

We have been engaged for the past four months in the work of framing anew the organic law of this State. However easy the task may appear to many, and especially to those who have never participated in such a work, yet I am sure you will concur with me that its difficulties, not a few even in times of profound peace, have been greatly increased by the condition of things by which we were surrounded.

Amid a civil war of the most gigantic proportions, our minds have been constantly disturbed by the ever recurring consideration whether the institutions, under which we have prospered so long as a nation, were to stand or fall amid the conflicts of the day. While the nation has been thus agitated throughout its entire limits, our own State has been the theatre of the most bitter contests between social and political classes ever experienced, and which it could have been wished should not have existed while we were engaged in a work of so much importance and magnitude. Our labors, though thus interrupted by scenes calculated to create the most embittered feeling, and to provoke discussions of the most exciting character, have not been marred by any of those personal animosities or collisions which might have been anticipated, and which have so often characterized the proceedings of other deliberative bodies. This is a matter of sincere congratulation, and if your President has succeeded in the accomplishment of this object, he has been encouraged and sustained by a conviction of your belief in his conscientious discharge of duty, and in his faithful endeavor at all times to award to each individual member, irrespective of party designations or particular localities, that impartial justice which should always control the action of a presiding officer of a deliberative body.

We are now about to separate for our respective homes. In all human probability the most of us may never meet again. As actors in the past and present eventful scenes, can we *not all*—dismissing the memory of every embittered feeling, before parting—unite in the prayer so often repeated at this desk, that the same *ever living God*, who has heretofore protected and defended us as one people, may, notwithstanding our civil broils, our many sins and misgivings, still preserve us “under the shadow of his wing” as one undivided nation; that whatever changes may be occasioned by the rapidly transpiring events of the day—whatever modifications may be produced in the character of our social institutions, the *Union*, as the great ark of our national safety, with the Constitution, may be vouchsafed to us and our children; and that *ere many years shall roll around*, we may