



Life in the Iron-Mills (Classics You Should Know) **(Volume 7)**

Rebecca Harding Davis

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Before Women Had Rights, They Worked - Regardless.

Life in the Iron Mills is a short story (or novella) written by Rebecca Harding Davis in 1861, set in the factory world of the nineteenth century. It is one of the earliest American realist works, and is an important text for those who study labor and women's issues. It was immediately recognized as an innovative work, and introduced American readers to "the bleak lives of industrial workers in the mills and factories of the nation."

Reviews: Life in the Iron Mills was initially published in The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 0007, Issue 42 in April 1861. After being published anonymously, both Emily Dickinson and Nathaniel Hawthorne praised the work. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward was also greatly influenced by Davis's Life in the Iron Mills and in 1868 published in The Atlantic Monthly "The Tenth of January," based on the 1860 fire at the Pemberton Mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

About the Author: Rebecca Harding Davis (June 24, 1831–September 29, 1910; born Rebecca Blaine Harding) was considered one of the nation's first social historians and pioneering literary artists. Throughout her lifetime, Harding Davis sought to effect social change for blacks, women, Native Americans, immigrants, and the working class, by intentionally writing about the plight of these marginalized groups in the 19th century. Throughout her long career, Davis challenged traditional subjects and older styles of writing. Her family lived briefly in Big Springs, Alabama, before moving in 1837 to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia), on the Ohio River. Its iron mills and immigrant populations inspired the setting of Life in the Iron Mills.

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