

quence of a pretended subsequent discovery, that this supposed plaster of paris had been landed from the wreck of a vessel, coming from Nova Scotia with a load of this article. But the fact of the existence of selenite on the Patuxent and St. Mary, explains the origin of the tradition; and its employment to make the stucco of the State House illustrates one of its useful applications.

The quantity of the material which may be obtained from the sources just designated, though not very great, is still sufficient to answer many valuable purposes. Many cart loads are stated to have been collected, loosely scattered upon the shore, after heavy swells of the river or the violent washings of its banks by an agitated sea. The conjecture is thought a plausible one, that by removing the masses of crystals as they become formed, they would be replaced by fresh crops; and thus almost an indefinite quantity of the article would be obtained. At all events, this portion of the geology of St. Mary's county deserves a minute and careful investigation.

Besides these deposits of fossils, which have been referred to as occurring in the lower counties on the Western Shore of Maryland, there are others, as at Upper Marlborough in Prince George's county, where the banks on the Western branch of the Patuxent, consisting of gravel, sand and clay, envelope masses of a siliceous incrustation, containing casts of marine shells. These masses of silicified shells are observed to rest on a deposit of sand and broken shells, made up of oyster shells, scallop shells, &c. A similar deposit occurs in the neighbourhood of Queen Anne, and another which has already acquired some celebrity in the annals of science, is that at Fort Washington, on the Potomac. But as