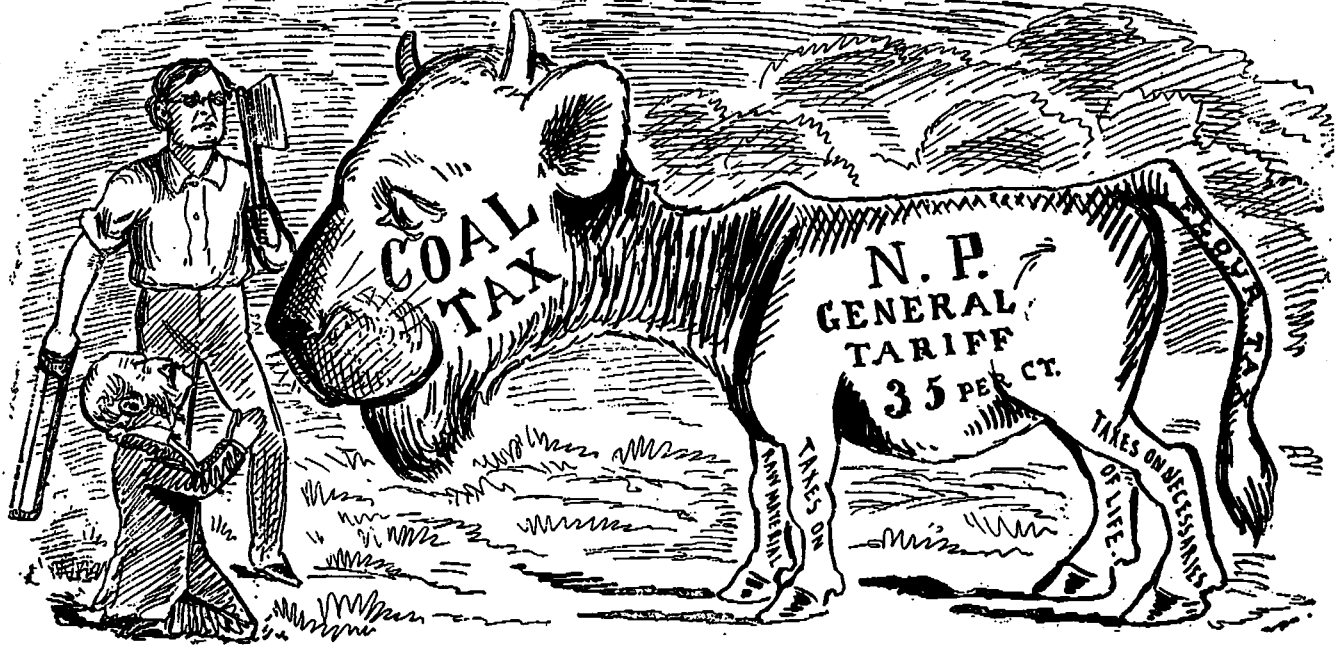


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THE CLEAR GRIT POLICY.

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was a gold key and an envelope sealed and addressed, "To the Lady of the Lilacs, introducing Mr. Ralph Abercrombie."

Vol. III.

The Lilacs was the name of a handsome villa in the neighborhood, whose occupant was hardly ever known to stray beyond her own beautiful grounds. Thither Ralph hastened, and unlocking a side door found himself in a richly cultivated garden, where the air was laden with the perfume of all manner of exotic flowers, and where he was received by a beautiful girl who told him that her mistress had for some time been anxiously awaiting his arrival. At the porch of the villa Ralph was received by the original of the miniature, who gently reproached him for being later than she had expected, an instrument resembling a telephone having informed her that the iron safe had at length been opened and the golden key and portrait in possession of Ralph. Their marriage took place that evening, and Ralph enjoyed every happiness which love could give him joined with wealth, a beautiful home and every luxury of the mind and the senses. A year passed like a dream; on the anniversary of their wedding, the Lady of the Lilacs informed her husband that she must leave him for the space of twenty-four hours. As he valued her happiness she implored him not to enter a locked closet which opened on their room. He promised; the Lady of the Lilacs left him with a parting kiss, but again curiosity was too strong for his fidelity to his word. He unlocked the closet; it contained a table with a curiously shaped flask of wine, the cork of which darted out when he touched it, and the foaming and flashing liquor had such a delicious odor that he could not resist drinking it. A strange feeling of dizziness came over him; he seemed to be passing through some strange and terrible dream, and now he seemed to see his wife, but the Lady of the Lilacs was dressed in widow's weeds; a crape cap covered her luxurious tresses, and in her hand she held a bunch of withered lilacs. When Ralph awoke he found himself in the house of the recluses beside the iron safe, which was open, but the key and the miniature were gone. He lost no time in making his way to the Lilacs, but the windows were closed, the garden gate locked, and over the door was the inscrip-

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tion "To Let." So he resumed his solitary life, once more a recluse, and was known in the neighborhood as the man who never laughed. Not even GRIP's most elaborate pleasantries could induce him to smile. But he is not the last who has found that the bottle has power to annihilate the most perfect conditions of domestic happiness.

"Whose ale is this!" asked our Funny Contributor of the popular bar-tender of the Benson House, Lindsay. "Cosgrave's," replied James. "Then," said our scribe, "when I go to Toronto I'll pay Mr. Cosgrave." James smiled a ghostly smile; but our contributor doesn't come that game again.

The Spirometer.

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