

**MRS. FARRELL; A  
NOVEL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649180714

Mrs. Farrell; a novel by William Dean Howells

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS**

**MRS. FARRELL; A  
NOVEL**



## BOOKS BY W. D. HOWELLS

- Annie Kilburn.  
 April Hopes.  
 Between the Dark and Daylight. New Edition.  
 Boy Life. Illustrated.  
 Boy's Town. Illustrated.  
 Certain Delightful English Towns. Illustrated.  
 Traveler's Edition. Leather.  
 Christmas Every Day, and Other Stories.  
 Holiday Edition. Illustrated.  
 Coast of Bohemia. Illustrated.  
 Criticism and Fiction. Portrait.  
 Daughter of the Storage.  
 Day of Their Wedding. Illustrated.  
 Familiar Spanish Travels. Illustrated.  
 Fennel and Rue. Illustrated. New Edition.  
 Flight of Pony Basket.  
 Hazard of New Fortunes. New Edition.  
 Heroines of Fiction. Illustrated. 2 vols.  
 Hither and Thither in Germany.  
 Imaginary Interviews.  
 Imperative Duty. Paper.  
 Impressions and Experiences. New Edition.  
 Kentons.  
 Landlord at Lion's Head. Illustrated. New Edition.  
 Letters Home.  
 Literary Friends and Acquaintance. Illustrated.  
 Literature and Life.  
 Little Swiss Sojourn. Illustrated.  
 London Films. Illustrated.  
 Traveler's Edition. Leather.  
 Miss Bellard's Inspiration.  
 Modern Italian Poets. Illustrated.  
 Mother and the Father. Illustrated. New Edition.  
 Mrs. Farrell.  
 My Literary Passions. New Edition.  
 My Mark Twain. Illustrated.  
 My Year in a Log Cabin. Illustrated.  
 Open-Eyed Conspiracy.  
 Pair of Patient Lovers.  
 Quality of Mercy. New Edition.  
 Questionable Shapes. Ill'd.  
 Ragged Lady. Illustrated. New Edition.  
 Roman Holidays. Illustrated.  
 Traveler's Edition. Leather.  
 Seen and Unseen at Stratford.  
 Seven English Cities. Illustrated.  
 Traveler's Edition. Leather.  
 Shadow of a Dream.  
 Son of Royal Langbrith.  
 Stops of Various Quills. Illustrated. Limited Edition.  
 Story of a Play.  
 The Vacation of the Kelwyns.  
 Their Silver Wedding Journey. Illustrated. 2 vols.  
 In 1 vol. New Edition.  
 Through the Eye of a Needle. New Edition.  
 Traveller from Altruria. New Edition.  
 World of Chance.  
 Years of My Youth. Illustrated Edition.

### FARCES:

- A Letter of Introduction. Illustrated  
 A Likely Story. Illustrated  
 A Previous Engagement. Paper.  
 Evening Dress. Illustrated.  
 Five-o'Clock Tea. Illustrated.  
 Parting Friends. Illustrated.  
 The Albany Depot. Illustrated.  
 The Gargoters. Illustrated.  
 The Mouse-Trap. Illustrated.  
 The Unexpected Guests. Illustrated.

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

ESTABLISHED 1817

# MRS. FARRELL

A NOVEL BY

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

*With an Introduction by  
Mildred Howells*



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

NO. 1111  
AMSTERDAM

Mrs. FARRELL

Copyright, 1921, by Harper & Brothers  
Printed in the United States of America

G-V

## INTRODUCTION

THIS story of my father's was first printed under the title of *Private Theatricals* in the *Atlantic Monthly* of 1875, while he was still editor of the magazine. It appeared a few years after Henry James's *Gabrielle de Bergerac*, and neither of the two short novels was ever republished by their authors. My father's must have been written in the Concord Avenue house in Cambridge which he and my mother had just built and moved into. They were very proud of the new house, even of its mansard roof such as every house of the period was obliged to have, and which is reflected in the newly added French roofs of some of the houses near the church in West Pekin; but their greatest pride was in the library. My impressions of the house are those of rather extreme youth, but I can remember that it was lined with bookshelves bordered by bands of red, scalloped leather that were meant, as I now suppose, to keep the dust from the book tops but which were then pleasantly mysterious to the infant mind. There were very satisfactory tiles of Eastlake tendencies over the fireplace, picturing the seasons in yellow and brown, and a vast flat-topped desk in the middle of the room with rows of drawers on either side



