

# SCIENCE

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## CONTENTS:

<i>The Smithsonian Institution</i> : .....	145
<i>Memorial Tribute to Professor Thomas H. Huxley</i> : HENRY F. OSBORN.....	147
<i>On the Classification of Museums</i> : G. BROWN GOODE.....	154
<i>The X-Rays</i> : HUGO MÜNSTERBERG.....	161
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i> :—	
<i>Professor Röntgen's Discovery</i> : Physics : W. H. Astronomy : H. J. General .....	163
<i>University and Educational News</i> .....	167
<i>Discussion and Correspondence</i> :—	
<i>The Metric System</i> : J. K. REES. <i>Improved</i> <i>Blackboard</i> : BEN. K. EMERSON.....	167
<i>Scientific Literature</i> :—	
<i>Tarr's Elementary Physical Geography</i> : I. C. RUSSELL. <i>Jackson's The Great Frozen Land</i> : ANGELO HEILPRIN. <i>Frye's Complete Geography</i> : T. W. HARRIS. <i>Hopkins' Religions of India</i> ; <i>Phillips' Teaching of the Vedas</i> : D. G. BRINTON.....	168
<i>Scientific Journals</i> :—	
<i>The American Journal of Science</i> ; <i>Astrophysical</i> <i>Journal</i> ; <i>The Physical Review</i> .....	174
<i>Societies and Academies</i> :—	
<i>Joint Commission of the Scientific Societies of</i> <i>Washington</i> : W. F. MORSELL. <i>The Philo-</i> <i>sophical Society of Washington</i> : BERNARD R. GREEN. <i>Chemical Society of Washington</i> : A. C. PEALE. <i>Boston Society of Natural History</i> : SAMUEL HENSHAW. <i>Geological Conference of</i> <i>Harvard University</i> : T. A. JAGGAR, JR. <i>Tor-</i> <i>rey Botanical Club</i> : H. H. RUSBY. <i>The Acad-</i> <i>emy of Science of St. Louis</i> : WM. TRELEASE.....	177
<i>New Books</i> .....	180

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## THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

THE annual meeting of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution was held Wednesday, January 22d, at 10 o'clock.

The Vice-President, Hon. Melville W. Fuller, Chief Justice of the United States, Postmaster General Wilson, Senator Justin S. Morrill, Senator Shelby M. Cullom, Senator George Gray, Representative Joseph Wheeler, Representative R. R. Hitt, Representative Robert Adams, Jr., Dr. A. D. White, General J. B. Henderson and Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard.

The death of Doctor Henry Coppee, President of Lehigh University, long a member of the Board, was announced and appropriate resolutions adopted.

An Executive Committee was appointed as follows: Hon. John B. Henderson, Chairman; Hon. William L. Wilson and Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard.

Secretary Langley presented his annual report, in which the chief events of importance during the past year were discussed. Allusion was made to the conferring of the Hodgkins Fund prize of \$10,000, and to the transmission of the amount of the award through the American embassy in London to Lord Rayleigh and Professor Ramsay; also to the fact that a similar prize for the same discovery has recently been given to the same persons by the Institute of France. The prize of \$1,000 was given to M. de Va-

rigny, of Paris, for the best popular treatise in accordance with the terms of the announcement, and three silver and six bronze medals awarded to the laureates out of nearly 200 contestants. The medals which have been designed by Mons. T. C. Chaplain, a member of the French Institute and the most famous medalist in the world, are being struck at the government mint in Paris and will soon be ready for distribution.

The Secretary expressed the opinion that the giving of a large prize having served its purpose in attracting the attention of the world to the Hodgkins Fund and the purposes of its founder, it would probably not be wise to offer at present additional large prizes of this kind, since these have rarely been found efficacious in stimulating discovery; and that hereafter the income should be spent directly in aid of investigations in regard to the atmosphere and its properties.

Speaking of the Hodgkins bequest, Secretary Langley dwelt upon the idea that the foresight of Mr. Hodgkins has been in one particular remarkably justified, since the experience of the last three years has shown that there is no department in the field of human thought, apart from such abstract ones as æsthetics, higher mathematics, logic and the like, which does not come under the purview of this donation; so that the restriction of the income from this \$100,000 of the bequest to the special purpose of investigations regarding atmospheric air is in reality no embarrassment or limitation of the free activities of the Institution.

Attention was also directed to the recent bequest of Mr. Robert Stanton Avery, of Washington, the value of which has been estimated at \$50,000, but which it seems probable will not prove to be nearly so large.

