarkable woman,' he says, with stress and emphasis, and with an indescribable ring in his voice; 'in force, and courage, and initiative, I have never seen a woman like her'" (531).

3. Frederic waffled between entitling his best book *Illumination* or *The Damnation of Theron Ware*—the English version of the novel appeared under the former title, the American version under the latter. For the aptness of both titles, see Dooley's "Fakes and Good Frauds."

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The next issue (Vol 9, No 2, N.S.) of *The Howellsian* will be published in the fall. Among other items, it will include an account of the Society's business meeting, a review of the Society's panels on this year's ALA program, the name of the inaugural prize winner and the title of the winning paper, an announcement of the topics selected for our two sessions at the 2007 ALA conference (scheduled to be held in Boston), a Call for Papers, the author and title of an article to be announced, a review by Elsa Nettels of *Master and Dean: The Literary Criticism of Henry James and William Dean Howells*, by Robert Davidson\* (University of Missouri Press), and recent publications on Howells.

\*Please note that Robert Davidson will present a paper for us in the session on "Howells and Women" this spring.



W. D. Howells at 75



## Annotated Bibliography of Work on W. D. Howells

Professor Alex Feerst of Macalester College has recently agreed to edit the Annotated Online Bibliography of Howells Criticism. Contributors to the Annotated Online Bibliography volunteer to provide abstracts of any articles appearing on Howells in the journal they've agreed to monitor; the collected entries from the contributors are then edited and posted to the Howells Society site. If you would like to contribute to the annotated bibliography, please contact Alex Feerst at feerst@macalester.edu.

### *American Literary Realism*

Annotations by George Fragopoulos

**“I write Very Deliberately Indeed’: Four Uncollected Interviews with W.D. Howells,”** by Matthew Teorey. *ALR* 37.2 (Winter 2005) : 159-179. Teorey’s article brings together four “previously uncollected” Howells interviews which span almost a decade, the first one taking place in September 1883 and the last in November of 1892. The interviews cover a wide range of topics, from Howells’ work habits—‘I work from 9 in the morning until 1 or 2 in the afternoon; after that the work does not seem to be in me’—to his opinions on writers such as Zola, Tolstoy, and Kipling. Howells addresses directly the question of what it means to be an American writer and his personal relation to the novel form: “American life is changing very much, as the American novel by which you know is changing, too. It is a mirror of our mighty world . . . for myself, I do not believe in what you term the ‘American’ novel. It has little or no prospect, and for this reason—we are too local. We shall go on writing novel of New York, of Boston, of Georgia, of California. Our very vastness forces us into provincialism of the narrowest kind.”

**“A Hazard of New Fortunes: Howells and the Trial of Pragmatism,”** by Sarah B. Daugherty. *ALR* 36.2 (Winter 2004): 166-179. Daugherty’s article not only examines Howells’ novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* as a text intensely concerned with the social, economic, and historical landscape of post-Civil War America but also looks at the novel as a “a critique of authors whose precepts [Howells] found confining, including Tolstoy and Henry James.” Daugherty examines as the central conflict of the novel the tension between its pragmatic characters and its dreamers or idealists: “The novel establishes a tentative hierarchy of characters, with pragmatists favored over idealists.” This tension in the text mirrors Howells’ own ambivalent outlook on pragmatic thinking. Daugherty concludes, “Having tested the claims of pragmatism, Howells could not dispense with idealism.”

**“The Next Best Thing: Business and Commercial Inspiration in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*,”** by Gib Prettyman. *ALR* 35.2 (Winter 2003): 95-119. Prettyman begins his discussion of Howells’ *A Hazard of New Fortunes* by briefly describing the anxieties that Howells faced in late 1880’s America due to, among other things, “the trial and execution of the anarchist speakers accused of murder in the Haymarket bombing.” Prettyman goes on to illustrate how *Hazard* is “generally understood as Howells’ attempt to dramatize [the] increasingly profound disillusionment with industrializing America.” The rest of the article is spent examining the way *Hazard* dramatizes the ‘interaction of utopian and realist impulses at the heart of the novel,’ and points out that the majority of this theme is worked out by Howells through his representation of the magazine business, drawing on the parallel between the magazine that serialized *Hazard* in reality, *Harper’s*, and the fictional magazine at the center of the novel, *Every Other Week*. Howells, a publishing insider, uses the magazine industry to explore and illustrate the anxieties and pressures of commercial life at the end of the nineteenth century.

