

FOR THE JEFFERSONIAN.

Eastern Virginia.

Centreville, Fairfax County, Va., }  
January 24th, 1859. }

MR. EDITOR:—It is some fifteen years since I pulled up stakes in the Empire State, and passed through your pretty village, on my way to Virginia. And on this occasion, having parted with many kind friends and connections, many of whom, I suppose, still live in Stroudsburg and vicinity, and who no doubt would be pleased to hear of this Country, I will give them a birds eye view; and perhaps at some future period, may still further enlighten them.

The Eastern portion of this State, since the date of my emigration hither, has been undergoing a great change in consequence of the change of inhabitants.—The old native citizens have continually kept going further South, in order to get further from Washington and keep their slaves from running off. For that city is filled with those who profess open hostility to the institution, and embrace every opportunity to entice the slaves to a stampede, and assist them in making good their escape to Canada. Their lands were sold at a low figure to settlers from the North, East and West; and in many locations, the land is wholly owned by the latter, for many miles. In such cases, the face of the country has put on, an entire new aspect. And now, instead of the large tracts, dotted with negro cabins, relieved occasionally and at the distance of 4 or 5 miles, by a plantation house, the land is divided into small and neatly cultivated farms; with tasteful houses, barns and other buildings!—all giving it the appearance of a Northern country, in a warm climate. And such is destined to be the case with this entire country.—Slavery will soon, entirely disappear. It

is found, that taking into account the high price of slaves, an investment in that kind of property, to devote to the raising of grain and grass, is not a wise one. They can only be made profitable further South, in the cotton, cane and rice fields,—and where the climate is too hot for the white man. As for our climate, perhaps the world does not own its superior. Any one who has experienced the delightful climate of Washington, can form an idea of it. We have a clear sky and a pure atmosphere. Consequently our country is remarkably healthy. Our soil is free from stones,—easy to cultivate and easily improved. It is extremely tenacious of manure; showing its effects for many years after its application. The face of the country is gently undulating,—thus rendering the land easily drained; while we have no hills disagreeably steep. Indeed this seems to have been intended for the paradise of the farmer. And the Northern men in most instances have turned to good account, the many natural advantages of the country.

How much better, it would be, for your citizens, who finding it necessary to select a new location, to come here, instead of exposing themselves to the thousand and one hardships of a border life in the west!! We have the best of markets. Washington, Georgetown and Alexandria are all adjacent to this county. In either of these cities we get New York prices for whatsoever is raised on the farm. Our county is being intersected by Railroads in various directions. The Orange and Alexandria R. R. is completed and doing a fine business; and several others are in progress,—all leading into Alexandria,—an excellent shipping port,—where the largest ships that traverse the ocean can come. Then what is

there to hinder this from becoming the greatest country in the world? Nothing. Land of good quality, with fruit and good buildings, and within 20 miles of Washington, and by the side of a R. R., may be bought for \$20 to \$30 per acre. That which is in a state of nature,—woodland can be had at \$8 to \$12. Our crops range according to the degree of cultivation, as follows: Wheat 15 to 30 bushels; Corn 25 to 100 bushels; Oats 25 to 60 bushels per acre. Flax of the best quality is easily raised, and sells in the cities at \$20 to \$40 per ton. All things considered, I know of no other place, where an investment of money or labor pays better than it does here.

Respectfully yours,

DANIEL G. ROBERTS.

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands

National Park Service Network to Freedom / House Divided Project at Dickinson College