

# *North and South*

*Episode 4*

## *Love and understanding*



## Main Themes episode 4

- Canteens? A good idea.
- Lunch time
- Mass produced food
- A «greyish» marriage
- A stroke of luck
- Married Women's Property Act 1870
- A Fortunate Marriage....for Thorton.



## Canteens? A good idea.

- The Industrial Revolution in the mid-19th Century regularised working hours, with labourers needing an early meal to sustain them at work.
- All classes started to eat a meal before going to work, even the bosses.





# Lunch time



- The origins of the word "lunch" are mysterious and complicated.
- "Lunch" was a very rare word up until the 19th Century.
- It was the Industrial Revolution that helped shape lunch as we know it today.
- Middle and lower class eating patterns were defined by working hours.
- Many were working long hours in factories and to sustain them a noon-time meal was essential.



# Mass-produced food



- Pies were sold on stalls outside factories.
- People also started to rely on mass-produced food as there was no room in towns and cities for gardens and many didn't even have a kitchen.
- Britain was the first country in the world to feed people with industrialised food.
- The ritual of taking lunch became part of the daily routine.
- In the 19th Century chop houses opened in cities and office workers were given one hour for lunch.
- But as war broke out in 1939 and rationing took hold, the lunch was forced to evolve. Work-based canteens became the most economical way to feed the masses.



## A «Greyish» Marriage



- It was not unusual for an old man to join in marriage a young girl.
- Fanny defines her suitor a bit «greyish» but an excellent match for her social standard and even Mr Bell seems to imply to have wished Margaret as a wife who might look after him.
- For a woman of that time, marrying was far more important than marrying for love as it was her only chance to achieve her independence and setting herself free from family bonds.

## A Stroke of Luck

- Margaret inherits Mr Bell's money and properties,



**HENCE**

1. She becomes the owner of Thornton's mill and house,
2. She makes more money thanks to financial speculations, thus accomplishing her final transformation into a woman of the North.

# Married Women's Property Act 1870

- Allowed married women to be legal owner of the money they earned and to inherit property

## But before 1870, once married:

- Any money made by a woman became the property of the husband with the exception of the dowry.
- She had no claim to her property.
- Women were not recognized to be a separate legal being.
- A woman had no longer the right to do anything with her property even if it was still legally hers.



# A Fortunate Marriage.....for Thorton

- As the story is set in the 1850s, we may easily imply that despite Margaret's generous offer, once married:
  1. Margaret's properties and income would be legally Thorton's anyhow,
  2. Thus losing any claim, even in case of divorce.

But, I'm sure that was not the case. 😊



▶ Next Episode



## The Book and the Movie