## INTRODUCTION

that went down to the floor, leaving a dark hole between them, which was useful as a doll's house when not occupied by my father's feet. The room was at the back of the house, for greater quiet, and looked out into a deep, grassy yard divided down the center by a hedge of lilacs, and only invaded by birds and children.

The background of *Mrs. Farrell* is the New England farm boarding house, which was the only form of simple country sojourn before summer cottages were imagined, and it is interesting to compare it with the farm boarding in *The Vacation of the Kelwyns*, written so many years after and giving a much fuller study of the country people. The farmhouse of this story, kept by the finer type of New England farmers, must, I think, have been the sort of summer place that my parents were always seeking, and the Kelwyns' experience a picture of what they more often found. In the latter book the country people are of much poorer stuff than the Woodwards, but one feels in his handling of them the greater tenderness and understanding that age teaches, and youth, no matter how sympathetic, cannot compass.

During the later summers, while we still lived in Cambridge, we tried many different kinds of farm board, and I wish I could remember more of them for comparison with those of Mrs. Farrell and the Kelwyns, but I can only recall one of all our landladies, a good-natured farmer's wife, so stout that her apron strings only appeared where they were tied behind her. I made many solemn journeys

## INTRODUCTION

around her in search of them, and I think it must have always been while she was frying doughnuts, for that act is firmly associated in my mind with her invisible apron strings. I was also vaguely conscious of a feud that raged between our hosts and their relations, over a family Bible that had reversed the squaring of the circle by having its corners worn off until it was quite round. It had been borrowed and wrongfully detained by a younger branch of the family, leaving hatred and uncharitableness behind. These reflections, I am afraid, do not throw any great light on the practical conditions of farm boarding, but they are all I have.

It is amusing to one who started life in the eighteen-seventies, to see it again from their angle in these pages written not only about them, but in them. One notes with surprise, after the feminine activity of the present, the general resignation of even faintly middle-aged ladies to headaches and invalidism, and the walks taken through woods and meadows in trailing draperies. The painting of cat-tails emerges from a very dead past, and even the more modern charcoal head of Blossom brings back the day of William Hunt's classes, when charcoal heads prevailed, and every Boston young lady of artistic taste longed to be among his pupils. Rachel Woodward's little red schoolhouse must be deserted to-day and quietly dropping apart on its country road, as so many others are doing now that their scholars have been concentrated in big graded schools; but her practical view

## INTRODUCTION

of her own talent and her firmness in returning what she thought more than her drawings worth to Mrs. Gilbert are of no epoch, but still endure in the New England character, unalterable as its native granite. Coming from southern Ohio, my father could, perhaps, see the New England people more clearly than if he had been one of them, and the Woodward family gives what he felt and valued in their stern uprightness and self-restraint.

The echoes of the Civil War, in the injustice of Easton's advancement in military rank over the head of his friend, come strangely to us who have just lived through another terrible conflict which has left this world weary and discouraged. In speaking of the two wars, my father said that a great difference lay in the spirit that came after them, for when the Civil War was done people in the North felt that all the troubles of the world were over, and that in the future everything was going to be right. Easton's ideas about hunting and fishing, and his desire to help the helpless, are a reflection, I think, of the writer's own feelings; and in the scene where Easton stops the rearing horse one wonders whether there survive faint traces of those early literary traditions that made my father, as he once said, feel when he began writing novels that he must have his hero do something to win the heroine, like rescuing her from a wild bull, until he observed that in real life nothing of the sort was necessary. His minute study of Easton's emotions as a lover makes one feel the sympathetic interest of a writer who was young