

## THE PORT ARTHUR COMMANDANT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MERCURY.

SIR,—I am charged by your correspondent "Jus" as one actuated by either envious or hostile motives, by reason of my suggesting the impropriety of Mr. Boyd's appointment, as commandant of Port Arthur, if he is the same person who some years since was pronounced by a Board and other official means of investigation to be unfit to hold the position of Superintendent of the Queen's Asylum. I shall not imitate the bad example of "Jus" by any attempt to direct public attention from the real question at issue, by insinuating base motives, or by impeaching the honesty and integrity of those who may think proper to defend the appointment of Mr. H. A. Boyd. From what I have heard, I believe the appointee to be a very good and worthy man, a credit to himself, and an excellent example as a son and brother. But with his private character or relations the public have nothing to do, although they may have influenced the Executive who are supposed to act in the name of the public. I am accused of having "suggested falsehood." On what basis is this charge grounded? Where is the "suggestio falsi" to be detected? Ah! upon reflection I can detect its foundation. The fact is I appear to have suppressed, although not willingly or knowingly, that knowledge which the letter of "Jus" has coerced me to acquire. Mr. Boyd, it would appear from the representations of "Jus," failed as Superintendent of the Queen's Asylum, through the faults and vices of others, not by reason of his own unfitness. He had a difficult task to accomplish—the reformation of an institution said to be thoroughly disorganized, and he did not succeed for the good and sufficient cause, that he was perfection and all the members of the ancient *régime* incorrigible. I pass over the silly and spiteful malignity of the remarks of "Jus" when attempting to extenuate the follies of young authority over chronic obedience—the new master over the old servants, and to hold his client guiltless, against the testimony of the witnesses he himself summoned for his defence—and in defiance of the judgments of the members of the two tribunals to which the disputes between himself and his subordinate officers were submitted.

A committee was appointed on the 6th October, 1863, by the Board of Management, to investigate into the general conduct, &c., &c.

The report was transmitted to the Colonial Secretary

The report was transmitted to the Colonial Secretary 10th December, 1863. There will be found in the following paragraphs:—

“ Mr. Boyd complains of Mrs. Bourne.—Report contra.—5th. That, in reference to the complaint of the Superintendent against Mrs. Bourne for neglect of duty connected with the removal of the gratings from the Boys' Lavatory, the committee feel it their duty to report to the Board, that the weight of evidence is strongly opposed to the statements made and reiterated by the Superintendent.

“ He complains of Second Schoolmaster.—Report contra.—4th. That as regards the complaint of the Superintendent against the second schoolmaster, the committee is of opinion that that officer was guilty of no official neglect, nor was he responsible for the absence of the boys; but as it is essential that such absence from the Institution should be reported, it considers the order since issued by the superintendent a judicious one.

“ He denounces Head and Second Schoolmasters.—Report contra.—On the other hand, the Head and Second Schoolmaster complained of a great want of courtesy towards them in the general conduct of the Superintendent, impairing, in their opinion, the discipline of the Institution and their authority over the boys, and, as the Head Schoolmaster expresses it, preventing him performing his duties as he would wish. The committee would here bring under the notice of the Board a written communication

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from the Superintendent addressed to its Chairman, complaining of a gross insult, which, he alleges, he received at the hands of the Head Schoolmaster, but to which that officer, on enquiry of him by the committee, gave the most direct and explicit denial. The contradiction involved in the respective statements of Mr. Boyd and Mr. Latham precludes the committee from offering any opinion as to whom untruthfulness is to be imputed; but they would draw the attention of the Board to former statements made by the Superintendent at variance with the evidence of other officers of the Establishment, and beg to record their opinion, that this occurrence alone sufficiently manifests the impossibility of these officers again efficiently or harmoniously performing any duties requiring their joint co-operation.

“ His want of courtesy.—The Matron expresses herself satisfied with the general demeanour of the Superintendent towards her, but the Senior School-

herself satisfied with the general demeanour of the Superintendent towards her ; but the Senior School-mistress complains of the want of courtesy evinced towards her,—preventing her, as she states, bringing herself into personal communication with him whenever she could avoid it. In reference to the infant school, the Superintendent expresses his general satisfaction with the management of, and the conduct of the several officers towards, the infants. The Matron, however, complains bitterly of the conduct of the Superintendent in charging her with peculation and mismanagement, and refusing to bring the matter under the notice of the Board. Some of the subordinate officers, viz., the gardener, the assistant clerk, and the beadle, also complain of the harsh manner in which the Superintendent conveys his instructions to them ; but nothing has transpired in this branch of the enquiry of sufficient importance to make it necessary for the committee to bring it under the notice of the Board.

