

The soil belonging to the table land—previously described as forming the tops of the hills—is principally in an exhausted condition; the effects of a bad system of husbandry anciently pursued, and of the continual washings to which it is subjected. As already remarked, the upper portions of this district of country are very gravelly; this character being more marked on the slopes of the hills and towards the Potomac, than lower down the peninsula, or inland, where the soil is chiefly a sandy loam. In the beds of the branches, an *alluvial* soil formed by the washings of the hills is found better constituted; though principally also of a very light character. When these ravines acquire more extent, which they are observed to do from the Piscatawa to the Wicomico, so as to present long and broad valleys, a corresponding improvement in the soil is discovered. Such is the case with the Valley of the Piscatawa, a part of Mattawoman Swamp, Port Tobacco Bottom, and portions of Allen's Fresh.

But the best lands occur on the alluvial *flats* along the Potomac, formed by the washing of the soil from the elevated country which bounds them to the north and east. Some of these flats are of considerable extent, increasing in this respect from north to south. The principal ones are in Charles county, in Pomonky district, at Maryland Point, in Nanjemoy, Piscawaxen and Cobneck; these districts probably furnishing upon an average the best soils of the county, on its Potomac side. They are sandy and clayey loams, and occasionally stiff clays, yielding good crops of wheat, corn, or tobacco.

The remaining geological characters of the country are to be sought for in the nature of the fossil deposits in which it abounds. These deposits belong to the Tertiary formation, which, by modern geologists, has been divided into three epochs, determined by the number and species of shells they contain, and in reference to their congeners known to be among the living inhabitants of the ocean. Those that belong to what is termed the *Eocene period*, the oldest of the Tertiary, embrace a great number of genera and species of shells, the analogous kinds of which are not found by conchologists among the present tribes of testaceous animals—the deposits of this period having furnished upwards of