**Extract from ‘North and South’ by Elizabeth Gaskell**

*In this extract Margaret Hale and her family have had to leave their pleasant home in the country and move to a busy Northern industrial town called Milton.*

One evening it was arranged that Margaret and her father should go the next day to Milton, and look out for a house. Margaret had a repugnance to the idea of a manufacturing town so she would willingly have deferred the expedition to Milton.

For several miles before they reached Milton, they saw a deep lead-coloured cloud hanging over the horizon in the direction in which it lay. It was all the darker from contrast with the pale gray-blue of the wintry sky; for in Heston there had been the earliest signs of frost. Nearer to the town, the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke; perhaps, after all, more a loss of the fragrance of grass and herbage than any positive taste or smell. Quick they were whirled over long, straight, hopeless streets of regularly-built houses, all small and of brick. Here and there a great oblong many-windowed factory stood up, like a hen among her chickens, puffing out black 'unparliamentary' smoke, and sufficiently accounting for the cloud which Margaret had taken to foretell rain. As they drove through the larger and wider streets, from the station to the hotel, they had to stop constantly; great loaded lorries blocked up the not over-wide thoroughfares. Margaret had now and then been into the city in her drives with her aunt. But there the heavy lumbering vehicles seemed various in their purposes and intent; here every van, every waggon and truck, bore cotton, either in the raw shape in bags, or the woven shape in bales of calico. People thronged the footpaths, most of them well-dressed as regarded the material, but with a slovenly looseness which struck Margaret as different from the shabby, threadbare smartness of a similar class in London.

'Where is our hotel, papa?'

'Close to the end of this street, I believe. Shall we have lunch before or after we have looked at the houses we marked in the Milton Times?'

'Oh, let us get our work done first.'

'Very well. Then I will only see if there is any note or letter for me from Mr. Thornton, who said he would let me know anything he might hear about these houses, and then we will set off. We will keep the cab; it will be safer than losing ourselves, and being too late for the train this afternoon.'

There were no letters awaiting him. They set out on their house-hunting. Thirty pounds a-year was all they could afford to give, but in Hampshire they could have met with a roomy house and pleasant garden for the money. Here, even the necessary accommodation of two sitting-rooms and four bed-rooms seemed unattainable. They went through their list, rejecting each as they visited it. Then they looked at each other in dismay.

'We must go back to the second, I think. That one,—in Crampton, don't they call the suburb? There were three sitting-rooms; don't you remember how we laughed at the number compared with the three bed-rooms? But I have planned it all. The front room down-stairs is to be your study and our dining-room (poor papa!), for, you know, we settled mamma is to have as cheerful a sitting-room as we can get; and that front room up-stairs, with the atrocious blue and pink paper and heavy cornice, had really a pretty view over the plain, with a great bend of river, or canal, or whatever it is, down below. Then I could have the little bed-room behind, in that projection at the head of the first flight of stairs—over the kitchen, you know—and you and mamma the room behind the drawing-room, and that closet in the roof will make you a splendid dressing-room.'

'But the wallpapers. What awful taste! And the overloading such a house with colour and such heavy cornices!'

'Never mind, papa! Surely, you can charm the landlord into re-papering one or two of the rooms—the drawing-room and your bed-room—for mamma will come most in contact with them; and your book-shelves will hide a great deal of that gaudy pattern in the dining-room.'

Margaret hoped so too, though she said nothing.

**Glossary**

Suburbs – outside the main streets of a city

Cornice – a decoration between the wall and ceiling

Gaudy – in bad taste

Q1. Read lines 1-12. List four things the writer tells the reader about the town of Milton [4]

Q2. Read through lines 11-18. How does the writer use language to make the stranger seem to be frightening figure? You could include the writer’s choice of:

* Words and phrases
* Language features and techniques
* Sentence forms [8]

Q3. You now need to think about the whole of the extract.

How has the writer structured to the text to make the reader understand and sympathise with Margaret’s situation?

You could write about:

* What the writer chooses to focus on in what order
* How the writer changes the focus on the extract
* Any other structural features you notice [8]

Q4. Focus your answer on the second half of the source, from line 20 to the end.

A student, having read this section of the text said: “In the second part of the extract, the writer does much more to make the reader interested in Margaret as a character.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

* Write about your own impression of the character
* Evaluate how the writer has created that impression
* Support your opinions with reference to the text **[20 ]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**