

In the succeeding pages the Physical Features of Maryland will be considered under the three following headings, viz., Physiography, Geology, and Mineral Resources.

PHYSIOGRAPHY.

The state of Maryland in its physiographic features is closely related to the states which lie to the north and south of it. It is part of the eastern border region which stretches from the Atlantic coast-line to the crest of the Alleghanies and from its central situation affords, perhaps, the most characteristic section of this broad belt. The country rises from the sea level at first gradually and then more rapidly until it culminates in the high lands of the western portion of the state. It has been divided throughout the middle Atlantic slope into three physiographic areas known respectively as the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont Plateau and the Appalachian Region. Before taking up the more detailed description of the Maryland area a brief characterization of the three leading physiographic divisions will be given.

The Coastal Plain as a continuous tract begins in New Jersey on the south shore of the Raritan Bay, where it has a width of from fifteen to twenty miles, and extends thence southward, constantly broadening, until in Georgia it reaches nearly one hundred and fifty miles. North of New Jersey it is continued in the islands along the New England coast (the largest being Long Island, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket) as well as in the narrow strip of main land which forms the southeastern portion of the state of Massachusetts. The Coastal Plain is characterized by broad, level stretches of slight elevation, which are cut by the larger rivers that flow across the area from the Piedmont Plateau, and the smaller streams that have their sources within the low land itself. Most of the streams have sluggish currents and the drainage of the land is imperfect. Throughout, the country is deeply indented with tidal estuaries and bays, the heads of which commonly reach quite to the border of the Piedmont