

Obituary.

GEOFFREY WATKINS SMITH.

In the Spring of 1907 Geoffrey Smith arrived in Tasmania for the purpose of working up our very interesting freshwater crustacea. He came with a brilliant record. Though only twenty-four years of age, his work on the Rhizocephala had already established his claim to world-wide recognition in the section of natural history to which he devoted his energy. He had already been elected Fellow and tutor of New College, Oxford.

From the very outset Smith, by his unassuming geniality and the rapidity with which he dropped into the ways of Australian students, gained the good wishes of those with whom he was brought into contact. Within a few days of arrival he joined us in a rough camp-out at Adventure Bay, where he made his first acquaintance with billy-tea and black snakes. He handled and bottled up a fine specimen of the latter without any of the reserve customary with those making their first acquaintance with these reptiles.

The crustacean which he had most desire to study was our interesting mountain shrimp, *Anaspides tasmaniae*, originally described by Geo. M. Thompson, of Dunedin. Smith spent several weeks on Mt. Wellington studying the shrimp in its native home, and the work he did is incorporated in his excellent memoir on "*Anaspidacea* living and fossil" published in 1909.

Smith worked hard during the few months he was with us. The Jordan, Lake St. Clair, and the Great Lake were, perhaps, his most successful hunting grounds. His most interesting find was a small shrimp allied to *Anaspides*, which he took in quantity in one bed of weed in the Great Lake. This animal, quite new to science, has never been taken anywhere else but in that one bed of weed. A little more than two years ago, when members of the British Association were here, we made a visit to the place, and captured a few hundred specimens in this spot. Smith described his find under the name *Paranaspides lacustris*.

On his return to England, Smith published papers on

the freshwater Crustacea of Tasmania and the freshwater Crayfishes of Australia, besides a fascinating little work, "A Naturalist in Tasmania." Then his field of research was greatly expanded and developed in the line of an experimental analysis of sex. We are told in "Nature, Aug. 17" of this year, that he had already published eleven memoirs on this subject, and also of the far-reaching research he was bringing to bear upon it, when to him, as to many other fine fellows, the end came suddenly, and robbed the world of the work of a master mind. The war broke out, and Geoff. Smith was amongst the first to offer his life to his country. His worth soon gained him a captaincy in the Rifle Brigade, and we who knew him here can well imagine the whole-souled manner in which he would do his duty. On July 10 of this year, in the fighting at the Somme, after his men had successfully taken a trench from the enemy, he was killed by a shell. Thus a life of brilliant promise was extinguished in the early portion of its career.

L. RODWAY.