Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and such-like enterprises are doing much in this direction. To-day Chemistry and Physics are taught in nearly all the academies and high schools of the land; so that the larger colleges, whenever they see fit, may easily require from the candidate for admission a wider knowledge of these sciences than they themselves taught a dozen years ago. When and in what manner the present scientific movement shall culminate, no one can say; but the fact of growth is evident everywhere. This report is an attempt to catch the present aspect of affairs and fix it in a permanent record.

ON THE SOURCES OF ENERGY IN NATURE AVAILABLE TO MAN FOR THE PRODUCTION OF MECHANICAL EFFECT.*

BY SIR WILLIAM THOMSON, F. R. S.

During the fifty years' life of the British Association, the advancement of Science for which it has lived and worked so well has not been more marked in any department than in one which belongs very decidedly to the Mathematical and Physical Section—the science of Energy. The very name energy, though first used in its present sense by Dr. Thomas Young about the beginning of this century, has only come into use practically after the doctrine which defines it had, during the first half of the British Association's life, been raised from a mere formula of mathematical dynamics to the position it now holds of a principle pervading all nature and guiding the investigator in every field of science.

A little article communicated to the Royal Society of Edinburgh a short time before the commencement of the epoch of energy under the title "On the Sources Available to Man for the Production of Mechanical Effect,"† contained the following:

"Men can obtain mechanical effect for their own purposes by working mechanically themselves, and directing other animals to work for them, or by using natural heat, the gravitation of descending solid masses, the natural motions of water and air, and the heat, or galvanic currents, or other mechanical effects produced by chemical combination, but in no other way at present known. Hence the stores from which mechanical effect may be drawn by man belong to one or other of the following classes:

"I. The food of animals.

"II. Natural heat.

"III. Solid matter found in elevated positions.

"IV. The natural motions of water and air.

"V. Natural combustibles (as wood, coal, coal-gas, oils, marsh-gas, diamond, native sulphur, native metals, metoric iron.)

"VI. Artificial combustibles (as smelted or electrically-deposited metals, hydrogen, phosphorus).

"In the present communication, known facts in natural history and physical science, with reference to the sources from which these stores have derived their mechanical energies, are adduced to establish the following general conclusions:

"1. *Heat radiated from the sun* (sunlight being included in this term) *is the principal source of mechanical effect available to man.*‡ From it is derived the whole mechanical effect obtained by means of animals working, water-wheels worked by rivers, steam-engines, galvanic engines, wind-mills, and the sails of ships.

"2. The motions of the earth, moon, and sun, and their mutual attractions, constitute an important source of available mechanical effect. From them all, but chiefly no doubt from the earth's motion of rotation, is derived the mechanical effect of water-wheels driven by the tides.

"3. The other known sources of mechanical effect available to man are either terrestrial—that is, belonging to the earth, and available without the influence of any external body—or meteoric—that is, belonging to bodies deposited on the earth from external space. The terrestrial sources, including mountain quarries and mines, the heat of hot springs, and the combustion of native sulphur, perhaps also the combustion of inorganic native combustibles, are actually used; but the mechanical effect obtained from them is very inconsiderable, compared with that which is obtained from sources belonging to the two classes mentioned above. Meteoric sources, including only the heat of newly-fallen meteoric bodies, and the combustion of meteoric iron, need not be reckoned among those available to man for practical purposes."

Thus we may summarize the natural sources of energy as Tides, Food, Fuel, Wind and Rain.

Among the practical sources of energy thus exhaustively enumerated, there is only one not derived from sun-heat—that is the tides. Consider it first. I have called it *practical*, because tide mills exist, but the places where they can work usefully are very rare, and the whole amount of work actually done by them is a drop to the ocean of work done by other motors. A tide of two meters' rise and fall, if we imagine it utilized to the utmost by means of ideal water wheels doing, with perfect economy, the whole work of filling and emptying a dock basin in infinitely short times, at the moments of high and low water, would give just one metre-ton per square metre of area. This work done four times in the twenty-four hours, amounts to 1.1620th of the work of a horse-power. Parenthetically, in explanation, I may say that the French metrical equivalent (to which in all scientific and practical measurements we are irresistibly drawn, notwithstanding a dense barrier of insular prejudice most detrimental to the islanders),—the French metrical equivalent of James Watt's "horse-power" of 550 foot-pounds per second, or 33,000 foot-pounds per minute, or nearly 2,000,000 foot-pounds per hour, is 75 metre-kilogrammes per second, or 4½ metre-tons per minute, or 270 metre-tons per hour. The French ton of 1000 kilos, used in this reckoning, is 0.984 of the British ton.

