'Has Madame left her room yet?' he asked of the waiter.

'Madame? the lady has left Paris, sir; they went by the 8.30 express.'

Lord Nayve did not answer. A glimmer of light pierced his love-sick brain. Gradually it grew stronger, and his lordship understood!

He knew those jewels!

FORTUNATE BABIES.

IS it supposable that the modern baby ever stops for a moment to consider the immeasurably more favourable conditions that surround it than those with which the infant of half a century ago or even less were hedged about? If it does not, it certainly ought to. In all the centuries that have elapsed since the birth of the first infant within sight of the Garden of Eden, there never has been a period when babies were treated with such care and attention as in this latter quarter of the nineteenth century. All the resources of ingenuity are taxed in devising means for their comfort, well-being, and amusement. Nothing is too handsome or too expensive to be lavished upon these household pets. No care is too great to bestow upon them—they are the autocrats of the home circle. Everything must be subordinated to their pleasure or well-being, and woe be to him or to her who fails to show a proper spirit of subserviency to the royal mite, whose will, no matter how feebly or vaguely expressed, is law.

Time was when the baby was relegated to a very inferior position—when he was required to take a back seat, as it were. He or she, as the case might be, was regarded as a sort of necessary nuisance, on whose account or for whose behoof it was not incumbent that any adult should for a moment discommode himself. For ages a popular superstition had been fostered that the infant was under the deepest obligation to the authors of its being for their condescension in bringing it, all unsought and unasked, into this world of weariness and suffering. That obligation must be repaid by the greatest self-sacrifice on the part of the luckless infant, and was never supposed to cease this side the grave. The declaration 'I am your parent' was assumed to carry with it all the force of a divine decree, calling upon the child to humbly prostrate itself before the being who had seen fit, purposely or otherwise, to call it into existence.

But within the last generation a faint glimmering of the truth appears to have penetrated the self-sufficient ignorance of the average parent, and a belief has become widespread that the obligation between parent and child is exactly opposite to the idea that has held sway so many ages. Instead of the infant being overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude to the author of its being for having been, as it were, pitchforked into a state of existence where it was doomed to a lifetime of suffering, disappointment and anguish, and according to orthodox belief, in 999 cases out of a possible 1000, to subsequent endless suffering in a literal hell of fire and brimstone, without having been consulted in the slightest degree, it has at last dawned upon the comprehension of sensible parents that the burden of obligation ought in simple justice to be reversed. Instead of the offspring devoting a lifetime to hypocritical expressions of gratitude for existence in a world which could not well be more uncomfortable than it is for the bulk of mankind, it is now conceded that it is those who are responsible for the mundane existence of that offspring who ought rather to be in a constant attitude of apology for the results of their own actions, and who ought by every means in their power to lighten the burden which they have deliberately imposed upon the spirits which they have summoned to endure a period of unspeakable woe on this earth and to take chances of endless misery in the world to come.

It is this just reversal of sentiment and the adoption of a common-sense view of the relation of parents and children that lies at the foundation of the present exalted station occupied by the infant in the average civilised household—and by the use of the term civilised it is meant to emphasize the fact that even in the most advanced communities there are households which are as deeply sunk in barbarism as the most degraded specimens of humanity in the dark continent. But the infant which makes its advent into the civilised household certainly has reason to thank the kindly fates that have delayed its appearance on the world's stage until the present era. What would have been its fate fifty years ago or less?

Instead of having a nurse to care for it, or instead of receiving the constant attention of members of the family, it would have been crowded to one side and left largely to its own devices. Instead of the handsome rattan or ornamental wood rocker or cradle it had a clumsy sort of ark, made of rough lumber, with a great, ugly wooden hood over one end, and mounted on low rockers, in which it was roughly rolled to and fro until syncope set in and there was a period of something called sleep, but which in reality more closely resembled the effects of a temporary paralysis of the brain.

To keep the hapless infant quiet while awake a stick was perhaps fastened at the foot of the cradle, so as to make a sort of spring-pole, and from the end over the baby's face dangled a piece of salt pork or some other delectable and eminently suitable infantile nourishment, fastened to the pole with a stout string. If the youthful gormandizer, after many ineffectual attempts, finally succeeded in catching hold of the tempting morsel and cramming it bodily into its mouth and down its throat, then the utility of the spring-pole came into play. The infantile boa-constrictor of course choked over the great junk of meat, and, loosing the cord or the stick from his hands in his energetic convulsions, the spring-pole at once resumed its normal position, yanking the morsel from the gullet of the little gormandizer, and thus putting an end to the choking process. If the youngster were of a determined character and persisted in maintaining its hold, so much the worse for it, especially if the springpole were possessed of less than the usual elasticity, and showed a disposition to regain its normal position regardless of obstacles. If the infant were incontinently dragged from the crib and cast sprawling upon the floor, so much the worse for it again. The pole and the meat were not injured at all events.

When this diversion palled upon the youthful imagination the infant was blocked up in the cradle, and its fingers being well smeared with treacle or 'West Injy,' it was given a handful of small feathers to play with. Here was resource for many an hour, picking the feathers from one hand only to find them adhering to the other, and so on until exhaustion induced sleep.

