

ST. MARY'S COUNTY.

This is the oldest county in the State. On the banks of St. Mary's, an arm of the Potomac River in this county, was established the first form of government that gave to man full liberty to worship the great Supreme Being according to the teachings of his own reason, and established the first asylum for liberty of conscience known to history; full right to worship with no restrictions to those whose faith might differ from the governing power; no persecution of the weak; none of diverse sects; none to the Heathen. Justice, love and mercy were the watchwords of the first Colonists, and with these they attained temporal prosperity, and, we must believe, everlasting rest.

The characteristics of the first settlers are in a great degree maintained by their descendants to this day, and it is no fault of theirs if, in consequence of the present state of things, that their prosperity is much diminished, and necessity compels them to part with many homes formerly the abode of peace, happiness and prosperity.

This county is bounded on the north by Charles county; on the south it terminates in a Cape well known to the country as Point Lookout; on the east by the Patuxent river, which separates it from Calvert county, and by the Chesapeake bay, and on the west by Charles county and the Potomac river. The county is about forty-two and a half miles in length, with a breadth of from about nine miles at its widest part to a point at its southern extremity. The peninsula which forms this county has in its middle portion high, elevated hills and table land, from two to three hundred feet above tide, which gradually decline as we approach the Patuxent, the Bay and Potomac. A short distance above Point Lookout the land is more flat and level, but by no means wet, boggy or marshy, all being easily drained and made fit for cultivation. It is well timbered, wooded and watered, some of the streams affording good water power. The soil, as in the whole of the tide water region, varies from coarse sands to heavy, rich clays, thus affording choice for the cultivation of various crops that require soils of specific physical qualities for their appropriate development.

In the northern part of the county the soils, for the most part, are light and sandy. On the Patuxent there are found soils to a large extent of loamy clay, approaching in their texture and conformation to the West river Green Sand soils. These extend, with some intermissions, to the Wicomico river and the Potomac. Towards the mouth of the Patuxent, and for a considerable distance above it, the white oak soils are found in great excellence; these, too, form a great portion of the soils on the bay and on the Potomac river, pos-