

Elizabeth Gaskell

North and South



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Elizabeth Gaskell

North and South

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Elizabeth Gaskell

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THE STORY IS FULLY RECORDED.

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Elizabeth Gaskell

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson was born in Chelsea, London, in 1810. Her mother died when she was just over a year old, so she was sent to live with her mother's sister Aunt Hannah Lumb. Her brother John, who was in the merchant navy, encouraged her to write and it

seems from Elizabeth's letters that she was already writing stories when she left school. However, no early stories have survived.

When Elizabeth met William Gaskell in 1831 they shared a love of music and literature, but in spite of this they were very different. Elizabeth was a lively, beautiful and sociable woman while William had a dry sense of humour and often liked to be alone. The Gaskell family lived in Manchester and had four daughters. When a young son died, William encouraged Elizabeth to write a novel. Elizabeth could see the social tensions in the city of Manchester. It had grown rapidly and was a wealthy city, but there was a lot of poverty. Her first novel, *Mary Barton*, published anonymously in 1848, was about the terrible lives of the poor workers in the industrial cities of the north.

This novel attracted the attention of Charles Dickens and much of her subsequent work was published in the periodicals which were edited by Dickens: *All the Year Round* and *Household Words*. Dickens

said she had a natural talent for storytelling. Her interest in people from all classes, whether mill workers or owners, shopkeepers or doctors, brought a richness to her writing. Her very popular novel, *Cranford*, a story of two sisters and their circle of women friends, appeared in episodes from September 1851 to May 1853. It is a story that is full of humour.

Elizabeth's second Manchester novel, *North and South*, appeared in twenty-two weekly instalments in *Household Words* from September 1854 to January 1855. In June 1855 it was published in book form. Elizabeth refused to allow Dickens to edit *North and South*.

Elizabeth Gaskell had a busy social life and was a friend of Florence Nightingale before she left to nurse soldiers in the Crimean War. Elizabeth was a contemporary of William Makepeace Thackeray, George Eliot and the Brontë sisters. She was a friend of Charlotte Brontë and wrote *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857. Because of complaints about this book and legal threats, she published a revised edition.





► Elizabeth Gaskell's home in Manchester.

Elizabeth Gaskell was an independent spirit and travelled a lot with her children in Britain and Europe. She died suddenly in 1865 at her new home in Hampshire. She had bought the house as a surprise for her husband and family.

**1 Comprehension check • Decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).
Correct the false statements.**

1. Elizabeth was brought up by her mother. T F
2. She wrote while at school, despite no early stories surviving. T F
3. Both Elizabeth and her husband were not very sociable. T F
4. Elizabeth failed to notice the social tensions in Manchester. T F
5. She published her first novel, *Mary Barton*, anonymously. T F
6. Subsequent work was published in Dickens's magazines. T F
7. Elizabeth only wrote about the working classes. T F
8. Dickens didn't edit *North and South*. T F
9. Elizabeth never met Florence Nightingale. T F
10. People were not happy about the book she wrote on Charlotte Brontë. T F

The Characters



From top to bottom, left to right:
Margaret Hale, John Thornton, Mrs Thorton, Bessie, Nicholas Higgins,
Mr Hale, Mrs Hale, Frederick, Dixon, Edith, Henry Lennox.

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Match the words to the pictures.

maid gentleman Corfu railway puff of smoke vicar
cotton cottage shilling pear platform wallpaper



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



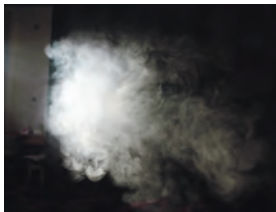
8



9



10



11



12

2 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the words and choose the odd one out for each category, as in the example.

0. job: worker ~~unemployed~~ employee labourer
1. money: surplus income loss profit
2. conflict: order strike riot dispute
3. produce: make manufacture study assemble
4. materials: food wool cotton textile
5. income: earnings wage salary debt
6. buildings: office mill house factory
7. manager: worker owner boss landlord
8. rights: workers' organisation workers' group Union management
9. well-being: energy disease health fitness

3 Use some of the words from the exercise 2 to complete the text on cotton mills.

In *North and South*, Milton is really the city of Manchester and Darkshire is a county that doesn't exist. The name Darkshire represents a smoky, industrial county.

During the Industrial Revolution, Manchester was the most important city for the (1) m..... of (2) t..... . People called it 'Cottonopolis' because by 1813 there were eighty-six cotton (3) m..... . A cotton mill was a (4) f..... where cotton was made into thread. Mill (5) o..... imported cotton because it was cheap to buy. Cotton became more important for business than (6) w..... and made large (7) p..... for the mill owners. The mill (8) w..... lived in small houses nearby because (9) w..... were not good, but the money was better than agricultural work. People worked long hours to keep the machines going. The work was repetitive and there were accidents.

