

unparalleled in popular elections, it has devolved upon this General Assembly to frame and pass such laws as would carry into effect the provisions of that instrument which called us into being,—a Constitution, which, whatever may be its defects, restored to the rights of citizenship, thousands of our friends and brethren, who had for years been pressed down by the iron heel of power. In what manner, and with what acceptance, we have performed our duty, time alone and the judgment of our constituents will determine. I am sure, that you, gentlemen, by your votes, designed to advance the best interests of the State, and that whatever may have been your measure of success, your motives at least were pure.

On an occasion like this, it is proper to allude to the part your Presiding Officer has taken, in the proceedings of the Body. The testimonial of your opinion of my labors among you, placed upon your records, shows that your kind partiality at least has accorded me a desire to do my duty. This is all to which I could lay claim. I have never been absent from your deliberations; on each day throughout the session, I have punctually opened the House at the hour to which you had adjourned, and at the time of closing, I have always put the question of adjournment, while my name will be found on the call for the yeas and nays, on every question from the opening to the close of the session. This is my record; I have done what I conceived to be my duty, and as I have always made it a principle in life, not to accept any position without an intention to discharge its duties, I have merely carried out in practice here, what I have always thought to be the duty of public servants.

On the day on which I accepted the position you had so generously confided to me, there were eighty-six members present, being the entire number of members elected; it is a gratifying fact, and one of thankfulness to God, that since that time, the number has not been diminished by the hand of death, but that at this moment of parting, each member is in the full enjoyment of health, and a happy cheerfulness pervades the whole body at the prospect of a speedy return to the loved homes, from which, by ties of duty, we have so long been separated.

I cannot omit to state here, that my duties have been much lightened by the promptness and fidelity of the various officers of the House and in an especial manner, without wishing to detract from the merit of others, would I commend the punctuality and zeal of the two principal clerks, with whom daily I have been brought in more immediate contact.

And now, gentlemen, there is only one duty left me to perform. Many of you met each other in this Hall, hallowed by so many sacred associations, for the first time; but I feel confident a bond of sympathy has sprung up between you,