SCIENCE:

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THE Spring Reception of the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park, New York, and the publication of the Twelfth Annual Report, remind us of the existence of this Institution, and recall its many claims for support from those interested in science, and in the intellectual progress of the people.

The additions and improvements made during the past year make only a short list on the programme, but reflect the excellent management and zeal of the officers in charge of the collections. A large portion of the collections of birds and mammals has been remounted on newly designed stands, the results obtained being most creditable to those who have carried out this improvement.

One of the new features of usefulness recently established is an Economic Department, which will contain specimens illustrating the Economic Botany of all the woods of our country, that are to be used for architectural or building purposes, or in the manufactures, each species being fully represented by specimens of the leaf, flower and fruit.

We fully appreciate the exertions made by the Trustees of this Institution to extend the usefulness of the Museum and to make it a means of teaching the laboring classes the value of scientific knowledge, and its practical bearing on many of the industrial pursuits of life. If such is, at least, one of the objects of establishing this Museum, it is difficult to understand the action of the Trustees in closing its doors on Sundays, that being the only day on which the artisan and mechanic can make a visit, without entailing a direct loss on himself and family. A petition, signed by 16,000 citizens of New York, was recently offered as a direct appeal to the Trustees to accord this privilege to the working classes, and we trust that the board of management, which has always shown a most liberal and enlightened spirit of enterprise in the conduct of this Institution, may reconsider its late decision on this subject.

The city of New York has provided a costly building for the Museum and recently appropriated $35,000 to improve the approaches. In the Report of the Trustees now before us, a direct appeal is made to the people for financial aid and support. We, therefore, believe the Trustees would confer a direct benefit on the Institution by opening its doors to the people on Sundays; the Museum would doubtless become one of the most popular Institutions in the city, and the Legislature would probably respond with no grudging hand, to provide means for the completion of the building and for its maintenance on a liberal scale.

THE announcement is made of an improved method of storing electricity, by M. Camille Faure, of Paris, the London *Times* asserting that "a box of electric energy nearly equivalent to a million feet, contained within less than a cubic foot of space, intact and potential, has been transported from France to Great Britan."

Sir William Thomson is said to have given some endorsement to the discovery, and tests and measurements are in progress at the laboratory of the Glasgow University.

The principle involved in M. Faure's discovery is understood in this country, and the possibility of its general correctness is conceded. The language employed in the announcement is rather equivocal, and the misuse of scientific terms render the exact extent of M. Faure's discovery a matter of some doubt.

We gladly welcome any progress in electical science; but as the necessity for storing electrical energy is of value only in very rare cases, the practical usefulness of M. Faure's discovery must be limited in extent.

MR. EDISON has courteously responded to a request on our part, to offer his opinion on M. Faure's discovery, and we take pleasure in placing before the readers of "SCIENCE" his reply, received since our own notes were in type.

To the Editor of "Science."

DEAR SIR: The Faure battery is an improvement on the Planté battery.

Planté was, I think, the original inventor of the battery which bears his name, invented some years ago for the purpose of storing up electricity.

Faure has simply made a Planté battery, by some means reducing its resistance, and thus reducing the percentage of loss. This is all there is in it.

Some two years ago I patented and applied a method for using the Planté battery in connection with electric lighting.

Yours truly,

THOS. A. EDISON.