When these failed, and the infant still persisted in 'declaring itself' to the discomfort of all around, recourse was had to that old-fashioned remedy euphoniously designated as a 'sugar-teat.' This consists of a small quantity of brown sugar tied up in a rag and placed in the infant's mouth. On this it was privileged to exercise all its powers of suction, the result being usually to calm the most fractious child unless indeed it were suffering from some actual pain.

When the infant of fifty years ago was taken out for an airing, does anyone suppose that his majesty was enthroned in one of those poems in upholstery and wickerwork that are now to be found in the great baby carriage establishments all over the land? Far from it. Not for him were the elastic springs, the satin cushions, the silken bows, the dainty sunshades adjustable to every angle, that are now lavished upon the cherubs that deign to rule in our households. Not for him even were the cheapest combinations of wheels, springs, woodwork and enamelled cloth which are within the reach of the humblest parents.

Instead he was in good luck if he were the owner by hereditary descent of a clumsy two-wheeled cart, without springs or cushions, into which he was dumped unceremoniously and bumped over the stones and clods at the imminent risk of his tender limbs and fragile bones. Instead of a patent adjustable sunshade, made of silk and fringed and embroidered in gorgeous shape, a hideous sun bonnet, about seventeen sizes too large, was wrapped about the infant's head, and thus attired he was dismissed with scant ceremony to take his chances with the calves and geese and other farmyard occupants.

When the luckless youngster, by the advent of a companion in misery, was forced to abandon his coffin-like hooded cradle, was he given one of those handsome works of art in polished brass that adorn the nursery of to-day? By no manner of means. A 'trundle-bed' made of rough boards, with a tick filled with straw and covered with patchwork quilts of the log-cabin, sunrise, hit-or-miss, or no pattern at all, was the luxurious couch upon which he reposed his aching limbs, this trundle-bed, by the way, usually accommodating anywhere from two to half a dozen of the smaller members of the family. There was only one thing that could ever be said in its favour. When any of the superfluous humanity got crowded overboard it had not far to fall to the floor, and no damage could be inflicted beyond a bruise or two.

Contrast the toys and playthings of the babe or child of the last generation with those of which there is such a superfluity for the enjoyment of a modern infant. A doll made of rags, a broomstick, a box of rough blocks, did duty for an entire family in those times. But the baby-jumpers, the perambulators, the adjustable high chairs, the thousand and one things now made for the use or pleasure of the infant, all testify to the high estimation in which that individual is held and the prominent place that has by common consent been accorded him in every day life.

Then compare the clothes of the average infant of fifty years ago with those of to-day. Can anything be more hideous than the garments in which some of us were swathed in those years long gone past? Just glance at the publications of that period and study the awful results of the handiwork of the average sempstress. Contrast them with the delicate, artistically made garments of to-day; compare the entire treatment of the infant of the last generation with the one of this; compare even the religious beliefs in regard to the little cherubs; contrast the cold-blooded atrocity of the so-called faith that 'paved hell with infants' skulls' with the present warm trust in the surpassing love of our heavenly Father for these best messengers of that love—and surely any sensible person must concede that the infant of 1891 has infinite cause for congratulation that he was not born in those olden times when children were looked upon as vessels of wrath, to be hammered into shape without regard to their rights or the infinite obligation owing them by their parents.

THE STORY OF BUDDHA.

BY ALFRED DEAKIN.

SARNATH was a city situated upon the banks of the Ganges, where Buddha, some 500 years before Christ, first proclaimed to the people a gospel which was the outcome of his meditations upon the miseries of life. The spot in the deer park from which he spoke is still marked by a great Dagoba or Stupa, 128 feet high and nearly 300 feet in circumference, built about a thousand years ago. The river has changed its course, the city has disappeared, and only the memorial remains, shaped like an immense beehive, the lower part of stone partly stripped and the upper of brick falling to decay. Once ranking among the most holy places, it attracted Buddhist pilgrims from far beyond the bounds of India, though rarely, if ever, visited by them to-day. For all that, it is not entirely neglected. Any spot once sanctified to any faith in India is certain to retain a reputation, even after the creed which created it has passed away. Consequently, although the Dagoba stands on a cultivated plain, amidst fragments of its own carving, and capitals which once adorned other structures, and where an ancient city is only suggested by a few shapeless mounds, it is not alone. Beside it is a walled garden to which pious Brahmins conducted crowds resort at certain seasons; just beyond it is one of their temples; adjoining is the tomb of a Mohammedan saint, which attracts devout believers; a little further is a brick tower, erected by their forefathers three or four centuries back, and in the distance, half hidden by the trees, are several small Jain chapels. Around us crops of barley and sugar cane stretch to an indigo factory, and then away to clumps of trees and fields intermingled. Even in its loneliness and decay the Dagoba is by far the most imposing feature of the scene, and may, without undue violence, be taken to typify the present position of the faith to which it testifies, since, though now unrecognised and unrevered, its message has been appropriated, in a mutilated form and under other names, by sects to which it has imparted much of their influence and prestige.