Returning to the question of utilizing tidal energy, we find a dock area of 162,000 square metres (which is little more than 400 metres square) required for 100-horse power. This, considering the vast costliness of dock construction, is obviously prohibitory of every scheme for economizing tidal energy by means of artificial dock basins, however near to the ideal perfection might be the realized tide-mill, and however convenient and non-wasteful the acumulator—whether Faure's electric accumulator, or other accumulators of energy hitherto invented, or to be invented,- -which might be used to store up the energy yielded by the tide mill during its short harvests about the times of high and low water, and to give it out when wanted at other times of six hours. There may, however, be a dozen places possible in the world where it could be advantageous to build a sea-wall across the mouth of a natural basin or estuary, and to utilize the tidal energy of filling it and emptying it by means of sluices and water-wheels. But if *so* much could be done, it would in many cases take only a little more to keep the water out altogether, and make fertile land of the whole basin. Thus we are led up to the interest-

* British Association, 1881.

† Read at the Royal Society of Edinburgh on February 2, 1852. (*Proceedings* of that date.)

‡ A general conclusion equivalent to this was published by Sir John Herschel in 1833. See his "Astronomy," edit. 1849, § (399.)

ing economical question, whether is 40 acres (the British *agricultural* measure for the area of 162,000 square metres) or 100 horse-power more valuable? The annual cost of 100 horse-power night and day for 365 days of the year, obtained through steam from coals, may be about ten times the rental of forty acres, at £2 or £3 per acre. But the value of land is essentially much more than its rental, and the rental of land is apt to be much more than £2 or £3 per acre in places where 100 horse-power could be taken with advantage from coal through steam. Thus the question remains unsolved, with the possibility that in one place the answer may be *one hundred horse power*, and in another *forty acres*. But, indeed, the question is hardly worth answering, considering the rarity of the cases, if they exist at all, where embankments for the utilization of tidal energy are practicable.

Turning now to sources of energy derived from sun-heat, let us take the wind first. When we look at the register of British shipping, and see 40,000 vessels, of which about 10,000 are steamers and 30,000 sailing ships, and when we think how vast an absolute amount of horse-power is developed by the engines of those steamers, and how considerable a proportion it forms of the whole horse-power taken from coal annually in the whole world at the present time, and when we consider the sailing ships of other nations, which must be reckoned in the account, and throw in the little item of windmills, we find that, even in the present days of steam ascendancy, old-fashioned wind still supplies a large part of all the energy used by man. But however much we may regret the time when Hood's young lady, visiting the fens of Lincolnshire, at Christmas, and writing to her dearest friend in London (both sixty years old if they are now alive), describes the delight of sitting in a bower and looking over the wintry plain, not desolate, because "windmills lend revolving animation to the scene," we cannot shut our eyes to the fact of a lamentable decadence of wind-power. Is this decadence permanent, or may we hope that it is only temporary? The subterranean coal stores of the world are becoming exhausted surely, and not slowly, and the price of coal is upward bound—upward bound on the whole, though no doubt it will have ups and downs in the future as it has had in the past, and as must be the case in respect to every marketable commodity. When the coal is all burned, or long before it is all burned—when there is so little of it left, and the coal mines from which that little is to be excavated are so distant and deep and hot that its price to the consumer is greatly higher than at present, it is most probable that wind-mills or wind motors in some form, will again be in the ascendant, and that wind will do man's mechanical work on land at least, in proportion comparable to its present doing of work at sea.

