



# Hard Times

*Charles Dickens*

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**Hard Times** Charles Dickens

**'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else.'**

Coketown is dominated by the figure of Mr Thomas Gradgrind, school owner and model of Utilitarian success. Feeding both his pupils and his family with facts, he bans fancy and wonder from young minds. As a consequence his young daughter Louisa marries the loveless businessman and “bully of humility” Mr Bounderby, and his son Tom rebels to become embroiled in gambling and robbery. And, as their fortunes cross with those of free-spirited circus girl Sissy Jupe and victimized weaver Stephen Blackpool, Gradgrind is eventually forced to recognize the value of the human heart in an age of materialism and machinery.

This edition of *Hard Times* is based on the text of the first volume publication of 1854. Kate Flint’s introduction sheds light on the frequently overlooked character interplay in Dickens’s great critique of Victorian industrial society.

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