

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1902.

POLICY OF THE SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION.

CONTENTS:

<i>Policy of the Smithsonian Institution</i>	961
<i>The Academy of Sciences: PROFESSOR J. McKEEN CATTELL</i>	965
<i>The Annual Address of the President of the Royal Society</i>	974
<i>The Carnegie Institution</i>	978
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>Spiller on the Mind of Man: PROFESSOR JOSEPH JASTROW. Archiv für Protistenkunde: G. N. C.</i>	980
<i>Scientific Journals and Articles</i>	982
<i>Societies and Academies:—</i>	
<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science. The Geological Society of Washington: ALFRED H. BROOKS. The Biological Society of Washington: F. A. LUCAS. The Research Club of the University of Michigan: FREDERICK C. NEWCOMBE</i>	983
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>The Carnegie Institution: PROFESSOR S. E. MEZES, CHARLES H. STERNBERG, ROSWELL H. JOHNSON, PROFESSOR W. A. NOYES. The Onondaga Lake Squids: DR. JOHN M. CLARKE. The Fossil Tree Bridge in the Arizona Petrified Forest: PROFESSOR HENRY F. OSBORN.</i>	987
<i>Shorter Articles:—</i>	
<i>Mendel's Principles of Heredity and the Maturation of the Germ-cells: PROFESSOR EDMUND B. WILSON</i>	991
<i>The Enlargement of the Naples Station: PROFESSOR T. H. MORGAN</i>	993
<i>Notes on Inorganic Chemistry:—</i>	
<i>The Telluric Distribution of the Elements; The Nature of Alloys; The Training of Technical Chemists in England: J. L. H.</i>	994
<i>Current Notes on Physiography:—</i>	
<i>Northeast Labrador; Physical Geography of New York; New Map of Switzerland: PROFESSOR W. M. DAVIS</i>	995
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	996
<i>University and Educational News</i>	1000

IN our issue of November 21, we commented on certain recent proceedings of the Smithsonian Institution having an important bearing on the question of its policy. We now return to the subject, in order to review the question at issue from a more comprehensive standpoint.

The Smithsonian Institution should be regarded as a sacred trust confided to our government by a foreigner for a specific purpose. We are bound to administer this trust in accordance with the expressed will of the donor, who defined it as 'an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.' A point of fundamental importance which should not be overlooked is that the bequest was not made to second the efforts of our government to increase and diffuse knowledge, but to found an institution which should itself do so. Questions to be considered are: What are the funds available for these purposes and how are they used to increase and diffuse knowledge? We summarize from the last annual report the following