

**CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A  
HISTORY OF ELECTRO-  
METALLURGY, ESTABLISHING  
THE ORIGIN OF THE ART**

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Contribution Towards a History of Electro-Metallurgy, Establishing the Origin of the Art by  
Henry Dircks

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**HENRY DIRCKS**

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*C. F. Jordan*

INVENTOR OF ELECTRO-METALLURGY,

8TH JUNE, 1839.

[*Mechanics' Magazine*, 1839.]

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TOWARDS  
A HISTORY  
OF  
ELECTRO-METALLURGY,

ESTABLISHING THE ORIGIN OF THE ART.

BY HENRY DIRCKS,

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LIFE MEMBER (1857) OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, &c.



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1863.

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## DEDICATION.

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To

MICHAEL FARADAY, ESQ., D. C. L., OXON.; L. L. D.,  
CAM.; F. R. S.; FULLERIAN PROFESSOR OF CHE-  
MISTRY IN THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT  
BRITAIN, &c. &c. &c.

SIR,

From the distinguished position which you hold in connexion with Electrical Science, as well on the continents of Europe and America as in England, I feel that a higher honour than the inscribing of so small a work as the present, is due to you; but permit me to adduce a few, and, as I conceive, cogent reasons for adopting a course which, otherwise, perhaps, might be open to erroneous conclusions.

The history of early inventions, even of many that have most contributed to the necessities and luxuries of life, have been either wholly lost, or continue as matters of unsatisfactory dispute. Of this latter fact the history of the Steam Engine is an eminent example; and that of Electro-Metallurgy was, twenty-four years ago, in an equally fair way to become one of litigation among scientific writers. But as the present work clearly settles the true position of all matters affecting the origin of Electro-Metallurgy, I would beg to notice here, more especially, your early association with that subject.

When the British Association held its first Meeting in Liverpool in 1837, the new, and previously unoccupied building



of the Mechanics' Institution in that town, was in a sufficiently forward state to accommodate all the sectional meetings of the Association. The Chemical Section was presided over by you; and at one of its Meetings, Dr. Golding Bird described the simple galvanic arrangement of his invention, which ultimately, in the hands of Mr. Jordan and other experimentors, originated the beautiful processes of Electro-Metallurgy. Dr. Bird's communication deeply impressed you, inasmuch that you commented at some length on its details, pointing out, at the same time, what appeared to you as certain discrepancies requiring examination. That address made such a lively impression on my mind at the time, that I even now vividly recollect it, while I thus note the fact.

Your own correspondence also with M. Jacobi, dating as far back as the 21st of June, 1839, afforded you personally an early intimation of the germ of this very art, even in Russia.

With these facts before me, and looking rather to the future than the present, I foresee that, with the growing importance of Electro-Metallurgy in numerous branches of art, the History of its Origin cannot fail to arrest the attention of the ingenious and the learned: so long as it shall be held that, among the greatest benefactors of mankind, must always be ranked that class of men whose genius, as inventors in the arts or the sciences, tends to the progress of society and consequent civilization of the world.

I remain, most respectfully,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

HENRY DIRCKS.

Blackheath, Kent,  
January 20, 1863.

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