

4th Dec 1896

MR. HOMBURG, M.P., AND THE
DESTITUTE CASES.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I could almost wish that I were an M.P. to be privileged to say nasty things with impunity about Mr. Homburg's sons, if he happens to have any, not for my own pleasure, but for the good of Mr. H., who, when he felt the lash tickle, might come to think other people may have feelings. Like Dr. Campbell, I have a son who attended at the Destitute Asylum, but who is so devoid of a sense of "fun" that he looked upon the cases with grave anxiety, and was pleased only at the gratitude of the patients. But then he is so sober-sided that he does not laugh even at the writhings of an epileptic, and I question if a death-rattle would raise a smile. But some day he may get into the House, when, doubtless, he will be better able to see where the "fun" comes in.

I am, Sir, &c.,

THOS. D. SMEATON.

THE MEDICAL STUDENTS IN REPLY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—Mr. Homburg on Friday last publicly in the Assembly laid a charge against the students of the Adelaide Medical School. We the undersigned, fourth-year students, who have had to do the work in connection with the lying-in department of the Destitute, so far as students are called upon to do it, during the past year, deny his statement from beginning to end, and with equal publicity challenge him to the proof. We assert that we have never experienced such indecent and foolish levity in the presence of human suffering, and trust for the sake of our common humanity that no medical student ever has. Mr. Homburg's accusations have never even been whispered in our hearing, and it is with feelings of indignation and disgust that we learn that any public man is capable of using his privileged position to so malign our characters and defame us to our fellow-citizens. We await the evidence that he has at his command, trusting that no delay will take place in its production.

We are, Sir, &c.,

B. SMEATON.

A. J. CAMPBELL.

J. L. T. ISBISTER.

FREDK. J. CHAPPLE.

H. S. NEWLAND.

A. W. CAMPBELL.

The University, December 2.

Advertiser

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MEDICAL STUDENTS AND MR. HOMBURG.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—On the discussion in Parliament of the item Destitute Asylum the "Hansard," in the condensed account of proceedings in committee, reports me to have said that one of the "medical students" had made an autopsy of a woman who had died in the institution. What I said was that one of the "house surgeons" had done so. Further on the same report makes me say that I had been told the house surgeons and a number of University students were in the habit of going to enjoy the fun at the confinements of unfortunate women at the Destitute Asylum, &c. This is partly incorrect, because I stated "that we (I was referring to some of the members of the Hospital Commission) had heard that when the house-surgeons went to the Destitute Asylum some of the University students went with them and enjoyed the fun." I addressed these and my other remarks to the Treasurer, who promised last May to make an enquiry. I asked him on Friday had this enquiry been made. This question I had a perfect right to address to the Treasurer, who, with myself and some other members in the House, heard that the students had made unseemly remarks at confinements at the Destitute Asylum. The Treasurer substantially denied the misconduct, and now I am challenged to prove what I have heard, and what the Treasurer says was not true. I am quite willing to prove that we (that is to say, some of the Hospital Commission) heard of the students' unseemly remarks, but it is too unreasonable to ask me to prove every statement which I hear, and as to which I may consider it necessary to make enquiries.—I am, &c.,

R. HOMBURG.

Advertiser

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THE ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY
MUSICAL EXAMS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I have a grievance, for in vulgar parlance I consider I have been “got at.” In common with some 500 others more or less, a fee was paid for examination in the practice of music. Many of the candidates are young ladies of known musical ability, in several instances having stood the brunt of public criticism, and have been prepared at great expense for this ordeal. It did come as a great surprise to me on opening *The Advertiser* on Monday morning to see the enormous number of *second-class* passes. Has the standard this year been raised? I may say at once that I do not impugn the integrity of the examiner, Professor Ives, but I do most strongly protest against the miserable instrument provided by the authorities for the exhibition of this accomplishment. Forsooth, a piano! On questioning my daughter as to her success or otherwise after her visit to the University she complained of the wretched piano she had to play on. 'Tis true there was a grand piano in the room, but it was religiously closed. Considering the large number of yearly entries for these exams., the large income accruing from the same, and the importance attached to the University certificates, I maintain that the instruments provided should be of the very best. Fancy expecting a young girl of nervous temperament to appear to advantage under the following conditions:—She enters a strange building with cloistered walls, is taken in charge by a duenna and ushered into the august presence of the robed professor and motioned to a seat at what she soon finds out is an apology for a piano. I say is it any wonder that her nerves fail her, and that it is with fear and trembling (on her part) that the examination proceeds, or that “shakes” are observable in places. You might as well expect one of the girls in our State schools to work a delicate buttonhole with a packing-needle as to expect a candidate to appear to advantage. What would be thought of asking one of the students in surgery to give a demonstration in amputation by removing a man's leg, at the same time presenting him with a blunt bread-knife and a crosscut saw with which to perform the operation. Absurd! Then, further, it is manifestly unfair to the musical teachers to find their painstaking efforts thus nullified; efforts extending over a considerable period in order to prepare their pupils for this “hall mark” of proficiency. I have not ventured to mention the matter of organ-playing, but *en passant* it does seem funny to expect a pupil on the pedal organ, with all its accompanying stops, couplers, &c., to interpret the music of the great masters in a fitting manner on a miserable little American organ. I do hope that this protest will have the effect of bettering the conditions of things at the University, and that next year none of the instruments will be

SECOND CLASS.

December 2, 1895.