

time. During this period of upper Cretaceous submergence the land of the continent must have stood at a low level, since the sediments accumulated slowly and with a constantly decreasing quantity of land-derived materials.

At the close of Mesozoic time, or perhaps a little later, another elevation of the continent, accompanied by the gradual stripping off of the deposits of earlier date, took place. Over this irregular surface the Eocene deposits were laid down in the submergence which opened the Tertiary period. Again came elevation at the close of the Eocene, followed by another submergence during the early Neocene, although the transgression of the previous period, which had gradually overlapped the Cretaceous deposits to the southward, was now towards the north, so that the oscillations of the continent in Tertiary time were much less normal to the coastal border than they had been during the late Cretaceous. During the early Neocene period a great volume of sediments was deposited, the strata giving evidence of a large discharge of land-derived materials from the adjacent continent. The elevation at the close of this epoch was followed by a brief submergence in the late Neocene period, during which the sea encroached considerably upon the Piedmont Plateau, while during the elevation which followed this brief period of submergence the present topography of our Coast border region was largely carved out. It was then that the great valley of the Chesapeake Bay with its estuaries was formed and the drainage of the area reached the existing ocean through capes Charles and Henry. A further depression in early Pleistocene time submerged the valley together with the low country, and choked with sediment the former drainage lines. This submergence, however, was not sufficiently long continued to entirely obliterate the old channels, for in later Pleistocene time another elevation removed the water from the higher portions of the valleys, and, although there was a brief subsequent submergence with accompanying elevation, the main confines of the valleys can to-day be seen with their lower courses still occupied, as in the case of the Chesapeake Bay and its major tributaries, by tidal waters.