

and none met with a more hearty approval in the popular judgment, than that clause, by which it was enjoined upon you to pass laws, in the exemption from execution of a portion of the property of unfortunate debtors. This humane provision is altogether in consonance with the liberal and enlightened spirit of the age. It is deeply to be regretted that you found it impracticable, at your last session, to discharge this constitutional duty. The difficulty, it appears, grew out of the great diversity of opinion, as to the amount of the limit to be fixed. The Constitution provides that the exemption shall not exceed five hundred dollars. That is a liberal sum; and may serve as an index to the expectations of those who framed the Constitution, and of the people who ratified it. To extend an insufficient relief, as a mere formal compliance with the peremptory requirement of the Constitution, would be to disregard its command, by defeating the object of its solicitude. I therefore most earnestly hope that you will, at an early day, and with a liberality worthy of the measure, hasten to gratify the public sentiment upon this subject.

It may be proper here to call your attention again to a kindred matter, alluded to in my last Annual Message. It is not sufficient to secure to the unfortunate the means of physical subsistence; but, it is, also, one of the highest duties of an enlightened Government to provide for the moral and mental cultivation of the people. If this be important, under every conceivable form of human government, how essential must it not be in a Republic, whose institutions rest upon the broad basis of popular intelligence and morality. No nation can be educated, if reduced to the condition of "hewers of wood and drawers of water". If the poor man is obliged to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, his condition should not be embittered by the deprivation of those means, which are necessary for the attainment of the higher enjoyments of social life, and for the proper discharge of the primary duties of Society. I most urgently recommend the passage of a law for the regulation of the hours of labor. I am well aware that many difficulties would attend a universal application of the principle. But, I have no reason to doubt that what has been accomplished by others, is surely within the reach of your wisdom. Certainly, where labor is organized as in factories, public workshops and elsewhere, there can be no difficulty. More especially should the law be made comprehensive, so far as it may relate to apprentices and children of tender years. When the State shall have thus afforded to the laboring man and his children every opportunity for mental culture,