

has relegated the horse to a secondary place in the solution of the problems of transport. It has made submarine and aerial warfare possible, and has revolutionized naval construction. Yet its possibilities were undreamed of by the grandfathers of boys still at school.

Nevertheless petroleum was collected for the use of mankind, and for the service of religion before the dawn of recorded history. It plays its part in the earliest annals of the human race. It is one of the bitumens that were in familiar use by the ancients; the fluid relative of the pitch with which Noah was directed to tighten the seams of his ark.

The "oil out of the flinty rock" alluded to in Deuteronomy and other books of the Old Testament is the veritable fluid from which so many sudden fortunes have been made in these latter days. Biblical allusions indicate that the priests not only of the Hebrews but of the other tribes of the East used natural oils for their altars. Like many gifts of nature it was regarded as miraculous by the ancient peoples who knew nothing of scientific theory. The burning wells of Baku were an objective of religious pilgrimage among prehistoric peoples, and despite the waste that went on in ages past, they still flow, though the output is now devoted to practical uses, and no longer plays its part in religious mysteries. The Zoroastrians, or fireworshippers of Persia and India, saw in these wells the manifestation of a great spirit imprisoned deep in the earth, who was supposed to breathe an inflammable vapor