

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 true 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 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 influences 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 school 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. But so long as many persons irrationally conclude that one or two brilliant show scholars indicate that all those who are under a teacher's care must be exceptionally well treated, it is useless to look for a very much better state of things than now exists. It is time, therefore, that people took a more reasonable view of this matter that they have hitherto done. It should be borne in mind that schools, the one or two exhibition members of which are constantly distinguishing themselves, the world being carefully appraised of the fact, are frequently very indifferent through the causes which we have already indicated, so far as the bulk of the scholars are concerned. In a general way, the best schools for a child of ordinary capacity are those in which the pupils are not expected to engage in a national rivalry, nor to develop extraordinary powers, but are made to do their duty, are taught to realise the end and aim of learning, are instructed how to apply the knowledge which they receive—this is seldom done in regard to those who are simply "crammed"—and are spurred on when necessary, due regard meanwhile being paid to their pleasures and physical education. It cannot be too well remembered that a wise teacher—who is neither vain nor desirous of advertising himself—will rather hold back an unduly precocious child than urge it forward, for he remembers that early and unnatural growth in nine cases out of ten involves early decay, if not something worse.

It is a satisfactory sign that many parents are beginning to see the danger and folly of forcing the immature mind. There is, therefore, reason to hope that those academies in which the brilliant scholars are forced while the dull ones are neglected, will gradually fall into disrepute. Meanwhile, teachers will do

well to recognise the healthy change which is coming over public opinion, and act accordingly. It will be their own fault if the present race of them some day wake up and find that their places have been taken by educators of a more approved and useful order than themselves.—*Scholastic Advertiser.*

*Nicknames.*—Every one who has reached the meridian of life without such an appendage must surely congratulate him or herself on having escaped the burthen of a nickname. We say burthen advisedly, for it is surely little else, when a shrivelled and elderly spinster is universally called "baby," or a stout and florid matron is found to answer to the equally incongruous appellation of "Fairy." Probably long use has dulled the victim's feeling; still, even so, it must, one would think, occasionally strike them how truly absurd such infantine names must sound to a stranger, who, seeing them for the first time in the evening of their days, can find no trace of the early charms that made the graceful endearment appropriate. We have mentioned "baby" and "Fairy" as being in some sort representative nicknames common to the experience of most of our readers; but everyone's acquaintance will at once supply a host of others—of "Kittens" who have long since become demure cats; of "Trots" who have seen many a weary year pass since the name could have been appropriate; and of a hundred other instances too common to require remark. As applied to women these nicknames lose their point and application from being given for some infantile grace that can at its best be but transitory; while in the case of men, they generally owe their origin to some nursery trick or schoolboy escapade which might well be suffered to sink into oblivion. Feminine nicknames, we may observe, are, as a rule, almost invariably complimentary; while masculine ones are almost as invariably the reverse. But the complimentary appellation, so pretty and so appropriate at sweet seventeen, does but call attention to the changes wrought by the scythe of ruthless Time between that blissful age and five-and-forty; while certainly the uncouth cognomens usually bestowed on men hardly sound dignified when addressed to them by their old companions in their children's hearing. And is it not often the case that, when questioned by his boys and girls as to the origin of his nickname, the father does not particularly care to recall the circumstance which saddled him with "the incubus"? Such being the case, is it not wonderful that parents should not steadfastly set their faces against nicknames for their children? A very little firmness would convert nurse's "Missy," and "Pussy," and "Baby," into Clara, Edith, and Edward. But the firmness is not forthcoming, and the children grow up almost without knowing the sound of their own names; for if Edward (by the strong protest which a boy does occasionally make against an infantile appellation as injurious to his dignity) succeed in ridding himself of the name of Baby, he is tolerably certain to be called Ned or some other equally objectionable abbreviation. There seems to be an impression—indeed we have more than once heard it gravely argued—that it sounds "cold" and harsh to call a child simply by its Christian name, and nicknames are used as terms of endearment. This might be very well if the use of the pet name could be by any means confined to the immediate relations of the child; but this can never be the case. Friends and even the nearest acquaintances grow to know the children only by the names they are habitually called, so that at last, for purposes of identification, it is not impossible to read in an announcement of a marriage in the *Times*—John Jones, Esq., to Edith Mary (Dot); and William Brown, Esq., to Catherine Matilda (Trotts), daughter of G. Green, Esq. Is not this too absurd? Nevertheless, it is of constant occurrence. It seems to us utterly incomprehensible why Trotts, which we should imagine all must agree to be an ugly cognomen, should be considered more affectionate or endearing than Catherine. Besides, to take a graver view, why should the Christian name—the name by which the child is in holy baptism enrolled among the young soldiers of the Cross—be habitually and systematically ignored? The habit of abbreviating names, though not open to the same absurdities as that of nicknames, is also both ugly and ridiculous. "Oh, life is not long enough always to call the child Henrietta!" says a young mother in extenuation of her inveterate habit of calling her Etta. Then why give the child a long name? Why not christen her Jane or Emma, or something else that will economise such precious time? Of course, we are not speaking seriously—the busiest among us will hardly do much more work in the twenty-four hours because we call our children Ned for Edward, Winny for