

5/11/1889

THE DAWN CLUB.

THE fortnightly social and literary meetings held by the club have been very successful, and have resulted in a great deal of enjoyment and useful interchange of ideas. The meeting usually begins in an atmosphere of slight formality and restraint, but as the reading of essays proceeds, and discussion follows, interrogations, replies, comments and laughter become general and the meetings are so lively and amusing that the disappearance of gas-light at ten o'clock is generally the first intimation of the flight of time.

The subjects discussed at the last four meetings were,—Sir Alf. Stephen's Divorce Act, Tennyson's Idylls of The King, Ambition, and Temperance. One member usually prepares the main essay on the topic, and three or four others get up the subject with less elaboration, and it is amusing to find how diametrically opposed the written opinions often are.

Subsequent good-humoured discussion generally discovers a common-sense mean, and all members agree that the practice of expressing and exchanging ideas at these Club meetings is of great use in the formation or correction of opinion.

The meetings are held every alternate Monday, the next being due on the 4th. Nov.

GIVE BABY A DRINK.

BY ALICE MONTCLAIR.

THE other night I was on a late train going out of Sydney, and in front of me sat a lady with her nurse and child. The latter was a remarkably pretty and healthy looking child of about fourteen months. Soon after the train started, the child began to show signs of uneasiness, and soon, in spite of all the efforts of mother and nurse to quiet it, it began a series of twistings and contortions that would have done justice to a Japanese juggler, accompanying them by shrieks that testified to the strength of its lungs. There is an inborn horror of a crying baby implanted in every human breast, and the passengers soon wearied of this amateur and unsolicited musical performance. Nurse dandled and trotted, and held Baby to the car windows and doors, but Nature as seen from a rapidly moving car at night did not seem to have a quieting effect. A hectic flush

rose to the mother's cheek, when a quiet, sensible-looking, motherly woman arose from the other end of the car, brought a cup of water, and said, "Perhaps the baby wants a drink." It was just what it did want, and in five minutes it fell asleep in nurse's arms, much to the relief of the other occupants of the car.

Many a baby is drugged with paregoric and soothing syrups when all that it needs, or wants, is a drop of water. It is always a safe thing to try a child with a teaspoonful of water when it is restless or evinces a desire to nurse frequently. A child who cannot ask for it often suffers torments for a drop of water. Especially in hot weather is this true. I have heard many a mother say that she never thought of giving her baby a drink, and yet, from the very nature of a baby's food, it is more apt to require water than we are. Milk induces thirst, as anyone who has tried a milk diet knows.

THE BABY SHOW.

THE baby show is over and its conclusion is regretted by no lover of children. No doubt the mothers who entered their infants in the competitive list, being inexperienced, had no power to foresee the discomfort they were to endure and the dangers to which their babies were to be exposed. For some injury could hardly fail to be done to the poor little children who suffered the intense exhausting heat of the crowded hall, and who were afterwards carried home late at night through the comparatively cold air. We had the misfortune to be there one evening and to be forced round the hall packed amongst a concrete mass of people; every now and then the blare of a cornet roused some little mite trying to sleep and the other poor darlings forcibly kept awake were covered with perspiration. Some of them looked utterly exhausted and absolutely unable to hold up their heads though the mothers did their best to keep the infants happy, and looking well and attractive.

Some of the children were undoubtedly very fine, some had beautiful features, but we doubt if any of the spectators gained any real pleasure or satisfaction from the show and the only thing to be learned from it was the knowledge of the amount of annoyance people will undergo for the sake of winning a round sum of money.

We could not but feel indignation that the proprietors provided no better accommodation for the mothers and their children. Though making a huge profit out of the exposure of these women and children, no comfort of any kind was provided for them during the four hours of the exhibition. On the bare floor a common hard chair was placed and this with the ticket overhead and the wooden bars like a loose horse-box surrounding each, constituted the sole furniture.

We trust it will be long before such another show is held in Sydney.