Even now, it is not utterly chimerical to think of wind superseding coal in some places for a very important part of its present duty—that of giving light. Indeed, now that we have dynamos and Faure's accumulator, the little want to let the thing be done is cheap windmills. A Faure cell containing 20 kilos. of lead and minium charged and employed to excite incandescent vacuum-lamps has a light-giving capacity of 60 candle hours (I have found considerably more in experiments made by myself; but I take sixty as a safe estimate). The charging may be done uninjuriously, and with good dynamical economy in any time from six to twelve hours or more. The drawing off of the charge for use may be done safely, but somewhat wastefully, in two hours, and very economically in any time of from five hours to a week, or more. Calms do not last often longer than three or four days at a time. Suppose, then, that a five-days storage capacity, suffices (there may be a little steam engine ready to set to work at any time after a four days' calm, or the user of the light may have a few candles or oil lamps in reserve and be satisfied with them when the wind fails for more than five days.) One of the 20-kilo. cells charged when the windmill works, for five or six hours at any time and left with its 60 candle-hours' capacity to be used six hours a day for five days, gives a 2-candle light Thus thirty-two such accumulator cells soused would give as much light as four burners of London 16-candle gas. The probable cost of dynamo and accumulator does not seem fatal to the plan, if the windmill could be had for something comparable with the prime cost of a steam engine capable of working at the same horse power as the wind mill when in good action. But wind mills as hitherto made are very costly machines; and it does not seem probable that without inventions not yet made, wind can be economically used to give light in any considerable class of cases, or to put energy into store for other kinds of work.

Consider, lastly, rain-power. When it is to be had in places where power is wanted for mills and factories of any kind, water-power is thoroughly appreciated. From time immemorial, water-motors have been made in large variety for utilizing rain-power in the various conditions, in which it is presented, whether in rapdidly-flowing rivers in natural waterfalls, or stored at heights in natural lakes or artificial reservoirs. Improvements and fresh inventions of machines of this class still go on; and some of the finest principles of mathematical hydrodynamics have, in the lifetime of the British Association, and, to a considerable degree with its assistance, been put in requisition for perfecting the theory of hydraulic mechanism and extending its practical applications.

A first question occurs: Are we necessarily limited to such natural sources of water-power as are supplied by rain falling on hill-country, or may we look to the collection of rain-water in tanks placed artificially at sufficient heights over flat country to supply motive power economically by driving water-wheels? To answer it: Suppose a height of 100 metres, which is very large for any practicable building, or for columns erected to support tanks; and suppose the annual rainfall to be three-quarters of a metre (30 inches). The annual yield of energy would be 75 metre-tons per square metre of the tank. Now one horse-power for 365 times 24 hours is 236,500 foot-tons; and therefore, dividing this by 75, we find 3153 sq. metres as the area of our supposed tank required for a continuous supply of one horse-power. The prime cost of any such structure, not to speak of the value of the land which it would cover, is utterly prohibirory of any such plan for utilizing the motive power of rain. We may or may not look forward hopefully to the time when windmills will again "lend revolving animation" to a dull flat country; but we certainly need not be afraid that the scene will be marred by forests of iron columns taking the place of natural trees, and gigantic tanks overshadowing the fields and blackening the horizon.

To use rain-power economically on any considerable scale we must look to the natural drainage of hill country, and take the water where we find it either actually falling or stored up and ready to fall when a short artificial channel or pipe can be provided for it at moderate cost. The expense of acqueducts, or of underground water-pipes, to carry water to any great distance—any distance of more than a few miles or a few hundred yards—is much too great for economy when the yield to be provided for is *power*; and such works can only be undertaken when the *water itself* is what is wanted. Incidentally, in connection with the water supply of towns, some part of the energy due to the head at which it is supplied may be used for power. There are, however, but few cases (I know of none except Greenock) in which the energy to spare over and above that devoted to bringing the water to where it is wanted, and causing it to flow fast enough for convenience at every opened tap in every house or factory, is enough to make it worth while to make arrangements for letting the water-power be used without wasting the water-substance. The cases in which water-power is taken from a town supply are generally very small, such as working the bellows of an organ, or "hair-brushing by machinery," and involve simply throwing away the used water. The cost of energy thus obtained must be something enormous in proportion to the actual quantity of the energy, and it is only the smallness of the quantity that allows the convenience of having it when wanted at any moment, to be so dearly bought.

