

SUMPTUARY LAWS.



He is drinking at the well, from the "Old Oaken Bucket." God provided that drink—it is a "good creature"—and the barefooted boy knows how to appreciate it. Hold on my boy to Nature's beverage. You shall be a legislator yet, and you will be a staunch one for the Maine Law, which does not come under the head of Sumptuary Laws, as is shown by the Rev. John Pierpont. He says, in a letter to the Massachusetts *Life Boat* :—

"The opponents of our "Liquor Law" cry out against it as "*a sumptuary law*;" seeming to suppose that by giving the law a bad name, they may bring it into bad odor.

Before we allow ourselves to be frightened out of our wits by this clamor, may it not be well that we should ask ourselves, or rather, ask those who raise the clamor, two questions. *First*, What is there so very alarming in a sumptuary law? Mr. Justice Blackstone tells us, (Book IV ch. 13. § 7) that, among political writers there has been much controversy concerning the general utility, to a state, of such laws. Baron Montesquieu, he reminds us, lays it down that *luxury*, which it is the purpose of all sumptuary laws to restrain—is *ruinous to democracies*. Now no one, I apprehend, will think of classing Montesquieu, with us "lunatics." Our government is mixed; and if one who so well understood the nature of Governments, and "*the spirit of the laws*" adapted to the preservation of the several forms of Government, as did Baron Montesquieu, seriously think that "*luxury is ruinous*," must the citizen, or the legislature, that seeks to protect the public, by holding in check that which is ruinous to it, be scouted and hooted at, as an enemy to the State? That is