

deadly struggle, or the sum of misery it is destined to entail upon our race. How profound should be our sense of gratitude when we reflect, that while this flame and cloud of battle, have been suffered to hang in gloom above the heads of our brethren in other climes, casting their dismal shadows of death and suffering over so many hitherto peaceful and happy hearts and homes, we, by the favor of a merciful Providence, have been permitted to move onward, by the steady light of our Free Institutions, in our high career of development and progress, in the midst of peace and plenty, blessed with a steady improvement in all the means of social and political elevation and expansion, and bearing around and about us the unmistakable indicia of national prosperity and glory.

We have had it is true, in some sections of the Union, particularly during the year 1854, an occasional monetary or financial pressure, but in the main, the occupations and pursuits of private life, have shewn signs of great activity and prosperity. Agriculture, the first and most important of all vocations, especially during the past year, has prospered in a remarkable degree; abundant yields of the varied fruits of the carth have richly rewarded the patient toils of the husbandman, while Commerce and the Mechanic Arts, have grown and flourished with new vigor, and the genius of prosperity sits smilingly on every department of human labor. Standing now upon the threshold of another year, we can look forward with high and confident hope that it will be distinguished by an unexampled degree of business activity and prosperity.

Nor is this all; the people of Maryland have not only shared equally with their sisters of the Confederacy, in these general blessings, so profusely shed upon the whole republic, but have been most signally favored by heaven, in an exemption from those public calamities and diseases which have bowed down in sorrow so many hearts in other sections of the Union. While on our very borders, pestilential disease has stalked, with a degree of malignancy almost without a parallel in our history, nearly decimating the population of two sister cities in the neighboring State of Virginia, opening up, the bitter fountains of sorrow in every household, and hanging the drapery of death and mourning at almost every door, we have been favored with an unusual share of that greatest of all earthly blessings, health. To us were assigned, the sad though grateful offices of charity and love, and the privilege of contributing from our abundance, the means of assuaging, as far as human aid could assuage, the poignancy of that sorrow which wrung the hearts of this pestilence scourged people in the dark hour of their awful affliction. That heart must indeed be cold and hardened, lost to all sense of gratitude, that in the contemplation of these great mercies, is not lifted up, in grateful praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for such marked evidences of his infinite mercy and kindness.