

view of the past—and we must now go on and try and make good our opinion, that it is sweeter “to muse upon the days gone-bye,” as Lamb has said, than it would be really “to act past seasons o’er, and be again a child.”

And, at the outset, we would exhort all those who speak in glowing language, and with doleful voice of the merry days gone by, to consider whether they are not misled in their fancies by their drawing for themselves a *purely imaginative picture* of childhood's years. We rather think that they do not compare their manhood or youth with their own actual childhood, but their present position and prospects, which may not be the brightest, with a *general idea* of a *happy* childhood. But it would be difficult, we believe, to find on terra firma any living, walking, concrete specimen of young, rational life, who enjoys one half of the Eden-like and enviable happiness of which they prate so volubly. Let them to the nursing, for a week, of one whose *les dents mâchelières* (grinders) are just beginning to force their way from out their fleshy envelope, or let them reflect upon the feelings of a child through all its courses of castor-oil prescriptions and head-washings and dominie discipline, and all the checks imposed on its spontaneous movements by foolish governesses and ignorant mammas, and we have little doubt that the secret utterance of their hearts would be: “From all these tribulations of the flesh, we thank thee, good Lord, that thou hast delivered us.” Who can believe that that little pulpy infant which can hardly be kept from crying with all a tender nurse's care, and which is constantly being bandaged up, to its great annoyance, and fed from so many suspicious looking bottles, is happier than the mother who bends over it so fondly, and watches its every little movement with such exquisite delight that she must be always smiling and talking any amount of nonsense to it and about it—thinking it, of course, the most wonderful baby that was ever born. It lies passive on her lap hardly conscious of its own existence, yet she is sure it knows her, and nods to it, and coos, and smiles, and enjoys its recognition—though, of course, it no more knows her than it knows a “hawk from a hand-saw.” Or, by and by, when it begins to coo and laugh for itself, she is sure to hear it say *pa* quite distinctly, though what it said sounded no more like *pa* than popery. Who, we ask, is the happier—the child or the mother?

But, perhaps, you say, it is not fair to take a two months' babe