

whites who live west of the Blue Ridge are about equal in number to those who live east of it; but the eastern division, or lower country, owns a greater number of slaves, and in right of them has more votes. The western men are talking loudly of a convention to place them on a more equal footing, some even desiring a separation into two states. There has also been a suggestion, that it might be well to allow a single county to declare itself free, without waiting for the emancipation of others. Among other signs of approaching change, I am told that several new settlers from the north have made a practical demonstration that slave labor is less profitable, even east of the Blue Ridge, than that of free whites. As we sailed down the Potomac from Washington, a landed proprietor of Fairfax county pointed out to me some estates in Virginia, on the right bank of the river, in which free had been substituted for slave labor since I was here in 1841. Some farmers came from New Hampshire and Connecticut, and, having bought the land at five dollars an acre, tilled it with their own hands and those of their family, aided in some cases by a few hired whites. To the astonishment of the surrounding planters, before the end of four years, they had raised the value of the soil from five to forty dollars per acre, having introduced for the first time a rotation of corn and green crops, instead of first exhausting the soil, and then letting it lie fallow for years to recover itself. They have also escaped the ruinous expense of feeding large bodies of negroes in those seasons when the harvest is deficient. They do not pretend to indulge in that hospitality for which the old Virginians and North Carolinians were celebrated, who often mortgaged their estates to pay the annual salary of their overseer, till he himself became the proprietor. The master, in that case, usually migrated with part of his negroes to settle farther south or southwest, introducing into the new states more civilized habits and manners than would have belonged to them had they been entirely peopled by adventurers from the north or from Europe.

On Sunday, December the 21st, we attended service in a handsome new Episcopal church, called St. Paul's, and heard the rector announce to the congregation that a decision had just