

SCIENCE :

A WEEKLY RECORD OF SCIENTIFIC
PROGRESS.

JOHN MICHELS, Editor.

PUBLISHED AT
229 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.
P. O. Box 3838.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1880.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We consider it due to those subscribers who have favored us with their subscriptions, previous to the publication of our club rates, that they should have the privileges of the list. They can therefore send us subscriptions for any or all of the publications named at the reduced double rates, less \$4, the subscription price of "SCIENCE."

Since the publication of the club rates last week, we have received rates from the proprietor of *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, the terms of which are \$6 a year. The club rate with SCIENCE will be \$8.50 per annum.

THE Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, for the year 1878, has just reached us, and as but twenty days intervenes before 1881 will make its debut, the first impression on opening the volume is that it is already somewhat out of date. We believe that the cause of delay in printing this and other reports is attributable to the slow action of Congress in making the appropriations for printing, and we trust that in future the Commissioner may have facilities for publishing his report at an earlier date, as both its value and interest are much diminished by its being circulated two years after the facts recorded have transpired.

Thus, the first line of the report lamenting the existence of the financial depression, is read with impatience in these booming times. We congratulate the Commissioner on the fact that "the assault on the bulwarks of society, by ignorant, unfortunate or unprincipled persons," has not been so destructive as was anticipated. Society at least survives, notwithstanding the action of those "who would modify our present freedom of conscience, and of those who would establish a distinction of classes with a view to a permanent aristocracy, or practice some form of destructive communism." These gloomy political forebodings, which hardly appear to come within the range of Educational Statistics (in the absence of the catastrophe indicated), may now be read without

alarm, and we feel tempted to suggest the propriety of publishing official prophetic utterances, while anticipations may yet "lend enchantment to the view."

The Commissioner of Education makes a strong appeal to public opinion, that Congress may be influenced to place more adequate means at his disposal to carry out the duties of his office. "Called upon by thoughtful educators in anticipation of perils, from which it was hoped he might afford relief or safety, and in the midst of ignorance on the one hand and indifference or opposition on the other," he complains that he is not furnished with either the quarters, the assistants, or the money necessary to do the work required.

To enable the Bureau of Education to perform its national functions satisfactorily, without the co-operation of volunteer aid, which has in the past enabled it to accumulate information, the Commissioner wishes Congress to comply with six requests, which he makes in the following order: *First*, a sufficient force of competent and trained men and women; *Second*, proper quarters; *Third*, a library having everything printed on the subject of education; *Fourth*, a collection of educational appliances, the character of which is described; *Fifth*, appropriate means of receiving and collecting information in regard to educational systems, institutions and methods; *Sixth*, means to arrange all this information, publish it, or communicate it to the educators of the country.

We fear the Commissioner has somewhat weakened his case by showing his ability to present so ample a report with the means already at his command, but we trust that any substantial aid that he really stands in need of will not be withheld. The concessions he calls for appear quite reasonable and essential to his office, and his success in obtaining them will probably be controlled by his ability to prove that such is the case.

This Journal, representing one of the highest branches of education, naturally desires that a National Bureau, for collecting educational statistics, should be properly supported by the nation, so that no lack of means at the command of the Commissioner should justify an inadequate administration of the office.

We have made a few selections from this report, chiefly relating to scientific schools, and a few facts that appear of special interest. These will be found in another column.

THE EPSOM MINERAL WATER OF MISSOURI.

BY PROF. CHAS. E. WAIT.

A shallow well recently sunk within three miles of this place yields a mineral water which promises to be a valuable addition to the list of saline purgatives. A sample of this water was taken