

vulgar atmosphere of a kitchen would kill her. Her residence in France had not tended to improve the tone of her mind and heart, however it may have helped her French. She had been to one of the cheap seminaries there: twenty pounds a year, paid quarterly in advance, included everything, from the first day of January to the thirty-first of December. Shrewd Miss Esther Jenkins might have spoken out her opinion of them, had she gone to pass a week in one, as to their eligibility for a girl who was to be "a lady."

Sophia May sat at the first-floor window, feeling very miserable, longing for excitement, vowing that she would not long put up with this, and sullenly glancing over the "bête" newspaper. After the beauties of Eugene Sue's novels, which the school had procured en cachette, English literature was tame, even that of a sensational weekly paper. Suddenly she threw it down with a gesture of impatience; and, dashing open the window, looked from it up the street, wondering how much longer her father and aunt would be.

They were not in sight. Not a soul was in it, save one; on a Sunday it was always particularly empty. This one, who was a foppishly-dressed, though not ungentlemanly-looking young man, was coming down it with a quick step. He halted at the door beneath, and knocked; a thundering knock. Sophia, who had drawn back, peeped out again, and saw a somewhat simple countenance, a moustache that would have been fair had there been enough of it to be seen, light blue eyes, and an eye-glass stuck in one of them.

She would not have answered the door for the world; so poor Mrs. May, who was in the attic with her gown off, had to throw a shawl over her black petticoat and hasten down; but not before a second and third knock had resounded through the house. She dropped a courtesy when she saw who it was.

"Oh, here's somebody at last! I thought you and May were asleep," was the gentleman's salutation.

"I hope you will be so good as to excuse it, sir. May is gone out, and I was up at the top, a cleaning of myself."

"Have you seen my cigar-case?" demanded the gentleman entering the front office on the ground-floor. "I must have left it here last night."