

The Sorrows of a Baby.

Baby (loquitor).

The other day when I was in that detestable place, the drawing-room, I heard a man say that babies could not see properly, did not think, did not know one person from another, and would as soon eat one thing as another, as they had no sense of taste. That man must either be so old that he has forgotten his own babyhood, or he never was a baby. I thought him extremely ugly, so perhaps he never was, as all the babies of my acquaintance are beautiful. I am myself considered to be very handsome.

We do not think! I assure you I do very little else, except when I am talking or sleeping.

No doubt, he would say that babies don't talk. Well, you ask any mother or nurse you know, and they will tell you. I often talk to my nurse, and she always talks to me. She often says she would rather talk to me than anyone else she knows; she thinks me a very interesting person.

She goes out every day, and if it is fine she takes me with her. When she does not I have a fearful time, for one of my aunts (I have a great number of them) drags me out of bed, smothers me with a shawl, and takes me to the drawing room; then I am passed round to an admiring crowd, just for all the world as though I were afternoon tea. Of course I get sick of it, any modest-minded fellow would. I defy anyone to listen to the insane remarks of a drawing-room crowd on the subject of an only son and not lose his temper, unless he is a conceited ape; and even then he could hardly enjoy such remarks as these:—

"What dear little handy pandies. What a ducky little nose. Oh! he's making a face, has he got the wind?" (I think that last remark distinctly offensive.) Then they wave me up and down till I feel seasick, and yell to them to stop. Then one of them sits me on her knee bolt upright, jogs me up and down, and thumps me on the back at the same time. They think I am better then because I don't yell. I really can't yell or I would, but when you are in danger of having all your ribs smashed with thumps, and concussion of the brain from the jolts, the only thing to do is to hold on tight, and wait for nurse to come to the rescue.

Say I don't know one person from another! I do though, and I just tell Nurse all they have been doing, and she holds me quite still and only says a word or two occasionally, just to show that she knows what I have been enduring, such as—

"Did they then, my sweetheart?" (She always calls me sweetheart.)

"Well it is a shame!"

"The wretches! I wish someone would serve them the same; and see how they would like it."

I wish so, too, especially the waving, heavy,

swell sort of motion, followed by thumping and jolting.

Then there is another thing they do in the drawing-room, they discuss what I eat, and how much and how often. It seems to me scarcely hospitable, but I would not mind that, only one or other of the visitors generally suggests a change of diet, just because I don't like the heavy sea motion. They have not got so far as changing it yet, but a baby I know told me his mother tried all the foods the drawing-room people suggested. The result is that he has had ten different kinds in six months; his looks remind me of the thin cat whose picture nurse and I see on the walls sometimes when we go out, and he says he has gastritis. I don't quite know what that is, but it has not a comfortable sound. My nurse said the last time she saw him, "That boy will go to his long home if they play many more tricks with his food." If I were him I would go now, for he does not seem to be enjoying himself here. They can't change my food while Nurse is here, for she would not allow it, but I hear she is going away. What they will do then I don't know.

(Two months later.)

Nurse has gone, and I am fading away. I always gained in weight about five or six ounces every week; now I am losing, all because they have done it. They have changed my food, and have given me some awful stuff. It does not suit me, then they give me some stuff they call medicine. I never had any while nurse was here; I remember they used to talk about it to her, and she said she would as soon give me arsenic. I don't know what arsenic is, but I wish they would give me some, for the other stuff always gives me a pain inside.

Then there is another thing—they have altered my clothes. They have put about twenty tight things round my waist and nothing round my neck and arms, and the wind blows down my back, and I think I've got rheumatism in my arms. They have put some ugly things on my feet, and I can hardly kick. Now before, I was just comfortably warm all over and not tight anywhere, and I could move my feet as much as I liked. I remember Nurse said that binders and boots were the creations of the Evil One; I wish I could see her now, I would tell her a lot of things about those same binders and boots and the draught down my back.

I have a "nanna" now instead of Nurse. She carries me out every day in a cloak that is fastened round the neck and nowhere else. It is a terrible weight, and hurts me. I wear a silly thing on the back of my head which is not comfortable to rest on, for it has bumps and pricks everywhere; then I wear a cobweb over my face, which I believe they call a veil. I don't know what use it is; it has no taste, I try it most days but it does not improve. Then the nanna carries me on my back, so that I have to stare at the sky. I shut my eyes, but it is no good, the sun still shines through my eyelids.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)