

Advertiser

2nd Dec 1895

MEDICAL STUDENTS—A CHALLENGE TO MR. HOMBURG.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—During the debate on the Estimates on Friday last Mr. Homburg made a statement with respect to the conduct of medical students now attached to the Medical School which cannot possibly be allowed to pass unchallenged. The charges he brings against these young men are of so inhuman and debased a nature that an enquiry should at once be set on foot and the whole thing brought to light. I cannot think Mr. Homburg would make the following statement from sheer malice, but I express my belief that he is once more the victim of an imposition. Mr. Homburg's words are—"He was told that some of the House Surgeons from the Adelaide Hospital and a number of University students were in the habit of going down to enjoy the fun at the confinement of unfortunate women in the Destitute Asylum. Even the midwife had complained that some University students had gone down to the institution and made rude remarks whilst poor women were in agony, and even now these boys were taken down to see women confined." I am interested directly in the truth or falsehood of these words. I have two sons reached manhood who have just completed their fourth year's studies and have done a considerable amount of work connected with the Lying-in Department. I therefore publicly challenge Mr. Homburg, the member for Gumeracha, to prove in your columns, or publicly in his place in the House of Assembly, the atrocious allegations he makes. I have a personal knowledge of the majority of the students who during the last year or two have done the work referred to, and I assert that their character for humanity of feeling, anxiety while in attendance upon such cases, and their attention afterwards are beyond all doubt. It must be remembered that the number of medical students who each year are called upon to attend maternity cases is small, and any charge such as that made by Mr. Homburg is levelled straight at a few. This charge is so cruel in its nature, and so destructive to the individual characters of these young men, that I hold Mr. Homburg is bound, by every quality by which a man can claim to be a gentleman, to justify his statement, and to make it clear, the when and the where the circumstances arose that he refers to, and through what channel he obtained the information. As a member of Parliament he is no more privileged to make himself the medium of spreading malicious allegations than any person outside the walls of the Assembly, although no criminal action can be laid against him for slander.

I am, Sir, &c.,

ALLAN CAMPBELL.

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TO THE EDITOR.

Sir--As the Hon. Medical Officer in charge of the Midwifery Department of the Hospital (which includes the supervision of such attendance at the Destitute Asylum), my attention has been drawn to the remarks of Mr. Homburg in the Assembly on Friday last. I was simply astounded when I read his speech. Although I was certain that there could be no foundation for so serious an accusation against the House Surgeon of the Hospital and the medical students, I felt it my duty to immediately wait upon Mr. Lindsay, the Chairman of the Destitute Board, to enquire whether he had any knowledge of such misconduct as represented by the hon. gentleman. I am glad to be able to record his emphatic denial of the truth of Mr. Homburg's charges. While conveying this information, I may state that other inaccuracies and misstatements appear in the same speech, notwithstanding Mr. Homburg's assertion that he was not in the habit of making statements in the House which he did not believe to be true. Referring to the poor woman who died in her confinement in the institution, and on whom an inquest was held, the post-mortem was not made by a medical student, as was suggested, in order apparently to discredit the medical opinion as to the cause of death; nor was the midwife in attendance freed from blame as he would have us believe. The Jury, who had the opportunity of listening to the evidence, added a rider censuring her for not sending for assistance before. I regret that Mr. Homburg should thus have disproved his own statement of infallibility, and in this case also should have omitted to make certain of his facts before giving publicity to such serious charges as those contained in his speech.

I am, Sir, &c.,

J. A. G. HAMILTON, M.B.

Register, 2nd Dec 1896

A MINING COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY.

At the present juncture, when well-educated and thoroughly trained mining managers are at a high premium, the public who are interested in mineral investments will appreciate the new practice endorsed at the last meeting of the Senate of the University in passing the regulations submitted by the Council for the establishment of what is virtually a mining course in connection with the curriculum for the degree of Bachelor of Science. All students of the University who wish to follow up scientific work, either with practical or with theoretical aims in view, will in future be encouraged to specialize in particular grooves right through their courses, the subjects being divided into groups which, in each of the three years' studies, will correspond with one another. In group B we find that the student, during his second year, will study assaying and practical chemistry together with physics and applied mathematics, and during his third year metallurgy and more advanced assaying, along with higher physics. Finally,