For anything of great work by rain-power, the water-wheels must be in the place where the water supply with natural fall is found. Such places are generally far from great towns, and the time is not yet come when great towns grow by natural selection beside waterfalls for power; as they grow beside navigable rivers, for shipping. Thus hitherto the use of water-power has been confined chiefly to isolated factories which can be conveniently placed and economically worked in the neighborhood of natural waterfalls. But the splendid suggestion made about three years ago by Mr. Siemens in his presidential address to the institution of Mechanical Engineers, that the power of Niagara might be utilized, by transmitting it electrically to great distances, has given quite a fresh departure for design in respect to economy of rain-power. From the time of Joule's experimental electro-magnetic engines developing 90 per cent of the energy of a Voltaic battery in the form of weights raised, and the theory of the electro-magnetic transmission of energy completed thirty years ago on the foundation afforded by the train of experimental and theoretical investigations by which he established his dynamical equivalent of heat in mechanical, electric, electro-chemical, chemical, electro-magnetic, and thermoclastic phenomena, it had been known that potential energy from any available source can be transmitted electro-magnetically by means of an electric current through a wire, and directed to raise weights at a distance, with unlimitedly perfect economy. The first large-scale practical application of electro-magnetic machines was proposed by Holmes in 1854, to produce the electric light for lighthouses, and persevered in by him till he proved the availibility of his machine to the satisfaction of the Trinity House and the delight of Faraday in trials at Blackwall in April, 1857, and it was applied to light the South Foreland lighthouse on December 8, 1858. This gave the impulse to invention; by which the electro-magnetic machine has been brought from the physical laboratory into the province of engineering, and has sent back to the realm of pure science a beautiful discovery—that of the fundamental principle of the dynamo, made triply and independently, and as nearly as may be simultaneously, in 1867 by Dr. Werner Siemens, Mr. S. A. Varley, and Sir Charles Wheatstone; a discovery which constitutes an electro-magnetic analogue to the fundamental electrostatic principle of Nicholson's revolving doubler, resuscitated by Mr. C. F. Varley in his instrument "for generating electricity;" patented in 1860; and by Holtz in his celebrated electric machine; and by myself in my "replenisher" for multiplying and maintaining charges in Leyden jars for heterostatic electrometers, and in the electrifier for the siphon of my recorder for submarine cables.

The dynamos of Gramme and Siemens, invented and made in the course of these fourteen years since the discovery of the fundamental principle, give now a ready means of realizing economically on a large scale, for many important practical applications, the old thermo-dynamics of Joule in electro-magnetism; and, what particularly concerns us now in connection with my present subject, they make it possible to transmit electro-magnetically the work of waterfalls through long insulated conducting wires, and use it at distances of fifties or hundreds of miles from the source, with excellent economy—better economy, indeed, in respect to proportion of energy used to energy dissipated than almost anything known in ordinary mechanics and hydraulics for distances of hundreds of yards instead of hundreds of miles.

In answer to questions put to me in May, 1879,* by the Parliamentary Committee on Electric Lighting, I gave a formula for calculating the amount of energy transmitted, and the amount dissipated by being converted into heat on the way, through an insulated copper conductor of any length, with any given electro-motive force applied to produce the current. Taking Niagara as example, and with the idea of bringing its energy usefully to Montreal, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, I calculated the formula for the distance of 300 British statute miles (which is greater than the distance of any of those four cities from Niagara, and is the radius of a circle covering a large and very important part of the United States and British North America), I found almost to my surprise that, even with so great a distance to be provided for, the conditions are thoroughly practicable with good economy, all aspects of the case carefully considered. The formula itself will be the subject of a technical communication to Section A in the course of the meeting on which we are now entering. I therefore at present restrict myself to a slight statement of results.

1. Apply dynamos driven by Niagara to produce a difference of potential of 80,000 volts between a good earth connection and the near end of a solid copper wire of half an inch (1.27 centimetre) diameter, and 300 statute miles (483 kilometres) length.

