

ages since these most ancient periods, namely, that vegetation carbonized into the coals, and are we to imagine instead that some other unobserved, unseen and mysterious transformation of vegetation into something else, namely petroleum, took place? This would be to lay aside an abundance of proven facts in order to adopt a mere supposition. The normal process of decomposition of vegetation into coals in nature is in active operation in the world today as it has always been, and it is the only one that we can see. It is also the only one of which we have any record in the long history of the geological ages.

As to the other argument that by destructive distillation the petroleum can be obtained from the coals, that would be all very well if nature had distilled the sedimentary strata and the coals or other vegetation in it, but as a matter of absolute fact it has not; therefore this line of argument also falls to the ground at once and can be dismissed. If the sedimentary strata had been distilled and petroleum thus produced there would be no coals anywhere on the globe; we would have nothing but coke left.

The belief in the organic origin of the petroleum leads also to chaos in the understanding of other geological facts and physical laws brought out clearly in the study of many petroleum occurrences or deposits, and no wonder that some geologists who are inclined to believe in this organic origin exclaim therefore that the genesis of petroleum is a profound mystery not yet solved by science. For instance:—

1st.—It cannot possibly explain the large petroleum fields below the Carboniferous.

2nd.—Neither can it explain the petroleum in the volcanic emanations of today.

3rd.—Nor in the volcanic or igneous rocks in all parts of the world.

4th.—Nor in crystalline rocks; in California and New Brunswick, for instance.

5th.—Nor in meteorites.

6th.—Nor in metalliferous veins.

7th.—It is also at a loss to explain why the petroleum fields in every district are found grouped along certain lines and why