

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1902.

POLICY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

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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