

OBITUARY.

WILLIAM JOSEPH RAINBOW.

Entomologist, 1895 to 1919.

After a long and painful illness Mr. William Joseph Rainbow, Entomologist, to the Australian Museum, passed away on the 21st November, 1919, at the age of 63.

Of Mr. Rainbow's early life and his entrance into the field of Entomology a few notes will doubtless prove of interest.

Mr. Rainbow was born in Yorkshire in 1856, and as his father was a Warrant Officer in the Royal Marines he spent much of his boyhood in the naval towns. It was in these towns and also in Edinburgh that he received most of his education. In 1873 he left England with his parents for New Zealand, and on the long sea voyage out young Rainbow acted as schoolmaster to the numerous children on the emigrant ship. On arrival in New Zealand he took up newspaper work, and was for some years on the literary staff of the "Wanganui Herald," edited and owned by Mr. John Ballance who in later years was destined to become the Premier of the Colony.

It was to Mr. Ballance that Mr. Rainbow was indebted for help and encouragement in furthering his studies in Natural History, a subject in which he appears to have shown an early interest. It is doubtless to this encouragement on the part of his chief that Mr. Rainbow's eminent position in science is due.

In 1883 Mr. Rainbow arrived in Sydney from New Zealand and during the year married Arriette Dainty of New Zealand. For some years he served on the staffs of the "Daily Telegraph," "Sydney Morning Herald," "Evening News" and other prominent local journals.

Mr. Rainbow subsequently abandoned journalistic work for a position in the Government Printing Office, from which service he withdrew in 1895 to fill the post of entomologist to the Australian Museum. During his career as entomologist to this institution, Mr. Rainbow contributed many papers to science embodying the results of his entomological and arachnological researches. His papers total 71 in number, and he also published two brochures "A Guide to the Study of Australian Butterflies" and "Mosquitoes: Their Habits and Distribution." The majority of his papers are devoted to the order Arachnida, a group which has always met with little favour in the eyes of naturalists. It is by his labours on this important branch of biological science that Mr. Rainbow's name will be remembered. He was long regarded as the leading authority in Australia on this group and his death robs science of one of her ablest workers. When we realise under what great physical disabilities Mr. Rainbow laboured, we cannot but highly commend the spirit with which he was endowed, for he was at all times of a genial and sunny nature and showed a devotion to duty even when racked with suffering.