

# The Dark Age of Science

*Science and Invention*, vol. 12 no. 9

January 1925

**DRAFT:** *Please do not share without permission of the author. Typeset versions in [web](#) | [pdf](#) | [doc](#)*

---

**“Those Who Refuse to Go Beyond Fact Rarely Get As Far As Fact” -  
- - HUXLEY**

---

TOO many people nowadays are prone to settle themselves back in their chairs and congratulate themselves about the wonderful age in which we are living. With railroads, airships, radio and other “marvelous” activities abounding around us, it is easy to lull oneself into the belief that surely the millenium has arrived and that the world will never look rosier than it does now.

As a matter of

I BELIEVE THAT:
-----------------

the wheel was one of the greatest inventions of all time
---

As a matter of fact, 300 years hence this present age of ours will probably be termed the “dark age of science.” This is not merely a catch phrase used by the writer, but he means it in all sincerity, and what is more, he can easily prove it.

Nowadays it makes us laugh when we think of how people in England and other parts of the world some five hundred years ago on top of coal mines and froze to death. They simply did not know that coal would burn and that it could be made to heat houses and otherwise perform tremendous work. While we laugh, you should soberly consider that we are doing the self same thing ourselves today. All about us there is untold quantities of energy, much cheaper, much

better, more sanitary than coal, but we simply have not learned how to use it because we do not know. Every piece of rock, every car full of sand has a potential dormant power locked up within it. We may call this power atomic or by any other name, but the fact remains that we do not use it because we do not know how.

I BELIEVE THAT:

sooner or later governments will subsidize all inventors of repute.

Take a great city like New York, which burns thousands of tons of coal whose products pollute the atmosphere every day, while right at its very feet two mighty rivers, the Hudson and the East Rivers flow by its shores, which rivers every day can actually furnish more power than all the coal burned in a year. Still, this mighty power goes to waste in this dark age of ours.

When you go to the butcher and order a 10-pound roast, you would become highly indignant if he handed you over 9 3/4 pounds of bones and less than 1/4 pound of meat, but when you pay your electric light bill at the end of the month and you send the lighting company your check for \$10.00 you do this very thing. The reason is that exactly 98% of the electric power goes up in useless heat, which you do not need and which you do not want but which you must pay for. You actually get 2% of light, and in order to get this 2% you have to pay 98% for something that is a total loss. Of course all this will make people laugh merrily 300 years hence, and they will not be able to understand how we could afford such frightful losses.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCIENCE

is now symbolized by the golden cover of SCIENCE & INVENTION, LOOK FOR THE GOLD COVER every month!

Then we go and invent the automobile, another monstrosity of the “dark age of science.” In order to propel the same, we generate carbon-monoxide that pollutes the air in our streets, gives us headaches, and otherwise makes life unbearable for us. But this is far from being the worst. Here we go and create the automobile and then build so many of them that they become useless by their very numbers. Instead of transporting us quicker than the hold horse-drawn vehicle, we actually find that the latter was much faster, in many instances. If you try, in any of our big city streets, to go about quickly, you will find that there is only one way of doing it and that is you must come right back to prehistoric times and *walk*. In cities like New York and Chicago, you can cover ground much quicker for reasonable distances on foot than by automobile.

Far from living in the millenium, we are living in an age of unspeakable waste. There is hardly anything that we can think of that is not wasted.

I BELIEVE THAT:

the human race has a lot to learn from the ants and the bees.

We know today the power of waterfalls, the inherent power of the tides, the inherent power of moving rivers, yet—99% of this goes entirely to waste. Wind power, another large source of energy, is hardly touched at all. This power alone is so vast that a small fraction of it, properly applied, would supply the world with sufficient energy to run all the machinery, all trains and all of our vehicles. Water power and wind power are well understood and can be exploited by us even today, but no real effort in this direction is to be discerned.

We do not wish even to speak of the power derived from the sun's heat, because we have as yet not found the key to unlock this tremendous energy, which is far, far greater than all the others combined.

At the present time we simply use sun power that has been stored up by nature millions of years ago. This is the case with coal, gasoline and practically every other fuel. All other forms of energy that are lying about us in every direction are not even touched. It is a comforting thought that our great-great-grandchildren will stand on their own legs, for they will know how to unlock a power universe, invisible to us.