

CLEVER CHILDREN.

An exceptionally sharp and intelligent child is acceptable to most teachers, who feel that they have in it material which, if properly handled, cannot fail to do them justice. They know very well, therefore, that it is worth their while to devote a great deal of care and attention to it, while, on the other hand, they are perfectly assured that a dull child will not, apparently at any rate, repay the labour which may be bestowed upon it. This being so it is, perhaps, natural that many teachers are led to neglect dull scholars to the profit of bright ones. At the same time it is certain that those teachers who do this fail to appreciate the importance and responsibility of their office, and are guilty of manifest injustice. Moreover, though it is true that dull children suffer when they are neglected, it is by no means sure that the majority of bright children repay, permanently, the extraordinary time and attention which are bestowed upon them. It is a significant fact that a large number of brilliant boys develop into the reverse of brilliant men, while many are injured in health, if they do not positively break down. The reason of this is that they are pressed beyond their powers by teachers who are anxious to establish reputations, and who, in their desire to make their pet scholars shine, render the latter's existence a joyless one. Nor is the fault all the teacher's, upon the shoulders of certain parents themselves resting a good deal of blame on account of the mischief that is being wrought. These parents second the efforts of the injudicious teachers by keeping their children grinding at the mill when they ought to be indulging in those exercises and recreations which, while strengthening their physical nature, would also do no little good to their minds. Such injudicious persons can see the



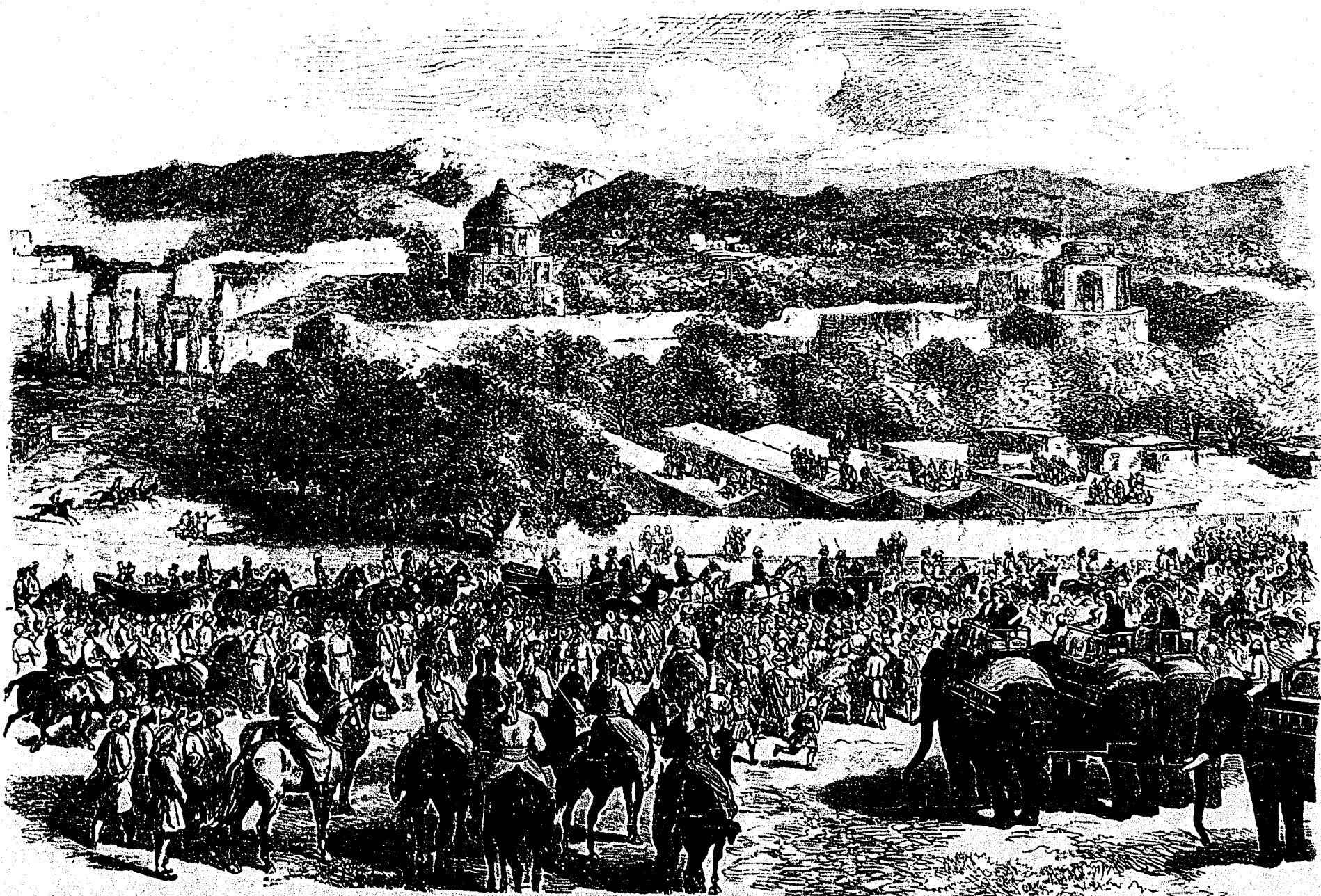
THE WARY OLD FISHERMAN, AND THE LOOSE FISH.

"I have caught some queer fish in my time, but I am afraid that my hon. friend....

is too loose a fish for me ever to catch."—(Vide Sir John A MacDonald's speech of Feb. 29.)

cheeks of their children paling, and their bearing continually displaying weariness and lassitude, but, in the hope of causing the unhappy youngsters to win an empty honour, they pause not. Perhaps, the honour is won; the children are flattered; and the teachers are advertised. But at what cost is all this done? The parents have the mortification of seeing the children, after they have reached a certain point, come to a sudden stand-still, while slower travellers pass them and push onward, and of learning that a great deal of what the children have been crammed with is positively useless. Moreover, the children are, in not a few cases, rendered incapable of original thought, their receptive organs being fostered at the expense of more useful ones. Many, no doubt, rise superior to the depressing influence to which they are subjected, but even of these a large proportion abandon their studies upon the first opportunity, and even look back with disgust upon their days, and regard with aversion all that pertains to learning. It would, then, be well if parents and teachers treated children as children, remembering that it is unwise in the extreme to place severe strains upon minds before they have become matured.

Now, most teachers teach in order that they may live. It is, therefore, natural that they should avail themselves of any opportunity to advertise their merits. In the competitive examinations for children which have become so common of late years they see a means of advertising themselves; and so long as the same bears the stamp of public approval they will readily have recourse to it. Perhaps if people would cease to believe that the teacher, whose pet pupils shine most brilliantly at these competitive examinations, is the best teacher, the cramming system would fall somewhat into disrepute.



INDIA :—AN EXCURSION OF THE PRINCE OF WALES IN THE ENVIRONS OF BENARES.