



The Chemical History of a Candle

Michael Faraday

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One of the greatest experimental scientists of all time, Michael Faraday (1791–1867) developed the first electric motor, electric generator, and dynamo — essentially creating the science of electrochemistry. This book, the result of six lectures he delivered to young students at London's Royal Institution, concerns another form of energy — candlelight.

Faraday titled the lectures "The Chemical History of a Candle," choosing the subject because, as he explained, "There is not a law under which any part of this universe is governed which does not come into play and is not touched upon [during the time a candle burns]."

That statement is the foundation for a book that describes, with great clarity, the components, function and weight of the atmosphere; the function of a candle wick; capillary attraction; the carbon content in oxygen and living bodies; the production of carbon dioxide from coal gas and sugar; the properties of carbonic acid; respiration and its analogy to the burning of a candle; and much more. There is also a chapter comprising Faraday's "Lecture on Platinum."

A useful classroom teaching tool, this classic text will also appeal to a wide audience interested in scientific inquiry.

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