

Nearly twenty-one years have passed since he received that title to mark the establishment of direct telegraphic communication between Australia and the rest of the world—an enterprise in the consummation of which he performed a specially distinguished part. Ever since then, as he had done long before, he has rendered great service to this community and far beyond it by his astronomical and other scientific researches; and by long study and practice he has become the acknowledged Australasian automatic encyclopaedia upon all concerns connected with postal and telegraph communication. In these matters Australasia has shown a greater advance towards federation than in anything else, and no trifling part of the colonial concert of action respecting them must be credited to Sir Charles. In promoting this federation he has attended more intercolonial conferences than probably any other man in Australia, and this alone would have won him a knighthood long ago if he had been a politician instead of a Civil servant. Dr. E. C. Stirling, C.M.G., may also accept his new title with the consciousness that it is only a fitting reward for his arduous performance in other departments of the public service. Apart from his work in bringing under the world's notice an Australian marsupial previously unknown to natural history, and irrespective of the enthusiasm which he has displayed in connection with the recent remarkable discovery of fossil and other remains in Central Australia, Dr. Stirling has probably done more than any other man in recent years to bring the public Museum up to its present excellent condition. In the task of enriching and otherwise perfecting that valuable collection he has expended more intelligently directed energy as a mere labour of love than many possibly equally competent men would have exerted as a matter of business. The medical branch of the University he has fostered and developed with great zeal and success; he has long been one of the most prominent members of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Society; he has filled the important position of President of the State Children's Council; and during the short time in which he mingled in the sphere of political activities he was equally characterized for his ability, his affability, and his thoroughness. His journey across the continent with Lord Kintore in pursuit chiefly of his scientific enquiries must be considered not as the cause of his present distinction, but merely as an evidence of the practical earnestness which he has put into the studies which he has made his speciality.

This new list of honours indicates a broadening of the bounds within which merit is officially recognised. Both Sir Charles Todd and Dr. Stirling have been chosen for their decorations because of their scientific attainments. In the past there has been too common a tendency to regard the Parliament as the chief if not the only arena in which titular rewards should be bestowed in Australia. This year a noteworthy exception has been made. Amongst the titles now conferred the only one in any way political is that of Sir George Shenton, of

Western Australia. But though Sir George is President of the Legislative Council he has also been eleven times Mayor of the City of Perth. That alone is a unique record of which account might well be taken. Mr. Dennis O'Donovan, Parliamentary Librarian in Queensland, has been made a C.M.G., but it is his work as a *libérateur*, and not his semi-political position, which has been thus acknowledged. Neither disappointment nor surprise is likely to be occasioned by Her Majesty's omission to select leading politicians in the adjoining colonies for preferment. There is a silly superstition to the effect that the Papal gift of the Golden Rose is apt to be followed by dire misfortune to its Royal recipient; but it is a fact, due to the exceptional vicissitudes of the times, that the newer order of Knights in New South Wales and Victoria have been singularly unfortunate. Those who flourished there a few years ago have since, metaphorically speaking, been cast into the oven; and there are reasons as excellent as obvious why the distribution of further knighthoods amongst politicians in the eastern provinces should be delayed. In South Australia circumstances are different, and some people probably expected that the Speaker of our Assembly would have been offered a similar distinction to that obtained by the President of the Legislative Council in Western Australia. The explanation of the omission is simple. The second consecutive term of the present Speaker has not yet begun, and it is understood that Australian Speakers have been selected for titular dignities on the understanding expressed in the phrase—“Once Speaker always Speaker so long as your Parliamentary life shall last.” Whether Mr. Coles would feel at liberty to accept any special distinction is, of course, beside the question. In Victoria Dr. Madden's elevation to the post of Chief Justice has been rapidly succeeded by a knighthood, but the title practically goes with the position. The late Mr. Higinbotham might have had it years ago had not his strong opinions in reference to all such honours interposed an insuperable obstacle.

The rule observed in reference to the Australian appointments has been adopted to some extent in connection with those made in the old country. Merit and genuine attainment have been conspicuously rewarded in several cases. The authorities who control this titling at present cannot justly be reproached with the old plaint:—

“The pity honour should be bought with gold—
It cuts off all desert.”

Neither wealth nor meretricious reputation seems to have been taken specially into consideration this year. The recognition of so many distinguished journalists does not form a new precedent, but such a thing was unknown not so very long ago. It may be “the business of newspaper men to make reputations for less deserving persons,” but there is no reason in common sense or in common justice why their own services should not receive official notice when those of other men do. Journalists like the editor of the *Daily News*, and an artist such as John Tenniel, of *Punch*, have probably exerted as much influence upon the nation as most statesmen within it. If it were not for the Press