2. Let resistance by driven dynamos doing work, or by electric lights, or, as I can now say, by a Faure battery taking in a charge, be applied to keep the remote end at a potential differing by 64,000 volts from a good earth-plate there.

3. The result will be a current of 240 webers through the wire taking energy from the Niagara end at the rate of 26,250 horse-power, losing 5250 (or 20 per cent) of this by the generation and dissipation of heat through the conductor and 21,000 horse-power (or 80 per cent of the whole) on the recipients at the far end.

4. The elevation of temperature above the surrounding atmosphere, to allow the heat generated in it to escape by radiation and be carried away by convection is only about 20° Centigrade; the wire being hung freely exposed to air like an ordinary telegraph wire supported on posts.

5. The striking distance between flat metallic surfaces with difference of potentials of 80,000 volts (or 75,000 Daniell's) is (Thomson's "Electrostatics and Magnetism." § 340) only 18 millimetres, and therefore there is no difficulty about the insulation.

6. The cost of the copper wire, reckoned at 8d. per lb., is £37,000, the interest on which at 5 per cent is £1900 a year, If 5250 horse-power at the Niagara end costs more than £1900 a year, it would be better economy to put more copper into the conductor; if less, less. I say no more on this point at present, as the economy of copper for electric conduction will be the subject of a special communication to the Section.

I shall only say, in conclusion, that one great difficulty in the way of economizing the electrical transmitting power to great distances, or even to moderate distances of a few kiloms., is now overcome by Faure's splendid invention. High potential—as Siemens, I believe, first pointed out—is the essential for good dynamical economy in the electric transmission of power. But what are we to do with 80,000 volts when we have them at the civilized end of the wire? Imagine a domestic servant going to dust an electric lamp with 80,000 volts on one of its metals? Nothing above 200 volts ought on any account ever to be admitted into a house or ship or other place where safeguard against accident cannot be made absolutely and forever trustworthy against all possibility of accident. In an electric workshop 80,000 volts is no more dangerous than a circular saw. Till I learned Faure's invention I could but think of step-down dynamos, at a main receiving station to take energy direct from the electic main

* Printed in the Parliamentary Blue-book Report of the Committee on Electric Lighting, 1879.

with its 80,000 volts, and supply it by secondary 200-volt dynamos or 100-volt dynamos, through proper distributing wires, to the houses and factories and shops where it is to be used for electric lighting, and sewing machines, and lathes, and lifts, or whatever other mechanism wants driving power. Now the thing is to be done much more economically, I hope, and certainly with much greater simplicity and regularity, by keeping a Faure battery of 40,000 cells always being charged direct from the electric main, and applying a methodical system of removing sets of 50, and placing them on the town-supply circuits, while other sets of 50 are being regularly introduced into the great battery that is being charged, so as to keep its number always within 50 of the proper number, which would be about 40,000 if the potential at the emitting end of the main is 80,000 volts.

ON THE ARRESTATION OF INFUSORIAL LIFE.*

By Prof. Tyndall.

