

"Can I have that paper now?" asked Sophia.

"No," snapped Mrs. May, "I have hardly begun it. Get on with your jingles."

From the above little episode of one evening the reader may gather somewhat of the manner in which Sophia May was being trained. It need not be enlarged upon. Her parents were making that most reprehensible and fatal mistake of rearing her to be above her station; *above them*. Such mistakes were not so common in those days, for what I am writing of took place many years ago; but, as the world knows, they are springing into mad fashion now. No training for the working classes can be more pernicious, or is likely to bring forth more disastrous fruits. In Sophia May's case—and hers is a true history—the error was added to by her being allowed the run of those wretched weekly romances. Sophia's parents had married late in life, and were decent, hard-working people; and if they had had the good sense to make their child hard-working too, they would have given her comfort and content for her portion. Mrs. May had been an inferior servant in a family of distinction, had picked up some exalted ideas, and the publications she had addicted herself to reading did not tend to sober them. Undoubtedly the child was a pretty, fairy-looking little thing; and a fancied resemblance to one of the aristocratic daughters in the family in which Mrs. May had served, first put ridiculous notions for Sophia into her brain. The father was a more sensible man, but he was so ardently attached to this only child that he too readily fell into the snare, and upon that point was now as extravagant as his wife. For their station they were in easy circumstances. The man's wages sufficed for their wants, in the humble way they were accustomed to live; Mrs. May had saved money, and Miss Foxaby was ever ready to produce funds to be spent on her pretty niece Sophia. She furnished not only funds, but clothes. All the very smart things Sophia flourished in came from her: cast-off relics of the family she served. Strange that the father and mother could not see the incongruity of what they were doing! The child, with her flounces and furbelows, her music and dancing, her pernicious romance-reading, and her fostered vanity; and they, with their household drudgery, living amidst their ket-