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THE YORKSHIRE FACTORY GIRL.

BY L. E. L.

ON a fine afternoon in the lovely month of June, 18—, as Mr. Temple, the rector of Bonfield, was driving his wife homewards, they having been a few hours on business at the large manufacturing town of Ledston, their discourse turned upon the pleasures of a country life, compared with that passed by the inhabitants of such a town as they had just left; and as they breathed the pure uncontaminated air, and feasted their eyes with the bright green foliage and gay flowers on the hedge bank, they felt grateful to Providence, for having placed them in a situation, where they were surrounded by God's works and not those of man. The long line of, prison-like buildings called factories, which they had passed in the suburbs of the town, impressed them with a melancholy view of the factory system in general: but they had yet much to learn, having been but a few months in the neighborhood of Ledston.

When about two miles clear of that place, their attention was attracted by a group seated on a bank at the hedge-side: a pale sickly looking girl, apparently about eighteen, was supporting in her arms a younger one, who appeared to be in a fainting fit. This scene excited the sympathy of Mrs. Temple, and she got out of the carriage and approached the bank with an enquiry as to what was the matter; the elder girl said, that she and her sister had walked from Ledston, at their father's desire, to breathe the country air, for he said, "If anything will bring Mary about again, it will be that;" but the fatigue and heat have been too much for her, and how to get her home again I don't know."

"How far are you from home?" said Mrs. Temple.

"Three miles at least," said the girl, "for we have a mile to walk through narrow lanes before we get to that in which we live, which is Marsh-Jane, ma'am." Here a shrill cry from a bundle which lay in the girl's lap started Mrs.

Temple, but the old shawl which covered it being raised, the face of the miserable looking infant appeared.

Mrs. Temple was struck with horror, for never had she seen anything human at all like it; the skin was shrivelled and tightly stretched over the bones; the eyes rolled with a vacant stare, and all the features seemed pinched with suffering.

"How old is this child?" said Mrs. Temple.

"Ten months, ma'am," said the girl, "and it seems to have been dying every day since it was born, and yet it lives on, and I tend it night and day; and do all I can for it."

"Has it no mother?" demanded Mrs. Temple.

"O no, ma'am;" and here the girl wept; "my mother died when this babe was only three weeks old, and she gave it to my care, ma'am, and told me to do the best I could for it, for she said, 'It will not be long a burthen to you.'"

Mr. Temple had now come up, and asked the girl if she had a father living.

"O yes, sir, but he has not done a day's work at the mill for more than a year, being hurt by the machine, and he fears there is little chance of his ever working again."

"And is there no provision made for the lame and the maimed, when unable to work for their bread?" said Mr. Temple.

"No redress but starving," said the girl in a sulky tone.

"Then how do you live at present?"

"By the work of my two brothers, Sir, who go daily to the mill; but they are only boys, and their wages small, and we are hard set to keep life in us; poor Mary ill too, and the babe keeps me at home, so I can be no help by my work."

"Have you no friends or neighbours to assist you?" demanded Mr. Temple.

"Our neighbors are as poor as ourselves, Sir, or they would help us, and our relations cast us off when we left the country."