

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,

BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY,

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SIR: I have the honor to transmit to you my report upon the Klamath Indians of Southwestern Oregon, the result of long and patient study. It deals with their beliefs, legends, and traditions, their government and social life, their racial and somatic peculiarities, and, more extensively, with their language. To this the reader is introduced by numerous ethnographic "Texts," suggested or dictated by the Indians themselves, and accompanied by an interlinear translation and by "Notes," a method which I regard as the most efficient means of becoming acquainted with any language. In this report I have given prominence to the exposition of the language, because I consider language to be the most important monument of the American Indian. Archaeology and ethnography are more apt to acquaint us with *facts* concerning the aborigines, but language, when properly investigated, gives us the *ideas* that were moving the Indian's mind, not only recently but long before the historic period.

Repeated and prolonged visits to the people of the northern as well as of the southern chieftaincy have yielded sufficient material to enable me to classify the language of both united tribes as belonging to a distinct family. In their territorial seclusion from the nearer Indian tribes they show anthropologic differences considerable enough to justify us in regarding them as a separate nationality.

There is probably no language spoken in North America possessed of a nominal inflection more developed than the Klamath, although in this particular, in the phonetic elements and in the syllabic reduplication pervading all parts of speech, it shows many analogies with the Salupian