

In point of utility, and as a vast reservoir of power, coal takes the lead amongst minerals which aid development. Its energy is a fraction of the solar heat and light diffused on the tree ferns and giant tropical growth of the carboniferous era, ages before man, which is again partly restored in combustion. Wherever coal exists, there is, or will be, development, and to its presence is due the existence of many a great industrial town. Take the Lowlands of Scotland and the manufacturing districts of England for an example. France, Belgium and part of Germany are hives of industry overlying coal fields, and a network of railways binding them together, aids in developing manufactures of all kinds, with ever increasing success.

The coal deposits of America, and their associated iron, have covered the Eastern States with factories and railways, and yet the story is told, that scarce one hundred years have elapsed since a wandering hunter in Pennsylvania built a fireplace of stones in a lonely valley, and was astonished to see his hearth taking fire from the burning brushwood. That was the first discovery of the great Appalachian coal field, and, if I mistake not, our own fellow-townsmen, Professor Macoun, in his wandering over the prairies in search of his favorite plants, near Crowfoot, accidentally found, much in the same way, what are now the coal mines of the Saskatchewan district in our Northwest. As long as coal maintains the preëminence as the source of power, the nations owning coal regions must maintain a supremacy. As in the course of centuries the supply fails in the countries now producing it, so the seat of commerce will change to where coal has yet been undeveloped, and the land of the Celestials (China), whose coal deposits are said even to cast America into the shade, will and must become the centre of commerce. Then civilization will have traversed the globe to recommence in the East.

Petroleum, accidentally discovered whilst boring for brine, to the intense disgust of the borer, has to a wonderful degree developed many large and important towns; but a rival treads hard on its heels, and before liquid fuel has displaced the solid it is itself threatened by gas. Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana are using gas where petroleum and coal formerly maintained the sway. Iron is melted, glass manufactured, and steam raised for factories, towns lighted, and houses heated by