

North and South

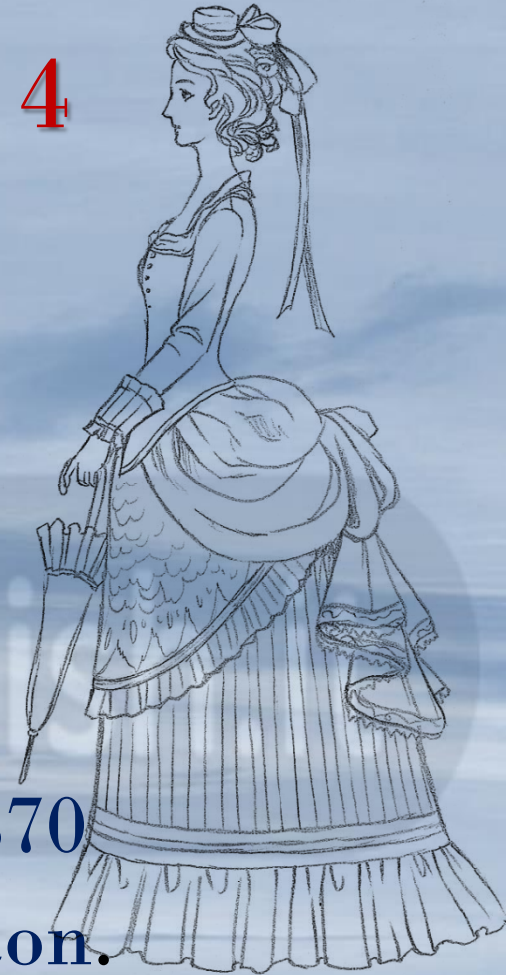
Episode 4

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 Thorton'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

