

## OBITUARY.

THOMAS WHITELEGGE, 1850-1927.

At Sydney on August 4, 1927, Thomas Whitelegge passed quietly from his circle of friends, after a life of intellectual attainment to which few have risen from such an obscure beginning. The death of this accomplished zoologist and able botanist removes one of our last links with the Australian systematists of last generation.

Whitelegge was born of humble parents at Stockport in Cheshire, England, on August 17, 1850. Soon after his birth the family was cast into destitute circumstances, and young Whitelegge received but meagre schooling, being put to work for one-half of each week at the tender age of eight years. One year later his father died and his son's miserable pittance of two shillings and sixpence per week contributed to the support of his mother, who was a bobbin winder by occupation. From this time up to the age of about fifteen, Whitelegge suffered hardships and privations which might well have seared the soul of a less spirited and resourceful being. A review of his vicissitudes will read like romance in these modern days of comparative comfort and protection; it will show the greatness of the man and the merit of his ultimate accomplishment.

From his early service in a tarpaulin factory, young Whitelegge moved to the occupation of "piecer" in a cotton mill. Later he went to learn weaving in the service of a cousin, but one day he made the grave error of putting two shuttles in the loom at one time, and the warp was broken. This act led to dismissal and the lad then gained employment in a machine shop, where he was occupied with tapping nuts and putting threads on bolts. At the age of eleven he entered Christy's Hat Manufactory at Stockport, after undergoing medical examination and being certified as a youth of fourteen years. After gaining an insight into this trade, the youth signed indentures and became bound as an apprentice to another hat manufacturer for a term of seven years. The wages were six shillings a week for the first two years of this employment, and then an increase of two shillings per week until half of the apprenticeship term was served. After that Whitelegge was to be put on journeyman's rates, but was to receive only one-third of these earnings. Just prior to this last employment he was receiving only four shillings per week, on which he and his mother subsisted during the awful days of the Lancashire cotton panic, brought about by the American Civil War. During the whole of one year the little family had no meat of their own buying, and in order to