

single dollar, may immure the body of his co-equal, if not his superior in all the qualities which adorn our nature; an anomaly indeed!! Most extraordinary, and most disgusting!! The sacred scriptures abound in proofs to support this humane and just principle, we mean the principle of abolition which is the object of this report. It is in fact the main pillar of our holy religion, for, of faith, hope and charity, the greatest of these is charity. Benevolence, forbearance and forgiveness are the chiefest christian virtues; then why shall we in a christian land entertain the unrelenting, intolerant, and grievous sin of plunging innocence in the midst of vice, at the will or caprice of an individual? And although strange, it is strictly true, that the worst of criminals enjoy advantages which are denied to honest debtors; for even a criminal cannot be arrested, without a specific accusation, under oath; but from inability to pay the smallest debt, from disappointment or mere accident, an unfortunate father may be dragged away, and forced to leave a wife in sorrow, and helpless children to cry for bread, to gratify the demoniac passion of a ruthless Vampire. The criminal may claim the privilege of bail, to be confronted by his accusers, to have counsel at the public charge, to compel the attendance of witnesses, and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury; but the hapless debtor must pine in prison, or submit to an odious ordeal, and commit his property, the fruits of years of care and toil, to be sacrificed and wasted, to the shame and ruin of himself and family. And yet it is said that imprisonment for debt is but a name, and may sometimes coerce the payment of money; but if we admit the fact, shall it justify the shameful practice? Shall we reverse the doctrine, that it is better for ninety and nine criminals to escape, than for one innocent to be condemned? and shall we adopt the unchristian example that it is better for ninety and nine honest debtors to suffer in prison, than for one defrauder to escape unpunished? We trust not; but we are well informed that this barbarous custom is more than nominal; that many unfortunate debtors are yearly delivered to the harpies of the law, to be locked within the common sink of filth and crime, even amongst vile felons. Will future ages credit this? And shall our annals continue to confirm its truth? For the honour of Maryland we will entertain far higher hopes, and expectations. In the catalogue of good consequences expected to flow from the abolition, may be enumerated,

1. The virtual abrogation of the odious system of insolvent laws, with all its train of mental degradation, and human misery, and waste, and destruction of property.

2. Its accordance to, and consistency with the decisions of the supreme judiciary of the union, and the necessary avoidance of a dangerous clashing of jurisdiction.

3. Its tendency to diminish the evils of litigation, by extending the principles of probity and honour, in the common concerns of life, and to reduce the pressure of the public charges.

To these consequences the following observations may be applied:

1. That so far as relates to matters of debt, the abrogation will be complete, but as regards torts, the laws will remain in full force, and such a procedure would seem to be warranted by cogent reasons of retributive justice, as such offences, although comprised in the common classification of causes of civil actions, partake essentially of a criminal character, and it might be considered that a tortfeasor should not enjoy that tender regard and legal protection, which ought to embrace the