INTRODUCTION.

This is the eighth volume of the series "Mineral Resources of the United States." The general object of the series is to show the progress made from year to year in the production of minerals. Of primary importance is the statement of the total quantity and value of every substance mined. This volume is entitled "Mineral Resources of the United States, 1891," because it contains a complete statement of the mineral products during that year. In order that such a statement may be intelligible it is accompanied by a considerable volume of secondary information concerning new discoveries of mineral deposits, new uses for these products, and improved technical processes by which minerals have been made more available, the yield increased, etc. This secondary information is not limited to the close of the statistical period under consideration. It is complete up to the latest date possible, frequently far into 1892. This is because of the impossibility of concluding a complete canvass of the product of huge industries like coal, iron ores, and building stone without a considerable delay after the close of the year reviewed.

The present volume deals with the mineral progress of the year 1891, and covers about the same range of subjects treated in the previous reports. The totals have already been published, and also the principal chapters in complete form as soon as compiled.

The sources of information have been in general the same as in previous volumes, but with a constant increase in the number of returns received direct from the producers.

The names of the contributors of the various sections appear in connection with the subjects treated.

In addition much information has been received from State geologists and other public officers, which is duly credited whenever possible. The statistics of imports and exports are published as usual from the records in the office of the Bureau of Statistics of the Treasury Department.