

the other toward Labrador. Upon this great skeleton the continental area has since been gradually built up by accumulation of sediments along its borders; yet in these early days there were additional areas above the seas which furnished the source of some of this sedimentary material, but which have themselves more or less completely disappeared. We must to-day draw our inferences regarding the character and extent of these areas both from the nature of the rock comprising their scanty fragments and from the character and relations of the strata of later date. There is no positive evidence that we have represented in Maryland any of the rocks of this earliest portion of Archean time, although it is not impossible that part of the gneiss complex may represent it.

There is much evidence in support of the view that the later portion of Archean time, which has been referred to as the Algonkian period, is represented by rocks of many varieties within the limits of the state of Maryland. The proof of this is seen not only in the character of the rocks themselves, but also when we consider the vast thickness of sediments which accumulated later, during the whole lapse of Paleozoic time, in the great trough in which the Appalachian mountains were formed. We are compelled to assume a great continent or mountainous mass lying along the southeastern edge of our present continent and extending perhaps eastward well into, if not beyond, the limits of the Coastal Plain, although we can form but little conception of the form and area of this ancient land mass. That it must often have stood at some considerable elevation above sea-level and have borne streams of no mean proportion is shown by the rapidity with which sediments, often coarse in nature, were furnished to the inland sea which stretched along its western margin. To-day we have preserved to us in the crystalline plateau which extends from New York to Alabama along the eastern base of the present Appalachian mountains, with a width of 300 miles in the Carolinas, the merest remnant of this ancient continent. These rocks with the eruptives which have broken through them are confined in Maryland mainly to the eastern portion of the Plateau country, although on account of structural disturbances which have taken place in the area farther