The present year, 1896, being the fiftieth since the foundation of the Institution, the occasion will be celebrated by the erection

of bronze tablets to the memory of the founder, James Smithson, upon his tomb in the English cemetery in Genoa, and also in the English church in the same city. A preliminary design of this tablet by Mr. William Ordway Partridge was submitted for inspection.

There will also be published a semi-centennial volume, giving an account of the origin of the Institution and summing up the results of its fifty years' activities in every department of science. This volume will be handsomely printed, in an edition sufficiently large to supply all the principal libraries of the world; and will contain portraits of the founder; the Chancellors—George M. Dallas, Millard Fillmore, Roger B. Taney, Salmon P. Chase, Morrison R. Waite and Melville W. Fuller; and those of the regents who have contributed most materially to the development and influence of the Institution, such as James A. Pierce, Alexander Dallas Bache, Louis Agassiz and George Bancroft. Chapters will be contributed by a considerable number of the most prominent scientific men and educators of the United States.

Allusion was made by the Secretary to the table at the Zoölogical Station at Naples, rented by the Institution for the benefit of investigators and students of American natural history, and to the fact that the popularity of this undertaking is so great that petitions from eight of the principal natural history societies of the country, four of them national, including together some 3,000 members, and a petition signed by 200 of the principal naturalists of the country, have been received, urging their continuance of the table for another period of three years.

The Secretary also called attention to the crowded condition of the National Museum and the necessity of new buildings, not only for the exhibition of collections, but for the storage of material now placed in temporary

sheds near the building of the Institution, which, being inflammable, are a constant menace to its safety.

The Bureau of Ethnology is continuing its important work in the study of linguistics, habits and customs of the American aborigines, and important explorations have been made during the year under the direction of Mr. McGee among the Seri and Papago Indians, of the far Southwest, and by Dr. J. Walter Fewkes in the ruins of a town near Moqui, which was destroyed by hostile Indians before the first visit of the Spaniards. The latter exploration was the first ever made of a thoroughly pre-Columbian town site, and resulted in the gathering of a collection of pottery and other objects of unequalled beauty and value.

Referring to the Zoölogical Park, Secretary Langley directed attention to the alarming reports which are coming from the Yellowstone National Park, which seem to make it certain that the herd of several hundred buffalo reported last year has been reduced to fifty or less, and indicating that it will soon be destroyed unless steps are taken for its preservation. Since the means at the disposal of the custodians of the Yellowstone National Park seem quite inadequate to protect them, the desirability is suggested of transferring most of the remnant of the herd to Washington, to be placed in the Zoölogical Park, which has amply sufficient space for all that are left.

The work of the Astro-Physical Observatory was referred to, and the researches there being carried on, which are giving us a knowledge of nearly thrice the amount of details of solar energy that were known to Sir Isaac Newton, and in a region which was left almost untouched until our own day when these researches took it up. The number of known lines in this portion of the spectrum has increased from less than twenty to over a thousand owing to the

work which has been carried on in this little observatory during the last four years. The location is a very unfortunate one, however, since the traffic of the street interferes with the proper use of the instruments, and reference was made by the Secretary to a plan for constructing a modest building for this work in some portion of the suburbs where the necessary quiet can be obtained.

The Secretary's report was accepted, as was also that of the Executive Committee.

Letters of acknowledgment were read from the Royal Institute of Great Britain for a portrait of Mr. Hodgkins sent by the Institution, and from the master of Pembroke College in Oxford, where Smithsonian received his degree in 1786, acknowledging the gift of a complete series of the publications of the Institution.

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*MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR THOMAS H. HUXLEY.\**

ALL the members of this Academy, in fact all men of science in America, are in different ways indebted to the late Professor Huxley. We should be ungrateful, indeed, especially in this section of the Academy, if we failed to join in the tributes which are being paid to him in different parts of the world.

In his memory I do not offer a formal address this evening, but, as one of his students, would present some personal reminiscences of his characteristics as a teacher, and some of the striking features of his life and work.

Huxley was born in 1825. Like Goethe, he inherited from his mother his brilliantly alert powers of thought, and from his father his courage and tenacity of purpose, a combination of qualities which especially fitted him for the period in which he was to live. There is nothing striking recorded about his boyhood as a naturalist. He preferred engineering, but was led into medicine.

\* Read before the Biological Section of the New York Academy of Sciences, November 11, 1895.