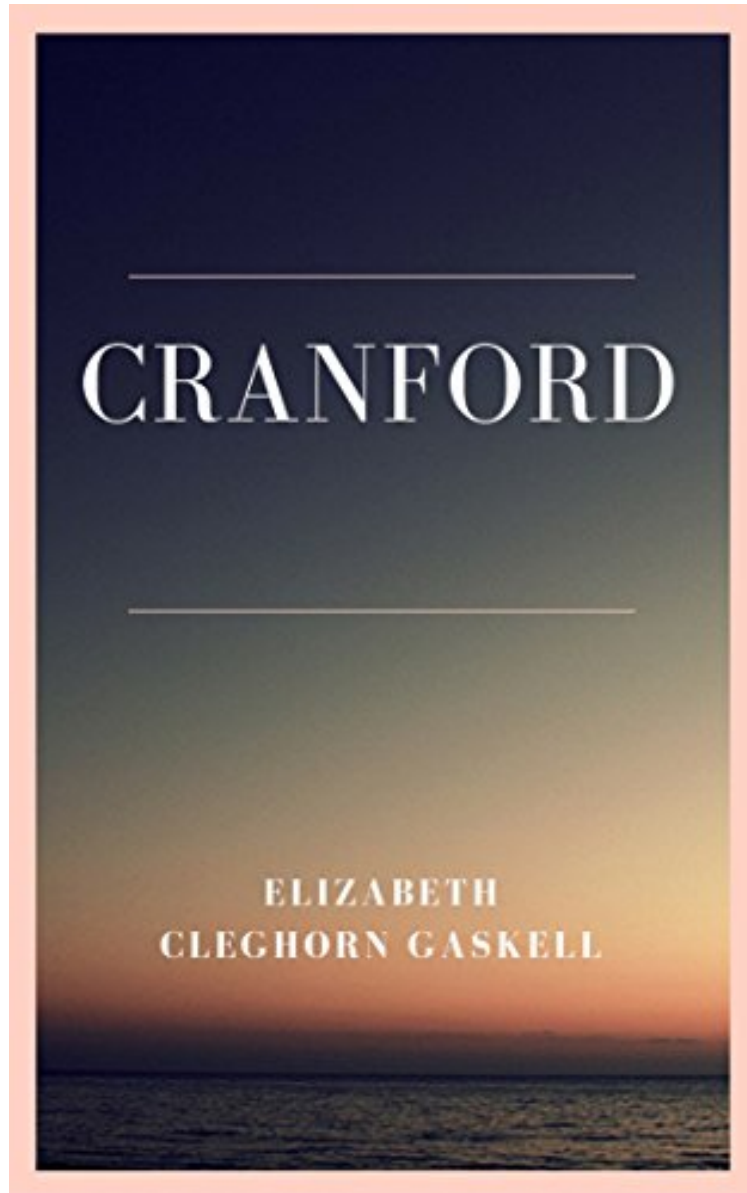


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## Cranford

*Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell*  
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**Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell : Cranford** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cranford:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The work of a masterBy I. SondelThis review is for Goodreads and there are 62,000 ratings and/or reviews already. So what is the point of my writing a synopsis? The setting is a small English village circa 1850. The narrator is Mary Smith. She tells many stories of the ladies of Cranford and their interactions with the protagonist is Miss. Matilda Jenkyns ndash; the kindest soul in all of literature [if there is

someone kinder please let me know ndash; I should like to read their story]. This episodic novel is a celebration of the bucolic village life. It is laugh out loud funny and tear provokingly poignant. It's a like Sinclair Lewis's "Main Street"; in its depiction of small town life and politics and hypocrisy ndash; yet the satire here is less ferocious, more sanguine and forgiving. The characters are indelible. Miss. Matty is a character so well drawn, so thoroughly fleshed out by Miss. Gaskell, that the reader never once questions the great love and generosity that is lavished upon her. There are great comedic set pieces ndash; the cow in pajamas, the cat that swallowed the lace. The story of Miss Matty's brother Peter leaving home and the effect it had on their mother ndash; it's all so fresh I can hardly write about it without getting emotional. There is also a little story Miss Matty tells about how throughout her adult life she has been visited in her dreams by a two year old girl who reaches up her arms to be held and kissed ndash; the scene is so rich, so exquisitely rendered ndash; the literary equivalent to Rembrandt or Renoir ndash; so seemingly effortless and so obviously the work of a master. Now I'm going to be silly and take you into my confidence. I love reading "surveys" where they ask if you've ever fallen in love with a character from a book. Mr. Darcy usually comes out the victor in these ndash; but I find Thomas Holbrooke's character and countenance quite in line with my ideal ndash; his attitudes and ideas and his love of literature. I'm sure I'd have been a fan of Miss. Gaskell and the lovely ladies of Cranford. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A New Favorite By Miranda Atchley In this classic novel, Elizabeth Gaskell introduces us to the small village of Cranford. Largely dominated by lower class women, we read the stories of life in a small impoverished hamlet in Victorian England. Such stories include the women of Cranford entertaining visitors, going about their daily lives, losing dear friends, and losing their life savings. As the women of Cranford endure such things, their neighbors offer all they have to give in order to help their friends. I really loved this book. I love the Victorian era, and this book gave some insight into what life was like for those Victorians that were not born into royalty. It was a lighter read than books like Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights. I really liked how the Cranford women were there for one another. When one hit a rough patch, the others were there to help and support her in any way they could. It's a nice message to read about and one that I think ought to be portrayed more in literature. This was a wonderful novel. Any fan of classic literature should read Cranford. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The English Way By Lewis Woolston I had previously read "Wives and Daughters" by the same author and enjoyed it so I thought I would give this a try. I am a dedicated anglophile in my literary taste. I have a strong preference that my reading should have a lot of writers who are English and dead. Cranford centres on a little village in the English countryside of the same name. The majority of the inhabitants are women, widows and spinsters living genteel lives on inherited money. Their days are spent socializing with each other and the village and church parish fill up their lives. The scene is charming and makes one homesick for a time and a place I've never actually lived in. The real substance of this novel is the relationships of the women with each other and how they endure the various turns of life. Some harbour secret regrets for never marrying and having children and live quiet lives of loneliness and desperation as elderly spinsters too proud and decent to let anyone know how they suffer. Others grieve for family long dead and gone and confine their hope for the life hereafter as promised by their church. The whole novel is beautiful and deserves to be read as an ode to vanished small town English life as well as the secret lives of women. I would gladly read it again.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, often referred to as Mrs Gaskell, was an English novelist and short story writer during the Victorian era. Her novels offer a detailed portrait of the lives of many strata of society, including the very poor, and are of interest to social historians as well as lovers of literature. Her first novel, *Mary Barton*, was published in 1848. Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, published in 1857, was the first biography about Brontë. Some of Gaskell's best known novels are *Cranford* (1851-53), *North and South* (1854-55), and *Wives and Daughters* (1865) (font: Wikipedia)

About the Author Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, nee Stevenson (29 September 1810 ndash; 12 November 1865), often referred to simply as Mrs. Gaskell, was an English novelist and short story writer during the Victorian era. She is perhaps best known for her biography of Charlotte Brontë. Her novels offer a detailed portrait of the lives of many strata of society, including the very poor, and as such are of interest to social historians as well as lovers of literature.