Weekly Chemawa American

VOL. 14 MARCH, 8 1912 NO. 28

Smithsonian Institute.

The Smithsonian Institute, which combines the National Museum of the United States with a comprehensive bureau of research, has become the center of scientific thought in the new world.

The great educational project had a rather small beginning. One James Smithson, a natural son of the Duke of Northumberland, died in Genoa in 1829. By his will his property was to go to his nephew, and in case the latter died without heirs, the residue was to be used to found an establishment for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge" in the United States. Six years later the nephew died childless, and thus the fortune, about $500,000, was the means of the foundation of the Smithsonian Institution.

As it now stands the building which the institution occupies is a magnificent structure almost 500 feet long. Built of red sandstone in the Romanesque style, it has nine towers, which vary in height from 75 feet to 150 feet, and is one of the finest buildings in the capital city. It is completely fitted out with chemical laboratories, geological and mineralogical collections, lecture rooms, and a library.

One of the great objects which it accomplishes is the publication of works too expensive to admit of private publication, but of inestimable value to the scientific world. Here are also printed pamphlets and reports, which are sent regularly to all important libraries and which cover all current research work.

Many of the important scientific inventions of the last half century had their beginnings or were partially worked out at the Institution. Here James Henry first utilized the principal of the telegraph and telephone. The first weather map was got out, the science of fish culture developed, and other things too numerous to mention invented and perfected in this remarkable home of science

Some of the inventions which have been made here are extremely interesting. Professor Langley, while secretary of the Institution, perfected an instrument called the bolometer, for detecting variations of heat Some of the material used in this delicate apparatus are a spider's web, a perfect little mirror the size of a pinhead, the gauze of a fly's wing, and a thread of spun glass. Although this

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