

Register June 18<sup>th</sup> 1887.

SIR THOMAS ELDER, G.C.M.G.—The distinguished and exceptional honour conferred by Her Majesty the Queen upon Sir Thomas Elder is one that will be highly appreciated by South Australians generally. Sir Thomas has shown himself to be a colonist of the best type. He has spent money freely in promoting the work of exploration, partly, no doubt, with a view to his own profit, but chiefly from patriotic motives. In the case of the most ambitious and expensive of all the expeditions fitted out at the joint cost of himself and the late Sir W. W. Hughes, it is certain that the desire to perform a national service—to shed light upon the dark places of the Australian continent and open up to settlement regions untrodden by the foot of the white man—entirely overshadowed all idea of self-interest. Nor is it to be overlooked that in furthering by his purse and by his counsel the opening up of the interior to beneficial occupation he has played the part of a public benefactor. Happily he has in some measure reaped the reward of his liberality and enterprise, but he has had terrible reverses to contend against—reverses which would have exhausted the patience, and the means to boot, of ninety-nine men out of every hundred. His perseverance, his hopefulness, his readiness to risk capital in the development of the country have not only directly produced great results, but have operated indirectly through the inspiring and stimulating influence they have had upon others. Of his munificence in the cause of higher education it is hardly necessary to speak, for his praise is in all mouths. Where other men, even wealthy men, have given tens, he has given thousands. The credit of giving the first great impetus to the starting of the University of Adelaide rests with Sir W. W. Hughes; but the movement must have fallen stillborn had it not been for the contributions of Sir Thomas Elder to the funds. Since then he has been the princely patron of the institution, aiding bountifully in the endowment of Chairs, and showing his practical interest in its advancement. If the University ever acquires the right to grant honorary degrees, the highest distinctions it can bestow should be freely showered upon Sir Thomas's head. To enumerate his other public services and his benefactions to various deserving objects would not be an easy task. On every ground he is entitled to be the recipient



of high honours at the hands of the Sovereign and of his fellow-colonists. It is comparatively a new departure for the higher distinctions in the Order of St. Michael and St. George to be conferred for other than important political services, but if an innovation upon the practice is admissible, it surely is in such a case as that of Sir Thomas Elder. South Australians may be excused for hoping that, while this is the first it will not be the last jubilee distinction awarded to a fellow-colonist.

It is, we believe, universally felt that there will be something sadly wanting in the fitness of things if the next few days do not bring a notification that Mr. E. T. Smith, the Mayor of the city and the father of the Jubilee Exhibition, has been admitted to the order of knighthood. There are two or three others in the colony who, if the honour were a matter of popular suffrage, would be triumphantly nominated by the public voice as well worthy of it. There will be a feeling of deep disappointment in the community if the claims of one or two at least of the gentlemen referred to are not recognised at this jubilee season.

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LEARNING SCIENCE PRACTICALLY.—Since the initiation of the movement in the colony in favour of training school children to an experimental knowledge of handicrafts attention has been given at the University to the question of affording science students the opportunity of becoming practically acquainted with the facts which they have been seeking to commit to memory. The study of chemistry, electricity, physics, and almost every science cannot be carried on to any extent apart from experiments, and as a rule it is almost equally desirable that students should not only see what their instructor can do, but perform the same experiment themselves. Two classes were started at the University a few weeks ago with the object of affording the means whereby students may, by experiments of their own, familiarize themselves with the laws of physics and discoveries in chemistry. On Thursday evenings Professor Bragg conducts a class in practical physics. There are twenty pupils, who work in pairs and are left entirely alone while seeking to arrive at results. Different experiments go on at the same time in a laboratory, which is capitally fitted up, and the pupils get written instructions from the Professor as to how to use the apparatus provided. As indicating the character of the instruction, it may be mentioned that on Thursday last the experiments dealt with the laws of falling bodies, the parallelogram of forces, radiation of heat, thermometer tests, finding specific gravities, the laws of levers, friction, and elasticity. On Friday evenings Professor Rennie conducts a class in practical chemistry, the pupils of which work together and find plenty of entertainment as well as valuable instruction. The classes are open to the public on the payment of a fee of £1 for each. A term comprises ten lessons each [of two hours' duration, and the usefulness of the instruction afforded can hardly be overestimated, considering the large variety of valuable appliances with which the students become familiar. The first two or three lessons are elementary, and the study throughout is of a popular kind, and does not call for mathematics or more than a slight knowledge of the principles of algebra. The University authorities are prepared to do their best to start similar classes in other science subjects in cases where they are asked to do so by at least ten prospective students.