

Hon. John Lancelot Stirling, B.A., LL.B., M.L.C.

THE subject of this notice, second son of the late Mr. E. Stirling, was born at Strathalbyn in 1849. He received his preliminary education at St. Peter's College, Adelaide, and then, after two years spent on the Continent, he proceeded to England, where he entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1871 he took the degrees of B.A. and LL.B. He also distinguished himself as an athlete. He won the Oxford and Cambridge Hurd Race in record time, and held the amateur championship of England for hurd racing in 1870 and in 1871. Leaving the University Mr. Stirling studied for the Bar, and in 1872 was called to the Inner Temple. Contrary to expectation, he did not, however, devote himself to the law; the free, active arena in which he was cradled was more attractive to him. He returned to South Australia in 1876, and entered into pastoral pursuits. Besides holding a considerable area of country in South Australia and New South Wales, he is one of the prominent pastoralists of the Province, and has been President of the Pastoralist Association of South Australia and West Darling since its formation, besides representing the association at the federal conferences held in the various colonies. He is largely interested in a number of Adelaide financial institutions, is a Director of John Hill & Co., of the Wallara and Moonta Mining Company, the Australian Mutual Provident Society, the Mortgage Company of S. A., and of the South Australian Company. He is an ex-President and Committeeman of the Royal Agricultural Society. He has been for some years Chairman of the Strathalbyn District Council.

As befitted one of his attainments and position, the Hon. J. L. Stirling has become a politician of reputation and experience. For many years he has been recognised as a reliable legislator who possesses a clear insight and a ready gift of speech. He was elected for Mount Barker to the Legislative Assembly in 1881, and was returned at the head of the poll in 1884. He was defeated in 1887 by Dr. Cockburn; but in May 1888, at a bye-election caused by the death of Sir R. D. Ross, he was elected for the district of Gumeracha. He retired from the Lower House in 1890, but in the same year became a member of the Legislative Council for the Southern District, which he continues to represent. The Hon. J. L. Stirling is not afraid of expressing his political convictions, no matter whether they be against the popular cry. He has very substantially influenced legislation, and has sponsored several useful measures. He has naturally taken much interest in the pastoral legislation of South Australia, and his experience has enabled him to urge on Parliament for many years the necessity of liberal measures in order to preserve vitality in this important industry. He acted on the Royal Commission on pastoral matters of whose report the Bill of 1898 was founded. He is a member of committee and also steward in the South Australian Jockey Club, as well as associated with several other racing clubs. He is an ex-Master of the Hunt Club, acted as Hon. Judge for the South Australia Coursing Club, and was the founder, and for years the captain, of the Adelaide Polo Club, playing for South Australia in most of the intercolonial and other matches.

The opinions of the Hon. J. L. Stirling carry great weight in the community. His solid views, his social position, and his talents constitute him one of our most influential residents.

form of lectures on literary subjects, or in contributions to the Press, his efforts are greatly appreciated. He is a devoted Shakespearian, and his love of the world's greatest poet has borne fruit in scholarly addresses—some of which have been published by request in the old country. His controversial literary style is lucid and pungent, and his articles, letters and pamphlets on debatable topics are of great force, and give powerful effect to his side. But he is equally successful in the calm historical style, as is evidenced by his recent article on "United Australia," in the *Yale Quarterly Review* for August, 1900. The quality of his pen would have given him success in journalism had he followed that career.

But, apart from law and literature, Sir J. H. Symon's greatest achievements—and those of which he is himself most proud—have to do with Federation. He is no doubt proud, though out of Parliament for years, of having been elected sixth on the poll for representatives to the National Convention. The supremely important question of Australian Federation has attracted the thought of the best minds of each colony for many years. Before it could be brought about, problems of a very difficult nature had to be solved, and the obstacles in the way seemed insurmountable. Sir Josiah Symon, by his speeches before the election of Convention delegates, did much to clear the way and concentrate public interest. The Federal Conventions—that in Sydney in 1891, and that of 1897-8 with its three sessions held in Adelaide, Sydney, and Melbourne—have been attended by the greatest men of Australia; and with a rare combination of ability and wisdom they evolved a means which has at last brought about the desired consummation. Among the delegates from South Australia at the last Convention, Sir J. H. Symon is the acknowledged champion of the interests of the small States. His contributions to the debates have been conspicuous for earnestness and brilliance, and he has been termed the most distinguished orator in this gathering of talented speakers. One or two of his deliveries in Sydney in 1897 were especially famous, and charmed and influenced those who were privileged to hear them. When the history of the Federation movement comes to be written, Sir J. H. Symon will undoubtedly hold a pre-eminent place among those sincere men who fought for national greatness and honor. His arguments on behalf of South Australia in the negotiations were exceedingly powerful, and have carried the desired weight; but Sir Josiah at the same time looked beyond the provincial aspect in his earnestness to encompass the high aspiration. He was eager for Federation, and he sought to obtain fair play to every State which would enter it. His reputation, which was already great, has become more widely known, and delegates from other colonies have found him a doughty warrior in debate. For his services in this respect, South Australia and the whole continent owe a debt of gratitude to Sir J. H. Symon. His greatness is not that of the politician; it aspires to statesmanship, and the people of the Province are properly proud of their distinguished Queen's Counsel.

On January 1, 1901, the day of the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth, Josiah Henry Symon was raised to the dignity of a Knight Commander of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, receiving the hearty congratulations of numbers of his fellow-colonists.