It was normal, in the 19th century, for children from poor families to work and give their (10) e..... to the family. Some started work when they were four or five years old.

The conditions in the mills were not good for people's (11) h..... . The air was full of dust and caused chest and lung (12) d..... . Many factory owners asked their workers to sign 'The Document.' This was a promise that they would not join a (13) U..... and would not (14) s..... . The workers did not have any (15) r..... .



CHAPTER 1

A marriage and a proposal

E

dith.'

Margaret spoke gently to her cousin, but she had fallen asleep on the sofa. How beautiful she looked, thought Margaret. They had grown up together, but it was only now, when Edith was about to be married, that Margaret found herself considering Edith's qualities. Edith was an only child and, even though she was a little spoilt, she was very sweet.

Life was going to change for both of them. Edith and Captain Lennox were getting married and they were moving to Corfu with the regiment.¹ Margaret Hale, who was nineteen, a year older than Edith, was going to live with her parents again in the beautiful southern village of Helstone.



track 02

1. **regiment** : a unit of the army.



Margaret was excited about going home, but it would be strange to leave London. She had lived with Aunt Shaw for almost ten years in a beautiful house in Harley Street. Margaret's father was a poor vicar and her parents had sent her to London to enjoy life in the city.

Margaret thought that her mother and aunt were jealous of each other. Despite the fact that Aunt Shaw had not married for love, Mrs Hale was jealous of her sister's wealth. Although her marriage to General Shaw had been based on respect, she did not want that for her only child. Captain Lennox was tall and handsome and Edith loved him, of course. It was just unfortunate that the Captain did not have a beautiful house or a title.

Neighbours came to the house for dinner that evening and a little later the Captain's brother arrived. He was a lawyer called Henry Lennox and although Margaret liked him and considered him a friend, she was not in love with him. When he sat next to her, she knew she would have a pleasant evening.

'Tell me about Helstone,' he said to Margaret. 'Is it a village or a town?'

'Oh, it's too small to be called a village. There's a church and a few cottages near the green and roses round the doorways.'

'Your description is like a picture,' said Henry. 'I would like to visit you at Helstone.'

'I hope you will,' said Margaret. 'Then you will see what a beautiful place it is.'

Margaret watched him for the rest of the evening. He was intelligent but not handsome. She didn't like the sarcastic² way he observed everything.

Because there had not been enough money for Margaret's mother to buy a new dress and bonnet, she didn't come to Edith's wedding

2. sarcastic : sharp humour.



and stayed at home. Margaret returned to Helstone in late July. She loved being outside more than inside the house. She loved the forest and the people who worked on the land. Margaret hated business or anything to do with industry.

In the years Margaret had been away, her mother had grown discontented with her life. She wanted her husband to take on a bigger parish³ with more money and responsibility. Mr Hale also seemed troubled and spent every evening in his study reading. Margaret thought they were hiding some bad news about her brother Frederick who was still away at sea. They had heard from him, but there was something they were not telling her.

One beautiful day Mr Henry Lennox visited them. It was one of Mrs Hale's days when everything was difficult.

'But we will have to give Mr Lennox dinner and there is nothing but cold meat. And your father is depressed.'

When Margaret's mother spoke, it was like a cold cloud coming between her and the sun. 'Cold meat is fine. I'm going to take Mr Lennox outside. We can do some drawing.'

And everything was fine until Henry drew a picture of Margaret speaking to one of the old men who lived in the cottages. She wasn't sure why, but it made her feel uncomfortable. After dinner they walked in the garden together.

Suddenly he took her hand. 'Margaret, I hope you have missed London and your friends there. I don't want you to like Helstone so much. I don't have much to offer you at the moment, but I love you.'

Margaret tried to calm herself. 'I didn't know you felt like this, Henry. You are a friend. I would like us to continue to be friends.'

'At least give me hope that one day our friendship can turn to love?'

3. parish : a church and community.

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Values & Feelings

1 Comprehension check • Read the first part of each sentence (1-10) and match it with a conclusion (a-l). There are two conclusions that you do not need to use.

1. Margaret can see the good in Edith
2. Captain Lennox and Edith
3. Margaret has lived in London
4. Aunt Shaw is wealthy
5. Margaret's brother Frederick
6. Margaret loves the countryside in Helstone
7. Mr Hale seems troubled
8. Henry Lennox visits Helstone
9. Mr Hale is leaving the church
10. Mr Hale wants Margaret

- a and tells Margaret he loves her.
- b but did not marry for love.
- c now she is getting married.
- d because he wants to work in industry.
- e are moving to Corfu.
- f and spends evenings in his study.
- g and Margaret promises to marry him.
- h to tell her mother they are moving to the north.
- i and hates the industrial north.
- j for almost ten years.
- k because he is having doubts.
- l is still away at sea.