

INTRODUCTION.

This report is the sixth volume of the series "Mineral Resources of the United States." The object of the series is to record annually the most important facts concerning the development of the minerals found in the United States. In this report the method of treatment in previous volumes has been continued. The report opens with a summary statement as to the condition of each mineral industry at the close of the period under review—the calendar year 1888. There is no attempt in this place to show the products of separate sections of the country. The division is entirely according to the minerals themselves. At the close of this summary is a table in which the values of the various products are added so as to furnish an estimate of the relative importance of the mining industry as a whole. Following the summary each important mineral industry is discussed in a separate chapter. The statistical tables given in former reports have been extended to include 1888, but otherwise the material in each chapter is intended to show the developments in 1888 and not in previous years. It is expected that the reader will consult the corresponding chapters of the six reports which constitute the series. For this purpose an index to the six volumes is in preparation.

The methods used in collecting the information presented in the following pages, and explanations of the units employed, etc., have been given in connection with previous volumes. As usual, the names of the contributors of the several chapters are given in connection with the subjects treated.

Delay in publication.—The date of publication of a volume including so many diverse topics can never be predicted, but the comparatively late date at which this report appears was anticipated by publishing the principal totals as soon as they were determined.