Owing to the poetic gifts of Sir Edwin Arnold one version of the life of Buddha has attained a world-wide popularity in all English-speaking countries. Fascinating as the story is, it requires to be regarded as poetry and not as history. There is no contemporary or early biography of Buddha extant which can be taken as trustworty (indeed, there are no biographies or histories of any kind in the early literature of India), and our knowledge of the facts of his life is derived from traditions, in which the profusion of supernatural interventions and meaningless miracles make it evident that they are the work of non-critical minds in a much later age. Buddha wrote nothing himself, and what was written about him, strange to say, does not affect to be inspired. The earliest canon was not written till probably two or three centuries after his death, the general judgment being that he died about 400 B.C., and that the first MS. date to about 100 B.C. The inscriptions of Asoka are considerably earlier; of the highest importance in their indication of doctrine, but throwing no light upon the life of the Master. Seeing that the sentence in which Steevens sums up our knowledge of our greatest national poet is generally received as true, when he wrote that 'all that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare is that he was born at Stratford-on-Avon, married and had children there, went to London, where he commenced acting, and wrote poems and plays, returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried,' we need express no surprise if we have but little more acquaintance with the details of the life of a religious teacher who lived in Asia 2000 years before. Having Shakespeare's works intact, the question as to his education and experiences becomes less urgent; the man can in large measure be known from them. The difficulty as to Buddha is that we are left in doubt not only as to his life, but in a lesser degree as to his exact teaching.

It appears clear that Gautama, as he is properly called, was the son of a rich aristocratic landowner in Oudh, owning a territory nearly as large as Yorkshire, who, though belonging to the soldier caste, neglected military exercises and gave himself up to contemplation; that he had a wife, and at least one son, whom he left to enter upon a life of self-mortification under the Brahmans; that he discarded their cruel penances, and arriving independently at what he felt was a clear vision of the true way of life, preached and practised what he preached indefatigably for more than forty years. M. Senart would resolve him into a solar myth, but his individuality, like that of Homer, promises to survive the attack, and on these cardinal points, at all events, appears to be reasonably settled. The careful inquiries of Sir Monier Williams point to such a conclusion, with the additional declaration that 'intense individuality, fervid earnestness and severe simplicity of character, combined with singular beauty of countenance, calm dignity of bearing, and, above all, almost superhuman persuasiveness of speech, were conspicuous in the great teacher.' High as this commendation is, it lacks the essential element which established his authority, and distinguished his career. It was an all-pervading pity, an infinite tenderness, and boundless compassion, which winged the words of Gautama and made him a sovereign of souls. The Bishop of Colombo, now preparing a work upon the Singalese records of his life, dwells upon the fact that there is no authentic record of any acts of his which rise to the level of these sentiments, but it may safely be taken for granted that his conquest of men's minds and hearts was achieved by example as well as precept, and that he effected his conversions not by mere eloquence or verbal dexterity, but by the proof of the sincerity of his sympathy in daily sacrifices and labours. These may be unrecorded, but not on that account the less credible, since they belong to

> That best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love.

It is not necessary to the reputation of a Gautama to conceal his indebtedness to his time and people. The sacrifice he made in leaving his home was common, marking, indeed, an essential stage of every Brahman's progress. He was content to allow himself to be surpassed in penances by the ascetics with whom he first associated, and to adopt as he found it a general basis of belief in metempsychosis, as the material upon which to embroider his own theory. India is in some senses a miniature of the world, and in its religious history embraces just the same controversies as have agitated the schools of Amsterdam, the colleges of Rome, and the lecture rooms of German universities. Excessive credulity has been counterbalanced by outbursts of aggressive scepticism and polytheism has found itself face to face with atheism in more than one struggle. The result of the meditations of Gautama led him to take the side of the doubters, and so far as doctrine went he was a positivist, or agnostic, knowing no personal God, and banishing all except human agencies from the realm of his philosophy. He had as great a dislike to metaphysics as Comte or Henry Lewes. He accepted the universe as a reality without further inquiry, admitted that it was in a constant condition of evolution and dissolution alternately, and faced the familiar problem of Brahmanism, how to escape from the chain of conscious existences, in an even sadder spirit than his teachers. It is possible, he taught, to avoid the hells and win the heavens, for the spaces which intervened between death and rebirth, by means of virtuous living; but this after all was only a temporary avoidance of temptation, and his chief discovery was of a new means by which the cycle of lives might be finally broken, so that the soul, avoiding all other reincarnations, could leap at once to permanent and absolute rest. This rest was either entirely unconscious, or almost so, and contained nothing which could satisfy the desire for immortality in a European breast. Practically, too, there was no rebirth of the same soul, since its previous existences were always blotted from memory, and only recurred at last just before its final absorption. A temporary heaven or a temporary hell were all that he offered to the individual, with ultimate loss of personality as a final goal, to be attained, without divine help or spiritual sympathy, by a self conquest comprising an uprooting of every desire. His method was as uncompromisingly drastic as that of the Stoics, taught with a sweetness akin to that of Epictetus, and a sadness such as long afterwards possessed the imperial sage, Marcus Aurelius.