

one thousand distinct species of shells, out of which only a very small number have been identified with recent species. Fort Washington, situated at the mouth of Piscatawa creek on the Potomac, is designated as the principal locality of the fossiliferous deposits in Maryland belonging to this period. The foundation of this structure rests upon a ferruginous clay, above which a deposit of black sand and over all a thick coat of gravel, are observed. In the ferruginous clay composing the banks adjoining it, boughs and twigs of trees mineralized into a compact iron stone are found. The ravine behind the Fort, displays to view an accumulation of fossil shells, which has been penetrated to the depth of forty-five feet; and is covered by a thick stratum of coarse gravel. Deposits of fossil shells bearing the same character, may be traced all along the northern side of the Piscatawa, extending as far as Upper Marlborough, on the western branch of the Patuxent.

The next period in the Tertiary formation, called the *Meiocene*, from the circumstance of its deposits containing a greater proportion of recent shells, although these are still less numerous than the extinct species, has not so far been identified in Maryland.

Superior to this, is the *Older Pleiocene period*, in which the recent species are comparatively abundant. According to Mr. Lea, this period finds its equivalent in the fossiliferous and selenitous deposit on the St. Mary's, at the mouth of St. Inigo's creek. For the *Newer Pleiocene period*, according to the same authority, we must look to the deposit at the mouth of the Potomac, in the same county.

But besides these, and anterior to them, in the opinion of Dr. Morton, there is the *Ferruginous-sand formation*, embracing the green sand, or green marl of New-Jersey. A very characteristic deposit of this period, has been discovered between Port Tobacco creek and the Wicomico. Our object being, however, to consider these fossiliferous deposits in an economical point of view, they will in this respect be more fully described in the succeeding section.

SECT. II.—*Principal Localities of the Shell-marl Deposits on the Potomac, their Constitution, relative value, and use.*
As the use of marl has scarcely been at all resorted