

MISCELLANEOUS.

We have recently received the last published statement of the valuable series of investigations conducted by Sir J. B. Lawes at Rothamsted, England. This statement was first formulated in 1877 for the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the First Experiment Station in Germany, at Mökern. Since then it has been continued each year, and extended to embody the more recent work of the field and laboratory. From the number before us, we find that from 1847 to 1887 the published results of the work conducted during this period by Sir J. B. Lawes and his staff of assistants, number no less than one hundred and four. As most of our readers are aware, these publications embody some of the most important scientific results touching the chemistry of plant foods and their sources in the soil. Probably no experiment station has done more in the way of securing valuable and accurate scientific data, to advance the cause of scientific agriculture, than Rothamsted.

The experiments at Rothamsted began in 1834 with a simple series of pot cultures, designed to throw light upon the relation of various chemical compounds to vegetable nutrition. These rapidly led to more enlarged operations in the field, supplemented by laborious researches in the laboratory by some of the most eminent chemists and botanists of the day. There was thus developed a systematic method of enquiry, which has resulted in throwing much important light upon many obscure or imperfectly understood laws. The peculiar value of the system adopted may be fully appreciated when we state that some of the experiments have been extended continuously for thirty-seven years, and are likely to be continued into the future for an indefinite period.

Although this valuable work is conducted primarily with reference to the practical application of the results, it has led to the accumulation of a large amount of data which are of the highest value from the standpoint of pure science. Very few institutions of a similar character have been able to surpass Rothamsted in the character, extent and general usefulness of its work. That the institution has a liberal endowment and is established on a broad scientific basis, reflects the highest credit upon its founder.

Unfortunately, many of the valuable papers embodying these results are no longer to be obtained. The annual statement, therefore, serves as an important means of gaining a summary of some of the more extended investigations and as a valuable historical and bibliographical record.