

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE—SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY.

To the student in pursuit of knowledge upon any branch of science and invention there is no museum or collection of material in this country at all to compare with that so beautifully and artistically arranged in the spacious halls and galleries of the Patent office. Like the other institutions of the Federal Government, the growth of this office has increased with the development of the resources and rapid expansion of the power and population of the Republic. A glance at its history shows that such an establishment early attracted the attention of the wise and able men of the revolutionary era. Hence we find that, on the 10th of April, 1790, Congress passed an act authorizing the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Attorney-General, or any two of them, to grant patents for such new inventions and discoveries as they should deem sufficiently useful and important. This act, which originated the Patent Office was repealed, and a new act passed on the 21st of February, 1793. Under this latter act patents were confined to the citizens of the United States, and they were to be granted by the Secretary of State, subject to the revision of the Attorney-General. By the act of the 17th of April, 1800, the privilege of issuing out a patent was extended to aliens of two years' residence in the United States, and the act of July 13, 1832, only required the alien to be a resident at the time of his application for a patent, and to have declared his intention, according to law, to become a citizen. By the act of Congress of July 4, 1836, all former laws on the subject were repealed, and the patent system was re-enacted with important improvements, embodying a new organization of the office, and conferring upon it much more extensive powers than it had heretofore possessed. Under this act the establishment was organized essentially as it exists at this day, except that by subsequent acts the power of appeal was allowed from the decision of the Commission to either of the Judges of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia. The Patent Office occupied a part of the General Post Office building, which was destroyed by fire on the 15th of December, 1836. All its valuable contents were lost by this sad accident; and by the act of the 3rd of March, 1837, Congress provided for the recording anew of patents and assignments of patents recorded prior to the date of the conflagration, and for issuing new patents for those destroyed.

The Officers of the Patent Office were also directed to procure duplicates of the most interesting models destroyed, at an expense not exceeding \$100,000. The loss of the Patent Office, or rather of its contents, caused a deep sensation throughout the country, and universal regret was expressed on all hands at this untoward event. Even the ruthless Admiral Cockburn, who fired the Capitol and President's House, and other public