

The Advertiser

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A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PEABODY.

THE Queen's letter to George Peabody acknowledged his "more than princely munificence." It did not need his will to establish the same character for the late Sir Thomas Elder. In his lifetime the deceased knight was a shining example of the generous, public-spirited man of wealth. Imbued with a sense of civic duty, keenly alive to the claims of public education and suffering humanity, he gave time and ability to the service of the State, and money with a free hand to noble movements and beneficent institutions. The riches accumulated by enterprise and industry that contributed to general welfare as well as to individual gain were liberally employed in doing good. Sir Thomas Elder proved, by innumerable acts of benevolence, how deeply he realised that mere personal enjoyment is not the end of life, and that the possession of wealth carries with it social duties and responsibilities. He delighted in the unselfish luxury of giving, and in the pleasant observation of useful work performed for others by means of his unstinted bounty. The administration of a fortune in a spirit so large-hearted silences envy and detraction. Sir Thomas Elder won the gratitude of his adopted country as a public benefactor. He rendered varied services that will always keep his memory green, and make for him an honored place in South Australian history. His death evoked the warmest acknowledgments of a full and useful life. But the story was not yet complete. His will, the character of which was announced in these columns yesterday, rounds it off by revelations of a generous regard for the broadest public interests which has no parallel in the annals of this province. His gifts, indeed, are more than royal. He leaves no less than £155,000 for distribution among educational, religious, and charitable institutions, and the community so largely

benefited by this unprecedented display of liberality has more reason than ever to cherish with affection the name of Elder, the Peabody of South Australia.

To give munificently is well ; to give with a wise munificence is better. The late Sir Thomas Elder gave with a wise munificence. In death, as in life, he devotes wealth to noble uses. An old proverb declares it to be bad etiquette to look a gift horse in the mouth ; but in this case the closest scrutiny need not be feared. The will of the deceased knight may not exhaust the list of objects of unexceptionable desert. But it does disclose a catholic and impartial generosity, with a strong perception of the class of altruistic movements that have the clearest and best claims on the practical goodwill of wealthy men. Aid to education, religion, science, art—to what agencies of civic advancement and social welfare could private riches be more advantageously applied? Relief of the sick and suffering, succor to the poor and distressed—in what direction could the charity of wealth be exercised more suitably? A wise head and a feeling heart must needs have united in such a broad and liberal appropriation. The University of Adelaide is under such a load of obligation to Sir Thomas Elder as will associate his name for all succeeding time with the cause of higher education. Already he had endowed that institution with sums aggregating some £35,000 ; he bequeathes £65,000 more—a magnificent total of £100,000. There is a general legacy of £25,000, and to the Chair of Music and to the School of Medicine £20,000 each. The provisions of the will are evidence of the unabated interest of Sir Thomas Elder in important branches of educational work to the development of which he was devoted in his lifetime. He established foundations, and has left the means of completing and perfecting a splendid superstructure. It is with the deepest regret that one reflects, with Sir Thomas Elder's will before him, on the present disorganisation, if not paralysis, of the once-flourishing Medical School. To the Adelaide Hospital he has left £3,000. The violent disturbance of the natural and almost necessary relation