

THE PERMIAN PERIOD.

The rocks which are here questionably referred to the Permian are confined to the central portion of the George's Creek valley in western Allegany county where they rest with apparent conformity upon the Carboniferous deposits below. The single formation recognized in these rocks of doubtful Permian age is denominated the Frostburg formation.

THE FROSTBURG FORMATION.—The Frostburg formation, so called from Frostburg in Allegany county, apparently conformably overlies the Elk garden formation of Carboniferous age. It occurs in patches along the centre of the Georges Creek valley, chiefly in the vicinity of Frostburg, where erosion has left fragments capping the tops of the higher lands. The Frostburg formation consists of limestones, sandstones, and shales, the limestones occurring in several bands and at different horizons. The most important of these limestone beds forms the base of the formation. Sufficiently distinctive fossils have not yet been obtained from the Frostburg formation and its separation from the Carboniferous formations below is not yet definitely determined. The difference in the character of the materials as compared with the formations below is striking, indicating that the physical conditions had changed prior to the deposition of the materials. The coal beds of earlier date are entirely lacking and in their place we have deposits which indicate deeper waters, in which, during much of the time, little sediment was being laid down. The thickness of the Frostburg formation is about 250 feet.

THE COASTAL PLAIN.

The area of low land which borders the Piedmont Plateau upon the east and passes with constantly decreasing elevation seaward has already been described under the name of the Coastal Plain. It is part of that great belt of low country which extends from New Jersey to the Gulf and is made up of geological formations of younger date than those which have been hitherto described. These later formations stand in marked contrast to the strata in other portions of the state in that they have been but slightly changed since they were deposited. Laid down one above another upon the eastern flank of