Three years ago I brought with me to the Alps a number of flasks charged with animal and vegetable infusions. The flasks had been boiled from three to five minutes in London, and hermetically sealed during ebullition. Two years ago I had sent to me to Switzerland a batch of similar flasks containing other infusions. On my arrival here this year 120 of these flasks lay upon the shelves in my little library. Though eminently putrescible the animal and vegetable juices had remained as sweet and clear as when they were prepared in London. Still an expert taking up one of the flasks containing an infusion of beef or mutton would infallibly pronounce it to be charged with organisms. He would find it more or less turbid throughout, with massive flocculi moving heavily in the liquid. Exposure of the flask for a minute or two to lukewarm water would cause both turbitity and flocculi to disappear, and render the infusion as clear as the purest distilled water. The turbidity and flocculi are simply due to the coagulation of the liquid to a jelly. This fact is some guarantee for the strength of the infusions. I took advantage of the clear weather this year to investigate the action of solar light on the development of life in these infusions, being prompted thereto by the interesting observations brought before the Royal Society by Dr. Downs and Mr. Blunt, in 1877. The sealed ends of the flasks being broken off, they were infected in part by the water of an adjacent brook, and in part by an infusion well charged with organisms. Hung up in rows upon a board, half the flasks of each row were securely shaded from the sun, the other half being exposed to the light. In some cases, moreover, flasks were placed in a darkened room within the house, while their companions were exposed in the sunshine outside. The clear result of these experiments, of which a considerable number were made, is that by some constituent or constuents of the solar radiation an influence is exercised inimical to the development of the lowest infusoria. Twenty-four hours usually sufficed to cause the shaded flasks to pass from clearness to turbidity, while thrice this time left the exposed ones without sensible damage to their transparency. This result is not due to mere differences of temperature between the infusions. On many occasions the temperature of the exposed flasks was far more favorable to the development of life than that of the shaded ones. The energy which in the cases here referred to prevented putrefaction was energy in the radiant form. In no case have I found the flasks sterilized by insolation, for on removing the exposed ones from the open air to a warm kitchen they infallibly changed from cleaness to turbidity. Four and twenty hours were in most cases sufficient to produce this change. Life is, therefore, prevented from developing itself in the infusions as long as they are exposed to the solar light, and the paralysis thus produced enables them to pass through the night time without alteration. It is, however, a suspension, not a destruction, of the germinal power, for, as before stated, when placed in a warm room life was invariably developed. Had I had the requisite materials I should like to have determined by means of colored media, or otherwise, the particular constituents of the solar radiation which are concerned in this result. The rays, moreover, which thus interfere with life must be absorbed by the liquid or by its germinal matter. It would therefore be interesting to ascertain whether, after transmission through a layer of any infusion, the radiation still possessed the power of arresting the development of life in the same infusion. It would also be interesting to examine how far insolation may be employed in the preservation of meat from putrefaction. I would not be understood to say that it is impossible to sterilize an infusion by insolation, but merely to indicate that I have thus far noticed no case of the kind.

* British Association, 1881.

PLANTÉ'S RHEOSTATIC MACHINE.*

Translated from the French by the Marchioness Clara Lanza.

Ruhmkorff's electric induction machine has proved in the most satisfactory manner that by the intermediary of inductive action, we can transform voltaic electricity into electricity of high tension. M. Bichat has likewise shown that by the same means, currents of high tension can be changed to currents of quantity, analogous to voltaic currents. M. Planté, with his secondary piles, has rendered this demonstration still more emphatic, and as his experiments demanded a greater tension than he was able to produce with his batteries, he undertook the manufacture of an apparatus by which he could obtain veritable discharges of static electricity, capable of forming at will, long thread-like sparks, or short, thick ones. In this way he was induced to make the battery of which we are about to speak, and which he calls the *rheostatic machine.*

Although this apparatus (fig. 1) was presented to the Academy of Sciences and exhibited to most of the physicians who witnessed M. Planté's fine experiments, it is as yet, but little known. Why this should be the case we are at a loss to understand, for it is one of the most perfect machines that can be employed in experiments of static electricity. Had the apparatus borne a foreign name, we are confident it would have attracted considerable attention long ago. It is much to be regretted that we are so constituted in France, that whatever is invented by an unknown man, a *savant* who does not rejoice in an established position or who is not a member of some scientific coterie originating from a celebrated school, is looked upon entirely as a matter of subordinate interest. "It is only an amateur's work," we hear on all sides for awhile and then the subject is dropped forever. In England it is quite different. Amateurs such as Grove, Gassiot, Warren, Delarue, Spottiswoode, Lords, Ross, Lindsay, Raleigh, Elphinstone and many others, find their efforts are appreciated as they deserve to be, and no one ever thinks of inquiring whether they are *savants* patented by the government or not.

M. Planté therefore, not being among the last-mentioned, was forced to meet with indifference which he forcibly overcame later by the fine work he performed with his accumulators. He was not so successful, unfortunately, with his rheostatic machine, and for this reason we shall dwell a little upon the important results it has afforded us.

M. Planté's machine consists of a series of condensers with mica plates, parallel one with the other and capable of being charged and discharged in a manner similar to his secondary batteries without any other alimentary electric source than these latter.

The various pieces composing the apparatus must be

* *La Lumière Electrique*, August 6th, 1881.