**“The ‘Enormous Effect’ of American Life: Divorce in W.D. Howells’ *A Modern Instance*,”** by Kimberly Freeman. *ALR* 36.1 (Fall 2003): 65-85. Freeman illustrates how Howells examines divorce in *A Modern Instance* as an attempt to portray postbellum America, in which divorce was an actual occurrence, in accord with Howells’ program of social realism. Divorce also allows Howells a space in which to explore gender roles, particularly “contrasting images of ‘American’ masculinity.” Freeman discusses Howells’ concerns with the “popular press’s invasion of privacy in the late-nineteenth century” and concludes with an examination of the novel’s somewhat ‘inconclusive’ ending and of its moral implications, which Freeman interprets as not entirely surprising in the context of the pattern of closure in Howells’ novels. In Freeman’s reading, the novel’s uneven ending suggests Howells’ own ambivalence on the moral valence of divorce in his time.

**“A Good War Story’: The Civil War, Substitution, and the Labor Crisis in Howells’ *A Hazard of New Fortunes*,”** by Andrew Rennick. *ALR* 35.3 (Spring 2003): 95-119. Rennick’s essay examines the thematic use of the American Civil War by Howells in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, arguing that the Civil War allows Howells to discuss and explore issues of class and labor during one of the most trying times in American history, participating: “in a contemporary discourse in which the meaning of the war was, in fact, not ignored but hotly contested: literature about labor.” Rennick illustrates this by examining Howells’ representation of certain characters in *A Hazard*, such as the magazine owner Dryfoos who represents a segment of the American population that had much to gain and little to lose from the war: “Oblivious to the wartime class strife, Dryfoos considers the war years ‘exciting times,’ and the death of union soldiers ‘worth it’ for ‘the country we’ve got now.’” Rennick concludes that the Civil War allowed Howells to examine both the “romantic conciliatory fantasies of battlefield heroics” that many Americans held and also allowed a space in which to examine “the history of American class relations.”

*American Literature* and *The New Yorker*  
Annotations by Terry Oggel

***American Literature* 73.4 (December 2002):**

Randall Knoper's "American Literary Realism and Nervous 'Reflexion'" (pp. 715-745) studies the connection between Howells's (and Holmes's and Twain's) literary theorizing and practice on the one hand and contemporary neuroscience on the other, showing that not only did the literary theory of the period register conceptual change but fostered it.

***American Literature* 75.4 (December 2003):**

Julie Cary Nerad, in "Slippery Language and False Dilemmas: The Passing Novels of Child, Howells, and Harper" (pp. 813-841), examines *An Imperative Duty* (1891), a flawed fictional attempt to "challenge the one-drop rule" (824) for which Harper's *Iola Leroy*, published the next year, was perhaps a "corrective" (830).

***American Literature* 77.2 (June 2005):**

- a. Only one reference (minor) to Howells in the concluding paragraph of "Elegies for the Haymarket Anarchists" by Kristin Boudreau (pp. 319-343), a survey of mourning poems published in the popular press for the five men executed in Chicago in November 1887.
- b. Claudia Stokes's "Copyrighting American History: International Copyright and the Periodization of the Nineteenth Century" (pp. 291-317) maintains that the international copyright movement, more than Howells's literary realism movement, gave public expression to the ideas that artists were laborers and that literature was not the realm of elite privileged intellectuals.

***The New Yorker*, vol. 81 and issue 17:**

In his "Metropolitan: William Dean Howells and the novel of New York" (*The New Yorker*, June 13 & 20, 2005, pp. 166-173), a review-essay of Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson's new biography, *William Dean Howells: A Writer's Life* (Univ. of California, 2005), Adam Gopnik focuses on Howells's New York years and the "three exceptional novels" (169) he produced while living there: *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), *The World of Chance* (1893) and *Letters Home* (1903).

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**“To give an account of one's reading is in some sort to give an account of one's life. . . “**

**—W. D. Howells, *My Literary Passions***

## The W. D. Howells Society Web Site

First established in 1997, the Howells Society site at <http://www.howellssociety.org> provides online editions of Howells's works, biographical information, bibliographic citations of recent Howells scholarship, and other information. What may be less apparent is that the site is visited not only by Howells scholars but by a host of visitors from all parts of the world. In December, for example, the site recorded 2,100 visitors, and while the majority were from the United States, others on a typical day came from Nigeria, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Moscow, Riyadh, Israel, Auburn (Australia), Bangladesh, Bombay, Rome, and Taipei. (The locations of another day's visitors are shown on the map at right.)



