

back of the inconvenience and nuisance which they endured from the shells of the molluses. As early as 1708 the Vestry of St. Anne's Parish by solemn order ordained that the oyster shells in the vicinity of that church should be levelled down to a level with the ground sill of the church. In more modern times the people have perhaps better learned the economical uses of these "shucks," and between the demand for both shell and kernel, abroad and at home, these products of the bay and its numerous arms are a source of great profit as well as a luxury, not to be despised.

In the interior of this county there is a considerable amount of water power, but it is improved only for moderate local purposes.

The county roads in this and the three preceding counties leave everything in that respect to be desired, and probably few features will be more marked in the "good time coming," than the improvements in the facilities of neighborhood communication.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY.

Prince George's county lies immediately north of Charles county, from which it is separated chiefly by Mattawoman creek, which empties in the Potomac; and Swanson creek, which is a tributary of the Patuxent. The Patuxent river forms the northern and eastern boundary of Prince George's, and the District of Columbia and the Potomac river its western border, while Montgomery county joins it on the north-west.

The soil consists of the best loam and sand intermixed with clay. The underlying strata is shell marl and cemented sand, resembling sand-stone. The surface, which is agreeably diversified, abounds in springs and brooks of pure water, and in many localities the waters are highly chalybeate. That fertile section of Prince George's known as "The Forest," was not very productive under the old system of cultivation. Gradually it became less fertile till wheat was scarcely sown save in patches about the dwellings, and the "crops of Indian corn were barely sufficient, even in the best seasons, to supply domestic wants." This soil has been improved almost beyond parallel, and to the application of gypsum a great share of the improvement is accredited.

The principal products are tobacco, wheat, Indian corn and rye. The tobacco of this county is often two-fifths the entire crop of the State. The air and the soils must have always been favorable to its growth, for among the papers of the Calvert's, in the latter part of the 17th century, it is said that