

will never be able to penetrate a bosom where the feelings that predominate are those which spring from covetousness or revenge.

Its efficacy to deter individuals from running into debt, like the sleeping force of the statute which prohibits gambling, is contradicted by the experience of all ages, as well as by every day's observation. It is no check upon the honest, prudent debtor, because he doubts not of his ability to comply with his engagements; and the fraudulent one will never be deterred by a penalty which he will have cunningly laid his plans to defeat, or have taken timely measures to evade.

The truth of the maxim, *carcer non solvit*, has become so manifest, that creditors themselves can no longer controvert it, with any shadow of plausibility. The dangers which they have alleged are chimerical, the fears which they have entertained are imaginary, and the apprehensions which they have expressed, may be set down as the suggestions of cupidity, rather than the convictions of reason.

The pretended necessity which is urged in favor of the policy of imprisonment for debt, is but the repetition of the stale and unrighteous plea which tyrants, in every country, have always made as an excuse for the arbitrary power they would exercise.

Experience has fully shown that the advantages supposed to result from the practice of imprisoning debtors, have been greatly overbalanced by the aggregate of additional losses thereby sustained by the creditors themselves in costs, jail fees and other charges; and by the injury done to the community at large by the withdrawing of the services of thousands of individuals from active and useful employment; by withering the hand of industry, by paralyzing the sinews of enterprise, and by diminishing, to the same extent, the amount of the productive labour upon which the prosperity of the country depends. The statements exhibited herewith, sufficiently demonstrate that fact.

As a necessary consequence, then, imprisonment for debt is calculated to foster indolence, produce beggary, and promote crime.

It drives multitudes of our citizens into exile, compelling them to seek elsewhere a new home, and a refuge from the persecution of relentless creditors, for "free citizens own no country in which they are not permitted to enjoy their freedom."

It not only deprives the country of able and patriotic defenders, but it strips whole families of their peace and comfort; it robs mothers, wives and children of their daily bread; and bereaves them of their rightful guardians and natural protectors.

It is not only at war with the best interests of society, but it is incompatible with the essence of liberty, derogatory to the character of liberal institutions, repugnant to the noblest feelings of humanity, revolting to the just pride and manly spirit which should animate every citizen of an independent Republic, degrading to a people professing to be a nation of freemen, and a disgrace to the enlightened age and country in which we live and legislate.

JAMES W. WILLIAMS, Chairman.