

libly parallelize every formation with that of Venango County.

Another popular error was that of regarding beds of coal as the source of the oil. This led searchers for the coveted fluid to prefer the borders of coal-fields, or even the regions underlaid by coal. Often it seemed to be a matter of indifference whether it were calculated that the oil would naturally rise or sink through the rocks. With many the question was never considered. With most, however, the opinion was entertained—and to this day is cherished—that oil naturally descends through the strata. I have seen it gravely stated in published treatises on the subject that our native petroleum is the “drainage of the coal-measures.” Nothing could be more erroneous. What connection can exist between the oil deposits of Enniskillen (Ontario) and the nearest coal-beds, at least one hundred miles removed? What between the oil accumulation of Manitoulin Island and the nearest coal-beds two hundred miles distant? Moreover, the coal-measures are every where less saturated with oil than many formations of more ancient origin.

“Surface shows” have been the fascination of many. The places of most copious escape to the surface were regarded as the favored spots where the “drainage from the coal-measures,” in disregard of the laws of gravity and hydrodynamics, had obligingly deposited itself. Such “shows” were always illusory. A great “surface show” is a great waste. When Nature plays the spendthrift she retains but little treasure in her coffers. This was the lesson learned at great cost by the confident capitalists who took “stock” in the “surface shows” of Paint Creek, in Northeastern Kentucky. The production of petroleum in quantities of economical importance has always been from reservoirs in which Nature for ages had been hoarding it up, instead