“ Unanimous judgment of committee.—After due consideration of all matters and circumstances which have been brought under its review during the course of this investigation, the committee have arrived at the conclusion that the Superintendent has shown, during his tenure of office a great want of the necessary qualifications requisite for the ensuring of the good and efficient management and control of the numerous officers necessarily attached to such an institution, requiring in its head great command of temper, and the exercise of tact and discretion, to enable him to secure a zealous co-operation of his subordinates.

“ J. FORSTER, Chairman.”

This investigation was held in 1863. There was another the year following by a Board composed of Charles Meredith, E. J. Manley, Thos. T. Watt. The Superintendent, Mr. Boyd, had brought various charges against the same officers, not one of which he brought any reliable evidence to sustain. Against Mrs. Bourne five or six specific charges were made, but all were disproved on the clearest testimony. The judgment of the Board was expressed thus :—  
“ The Board have, therefore, under the circumstances as detailed, and on the merits of the case, come to the conclusion that Mrs Bourne must stand acquitted of the charges brought against her ; and that, consequently, the recommendation of the Superintendent for her removal from her appointment as Matron has not been justified by the evidence adduced during the enquiry.”

There was a complaint of Mrs. Horan's in the following terms :—

“ Mrs. Horan complains that on August 11th

lowing terms :—

“ Mrs. Horan further complains that, on frequently bringing these matters under the notice of the Superintendent, that gentleman has generally replied to her in a hasty and offensive manner ; and that he had declined to listen to her suggestions for the proper management of the one hundred and fifty-six children placed under her charge.”

But *as per contra*. There was a charge of theft against Mrs. Hogan by the Superintendent. The charge is given in the words of the Report, and how it was disposed of may be gathered from the subjoined extract :—“ During the course of enquiry, Mr. Boyd preferred a complaint against Mrs. Horan for having allowed two half bags of ration potatoes to be concealed in a cupboard under the kitchen stairs, where they were discovered by himself on the 15th of April last. He also charged her with having allowed a can of milk to remain over night unused ; and also with having discovered on the 19th April, in a cupboard, one pound of butter more than should have remained on hand. Into these charges the Board instituted a most careful and searching enquiry, and the evidence adduced went incontestably to show that Mrs. Horan's defence completely exonerated her from any improper conduct in the matter : they are, consequently, of opinion that Mr. Boyd was too hasty in making charges against her which he was quite unable to substantiate, and which must, in their opinion, be considered as wholly groundless and vexatious. In justice to Mrs. Horan the Board annex to the Report several testimonials which she has presented ; viz.,—from the Roman Catholic Bishop, the Rev. T. J. Ewing, Dr. Benson, and Mr. A. B. Jones. Mrs. Horan drew the attention of the Board to the large number of servants who had been discharged or who had left the institution since Mr. Boyd's appointment as Superintendent, contrasting that number (28) with the number (13) who had left during the two years preceding ; and complained that excellent servants had been discharged by the Superintendent in direct opposition to her wish and recommendation. On this point the opinion of the Board is, that the Superintendent, who is a single man, cannot have an opportunity of observing the work of the several female domestics with sufficient minuteness to enable him to decide definitely on the competency or otherwise of the servants ; and they therefore recommend that no female servant should be dismissed by him without placing the opinion of the Matron, as well as his own, before the Colonial Secretary.”

But Mr. Boyd was vexed with the Ladies' Com-

But Mr. Boyd was vexed with the Ladies' Committee. How does the Board report?

"In conclusion, the Board beg to add that they quite dissent from the views expressed by Mr. Boyd in his letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 13th May, 1864, as regards the interference of the Ladies' Committee, recognising as they do the great assistance derived from the report of that body; and they desire to express their opinion that the visits of the Ladies' Committee, being calculated to afford much advantage to the institution, should be courted rather than be undervalued by the Superintendent."

I now leave the public to judge between me and "Jus" as to which is justly liable to the charge of having suggested untruth. Let me warn "Jus" that such grave principles as are involved in this appointment are not to be "argued out of countenance" by flippant and unworthy imputations. The public care nothing about either "Old Tasmanian" or "Jus." What concerns them is—whether we are to be governed as a public community, or a private patrimony.

**AN OLD TASMANIAN.**

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