

JUDICIAL SENTIMENTS.

the words of the Vagrant Act (32-33 Vic. cap 28, Ca.):

"All persons loitering in the streets or highways, and obstructing passengers by standing across the footpaths, or by using insulting language, or in any other way, shall be deemed vagrants."

We trust this decision may give the *coup de grace* to the velocipede mania, now fast disappearing, but which for a short time made our streets a theatre for the acrobatic displays of aspirants after bycycular notoriety. It only remains for some philanthropist to carry the matter a little farther, and invoke judicial authority for the suppression of those terrible "obstructions," the perambulators which careless nursemaids propel so skillfully against the sensitive tibæ of unwary pedestrians. We congratulate the London magistrate on the result of the argument, and invite him to "carry the war into Africa," and head a crusade against the "perambulator-propellers" as well as the "velocipedestrians."

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We cannot forbear to notice the following very remarkable passage in a speech delivered by Mr. Lawrence, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, in reply to an address presented to him by the Law Institute at Chicago, on its recent opening. After saying (the *Chicago Legal News* is our authority) that the Bench, if cordially supported by the Bar, could "calmly face any degree of popular passion or partisan clamour, trusting its vindication to the bar, and strong in the conviction that the upright magistrate will certainly be honored in the end by the very community whom his judgments may have offended," he says:

"But a better and deeper reason than this can be given why the bench and bar should keep fully alive the sentiment of brotherhood. It is a fact which cannot be denied that, as a people, we are undergoing rapid deterioration. Our social, political and commercial morals are sinking to a lower and lower grade. We are no longer content with the acquisition of wealth by patient toil, to be when won, as wisely expended as it has been honestly earned. A fevered and insane passion for money has gained possession of the minds of men, and at this moment, is doing more to corrupt our national life than all other causes united. This maddening love of gold, to be expended, not

in the modes which shall make American life the highest development of modern civilization, but in coarse and barbaric display, or what is still worse, in the ways that lead to the debasement of public morals, is leading us, as a nation, down the dance of death. Corruption has become a systematic and almost shameless means of power, and contemporary events at times recall the period when the Roman Empire entered upon its swift descent to ruin. Wise men begin to doubt the ultimate success of our institutions, and already proclaim that in the metropolitan city of the continent, republicanism, as an instrument of municipal government, stands a confessed failure; day by day we seem to be drifting further and further from our ancient anchorage toward an unknown coast whose atmosphere is laden with poison and death.

That it is in the power of the bench and bar of the country, unaided, to arrest the downward tendency of the times, is not to be supposed. Nevertheless we can do something, and, if properly aided by other conservative elements of society, can do much to check it. We can, at least, make a noble struggle, and be the last to fall. Common as it is to utter rapid witticisms in disparagement of the bar, the well-known truth, nevertheless is, that the men who, in better times, have done most to create and mould our political institutions and control the social forces of the country, have belonged to the profession of the law. If you, gentlemen of the bar, can constantly live up to the highest and noblest traditions of professional life; if you can keep ever fresh and bright the sentiment which doubtless now animates you, that the true ambition of the lawyer is not the acquisition of wealth, but of that pure professional fame which is to be won by the exercise of your high vocation in a spirit of the most punctilious honour, and with an ever present consciousness that you, as well as the court, are ministers at the altar of Justice; and if the various judicial tribunals of this state shall so perform their duties as to command the confidence and support of such a bar, shall be so clear in their high office that not even a disappointed litigant can venture to charge them with unholy motives—then the judiciary and the bar standing together, will, in the future, as in the past, furnish a sure protection against wrong, and keep alive in the hearts of all good men the hope that our downward tendencies as a people may be stayed, and that we may get back upon those ancient ways wherein we walked in the better days of the republic."

Now considering that these are the words of an American, they are very remarkable, and