

when, owing to the talent of the writer, she is so led captive as to "adore" the villain of the book. Mary Jones, the servant, reads the same book as her young mistress, and straightway becomes dissatisfied with her lot; the maid-of-all-work next door reads it, and honest John, who has been "courting" her, is no longer favorably received; he is dowdy and vulgar beside some of her favorite characters in print.

This is not true of all novels; there are many which are not only harmless, but instructive, but even those should be dealt out very sparingly to the young during that period of their lives which should be almost entirely devoted to the acquiring of useful knowledge. Those that I allude to are of the sensational kind, chiefly such as appear in cheap magazines or daily papers; where all the incidents are of the most improbable and exciting nature, quite sufficient to disturb the rest of any impressionable girl, thus slowly and surely injuring her physical health, even if her morals do not suffer.

"Why is it so?" I ask as a heading to my paper; why is there such a widespread delicacy among our growing girls, and though no doctor, I unhesitatingly reply, it is because of the artificial lives our young people are leading; they are brought up too much on the high-pressure system, and wither under it. To some there may be a charm in the self-possessed young lady of six or eight who enters a room with all the grace of a ball-room belle, and expects to be "introduced" to gentlemen in all due form, but to me it is a pitiable sight. Where is the true child-grace, which, though not quite so artistic, is far more natural, and far more attractive? Gone, gone; she has never been

allowed to show it, poor little soul, since her chubby feet were able to take a secure hold of Mother Earth, but she has been trained, and trained, till there is no child left, but a little old woman put in her place. And what will be the wonder if this precocious present-day child, who never knew the delights of a good romp, lest she should spoil her "pretty dress," never ran a race or trundled a hoop, because her high heeled boots would not permit—what wonder I say if, at an age when her mother was still gentle, quiet, unassuming, carrying around everywhere with her that wondrous and delightful half-shy, half-womanly look of a true, modest, simple-minded girl, she should emerge like a gaudy butterfly from that burlesque of the present day—the nursery—take her place in society with the confidence of a matron of many years' standing, and coolly usurp all the rights and privileges of the mistress of the house. And this, too, when "delicate health" has prevented study (except novels and dress), and when Miss May, precocious as she is in other things, is entirely ignorant of much that would be necessary before joining even a junior class in a moderate school.

Our mothers and grandmothers may not have cut such a stylish appearance as their daughters and grand-daughters do; the education they actually received may have been more circumscribed than what the others pretend to receive, but as in spiritual things "a tree is known by its fruits," so in secular things; and I ask all sensible people if the simpler education, simpler life, simpler habits, simpler food of the past generation has not borne better fruit than what is now ripening under the forcing system of *educational greenhouses*, and ultra fashionable homes.