INTRODUCTION.

The present volume of the series “Mineral Resources of the United States” presents a review of the mineral industries during the calendar years 1889 and 1890. It is in continuation of the previous volume which covered the year 1888. During part of the years 1889, 1890, and 1891 the several contributors to this series were nearly all of them engaged in preparing the volume on the mineral industries for the Eleventh Census. The statistics here presented for 1889 are therefore those of the Census Office, with a few minor exceptions. These exceptions are the cases in which the mineral report for the Census Office did not consider certain industries which are usually included in the reports of this series. The statistical tables of former years have been carried forward, but the previous volumes should be consulted for all other information concerning the mineral industries prior to 1889.

The scope of the present volume has been lessened slightly in the effort to make the arduous work of complete statistics from all producers more accurate in the subjects of coal, iron ores, and other important subjects.

Units.—The different units adopted are those in common use for each mineral. Pounds are avoirdupois and tons are short tons of 2,000 pounds, unless long tons of 2,240 pounds are specified.

Imports and exports.—These are obtained from the records of the Bureau of Statistics of the Treasury Department. Recent years coincide with calendar years from January 1 to December 31, but earlier statistics of imports are for the Government fiscal year ending June 30.

Delay in publication.—It has already been shown in previous volumes that it is impossible to gather complete reports on so many subjects and publish the resultant volume without much delay, since one report can delay all the rest, and this is especially the case in proportion as the inquiries are extended to individual producers. Efforts have been made, however, to avail of the daily and technical press in giving information regarding each subject as promptly as possible.

Totals.—In preparing the statement of the total value of the mineral product, the usual commercial value has been taken. Following the rule adopted in the Census investigation, the value of a mineral is taken at that stage in its production where it first becomes a salable
article with a market value recognized in its trade. Thus, coal is valued on cars at the mine, while lead is given its value in New York City. Any valuations which might be adopted would involve inconsistencies, but this plan is best in accordance with ordinary usage.

The product indicated for 1890 is $656,604,698, an increase far beyond any previous year. The year was a period of unexampled activity in mining, particularly so in iron, silver, copper, coal, and petroleum. This total is extraordinary, but the activity continued in 1891 until checked by the feeling of insecurity following the English depression. The year 1891 will show no marked contrast to 1890.