

the law by reason of the reward to the informer had brought into existence. A man of high tone and lofty honor would scorn to appear on the witness stand against a fellow citizen as informer; a citizen who had been licensed during the week to follow a legitimate calling, but who, because he had yielded to the importunities of a friend or customer, and thereby rendered himself liable to the penalties of the law of 1847, and the different supplements thereto, each more stringent in their character, until they all culminated in the law of 1866, enacted by a Legislature that neither reflected the number or political sentiment of our State. It is the puritanical, stringent and draconic features of this law we propose to change. Men can no more be restrained from violating law by penal statutes than made moral or good men by temptation held out to perjury, which the law of 1866 does offer. If the moral sense of the community is not sufficient to discountenance vice, it is vain for the moralist to invoke the aid of the Legislature. We do not believe that a single citizen has been saved from the evils of intemperance, or his moral position improved by the enactment of the different laws, which we propose to modify.

Tacitus, in his glowing periods, utters this sentiment: "We strive after things forbidden, and covet things denied." He knew the inutility of legislating about morals.

A man addicted to the daily use of spirituous liquors, be he high or low in the social scale, that man will have the coveted stimulant despite any law which the Legislature may enact. The man of wealth will always be supplied with "the forbidden fruit;" he will have around him at the well-spread Sunday board, groaning with all the appliances that can stimulate appetite, the man of pleasure, the man of social talent, to enliven the dullness of the circle by a genius stimulated, and which derives its brightness from the grape. The poor laboring man, too, will provide himself with "the forbidden fruit" on Saturday night, less expensive than the rich man, but which will enable him to purchase a momentary oblivion from the thousand and one troubles to which his life is incident. Think you not any man addicted to the habitual use of ardent spirits has not his periods of melancholy thought and remorse? If those moments of bitter reflection will not induce him to abstain, then the work of the legislator is in vain. It possesses no more value, no more efficiency, than the paper on which it is written.

For these reasons we propose a modification of the Sunday Law, and respectfully report the following bill.

WILLIAM DEVECOMON.

Which was read.