Here are some of the features of the site:

- Links (mostly annotated) to page images of all the “**Editor’s Study**” columns (1886-1982) in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* at <http://www.howellssociety.org/edstudy.htm>.
- Links to **Howells’s works online**, including text versions and page images for twenty-nine novels, several short story and poetry collections, a number of plays, and much of Howells’s nonfiction, including *Criticism and Fiction*, *My Literary Passions*, *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*, and essays on Frank Norris, Charles Chesnutt, Henry James, and Emile Zola, among others.
- Two **search features**, one for the site and one for Howells’s works. Many of the works stored at the site are searchable; for example, someone curious about Howells’s use of a certain word (e.g., “mittens”) would be able to type that term into a search box and see where it appears in Howells’s works.
- A **current bibliography** of works on Howells and an annotated bibliography (<http://www.howellssociety.org/onbib.htm>) of abstracts edited by Alex Feerst.
- Critical **commentary** on Howells, including a review by Don Cook of *William Dean Howells in St. Augustine*.
- Conference announcements and **calls for papers**, including information on (and some abstracts for) panels for ALA.
- A short **biographical sketch** of Howells and a Howells chronology.
- Links to sites on **Howells’s contemporaries**.
- **Queries and replies** about Howells.
- Back issues (1996-2002) of *The Howellsian*.
- Links to other **Howells sites and teaching resources** on the web, including <http://www.memoware.com>. Memoware.com features free versions of literary classics that can be downloaded to PalmPilots, eBook readers, and other handheld computers and personal digital assistants. Howells’ work has proven surprisingly popular, if the download numbers are any indication: for example, his “Christmas Every Day” has been downloaded 461 times. This is scarcely a surprise, considering the popular subject matter; what may be surprising is that Howells’s plays *The Garrothers*, *The Parlor Car*, and *The Elevator* run a close second, with over 200 downloads each.
- The site also maintains two weblogs, or “blogs,” for announcements:
  - **Howells in the News** (<http://howellsinthenews.blogspot.com>) includes excerpts from and links to news items about Howells appearing in the popular press. Recent items include excerpts from reviews of Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson’s new biography of Howells, an essay from *The Atlantic* about Howells’s tenure as editor, and a mention of “Wallop” Dean Howells and the Johnson-Jeffries fight.
  - **Howells News and Notes** (<http://howellsnews.blogspot.com>) lists announcements and news primarily of interest to Howells Society members.

## The William Dean Howells Society Executive Board

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## Selected Queries from the Howells Society Site

These and other queries can be found online at <http://www.howellssociety.org/queries.htm>. If you have answers for these any of these queries, please submit them to the Howells Society site at <http://www.howellssociety.org/queryform.htm> or e-mail them to [campbelld@wsu.edu](mailto:campbelld@wsu.edu). Thank you.

### Paintings by Mildred Howells

I have been asked by my father to write to this group. He has some paintings by Mildred Howells (2 I believe) and is wondering if there is any interest in them from members of this society. I will await any response and then contact him. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Melissa

Melissa Carrara [dcarrara@localnet.com](mailto:dcarrara@localnet.com)

### "Wild little Canadian watering-place"

I'm working with *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and I'm interested in whether or not anyone has identified the "rather wild little Canadian watering-place on the St. Lawrence, below Quebec" where Anna Corey and her daughters meet Irene and Persis Lapham.

I'm interested, especially, in what vacationing there would mean economically, given the Corey family's dwindling fortune and the Lapham family's conspicuous consumption.

Fred Johnson, Ball State University

### Howells and Chekhov

I am working on *The Son of Royal Langbrith*, and am looking in particular at chapter XIV, pp. 83-84 (in the Indiana U. P. edition). Judge Garley makes a reference to a study of a Russian Island (Sakhalin, as the note indicates). The note also mentions a book on Sakhalin by Hawes. I was wondering if Howells could have had in a mind a book by Chekhov, *The Island of Sakhalin*, serialized in Russia in 1893 and published in book form in 1895.

The only hitch is : Could Howells have possibly read it by the time he wrote *Royal Langbrith* ? When was it translated into English ? or into French, or into another language which he knew (Spanish, Italian & German) ? I don't think that he knew Russian, but I may be wrong.

I have read extracts of Chekhov's book. It does not express the theory of remorse expressed by Garley, but I think Howells could very well have reinterpreted & modified the book in order to make his point. I would be very interested to have your opinion on this and would be very grateful if you could enlighten me.

Thank you,  
Guillaume Tanguy.  
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