

appeared 1876. He spoke :—" So, Mr. Grip, you thought I was dead, eh ?"

" Oh ! no, not dead ; only—only—"

" Exactly, departed. That's it, gone to the shades—to my numerous relations who were waiting to embrace me."

" Well, and why have you come back ? Isn't it comfortable there ? You had a good many storms made by Wiggins, and earthquakes, and wars when you were here. Surely you do not want to try it over again."

" I can't rest."

" What's the matter ?"

" Politics."

" What about politics ?"

" I'm excited. Can't sleep. Five hundred grains of opium has no effect."

" Poor shade ! Where wilt thou find peace ?"

" From GRIP. Came to see about it. Don't come regularly. Haven't taken my name off the list, have you ?"

" By no means—never do such an ungentlemanly thing till we've proved a man has no conscience, and intends to beat us out of our hard-earned cash."

" Thought so. Must be the fault of the P.O. Department. No P.M.-General to abuse down there."

" Well, we'll send a copy by special electrical express after this."

" That's right. The country would go to destruction without GRIP. The Tories say you're Grit, and the Grits say you're Tory, but you give it to them both fair and square. The *Globe* would ruin one-half of the country and the *Mail* the other half, but in the hands of GRIP the Dominion's safe."

" Stop, Stop ! Modesty forbids me to listen—"

" Can't stop. Truth must come out. Go on, most wise, fair, and funny bird. Be to 1887 what you ever were to me. Hold every humbug up to ridicule, and don't forget to send me all the clever things your pen or pencil—"

The voice grew faint. The kettle hissed louder than ever, and the dim form of 1886 curled upward in wreaths of vapor, and was lost to view. Instead, John A. winked at us over a burning coal, while Edward Blake sat meditatively on a clinker, revolving in his mind the great question of PROHIBITION.

THE INDEPENDENT RACKET—A COMEDY.

FIRST ACT.

SCENE—A private council chamber.

Present—Sir John and a chosen band of members.

Sir John—That I think is about the best way we can get out of it, however, if any of you gents can suggest any other idea, equally practicable and comprehensive, I will be glad to give it, as Mowat would remark, "my consideration."

C—n—I do not think, Sir John, that idea could be improved on. The recent straining of relations between the *Mail* and the Government, the preliminary mutual repudiations of each other's opinions, the prohibitory *coup* has all been, to my mind, the perfection of acting ; but this draft of an address to the public from the platform of honest independence takes the cake. *Ma foi !* It is the sublime of dissemblément !

W—e— Of course, the repudiation being mutual, people are more likely to be taken in by it. That is to say, more likely to consider it a genuine affair.

Sir John—With regard to this anti-Catholic crusade

these hands are clean—the *Mail* is independent—we are not responsible for its utterances, in fact we repudiate them, and call upon our brethren of the Catholic persuasion to endorse the stand we have taken against the no-popery-ites by returning me to power.

B—e—Grand ! simply grand ! I've just been worrying how the deuce we were going to get out of this corner, when—

Sir John—Slap bang ! here we are again ! ha ! ha ! As I said, our Catholic friends in Quebec and elsewhere will endorse our tacit defence of their religious principles, while on the other hand, the *Mail*, with its leaning to Conservatism, will carry double weight with the Protestants, now that it is no longer a party organ, but an independent voice.

W—e—But about the financial prosperity of the *Mail* after the supposed withdrawal of—of—

Sir John—Exactly ! but haven't you heard the rumors about the *Mail* being in a hole ? Oh, yes ! the *Mail's* in a hole ! a big hole ! the withdrawal of government pap, and so forth. Is thy servant a cat, that you should see green in his eye ?

C—n—*Pardonnez moi*, it is wonderful ! it is complete ! Your head is great my chief !

F—r—The prohibition departure then was merely preliminary to the greater *coup*. The *Mail*, of course, will support us when we bring in a prohibitory—

Sir John—Oh, the devil ! yes,—I suppose we'll have to tackle that next—better that than let Blake get the temperance votes, which I believe are on the increase, and not to be sneezed at.

F—r—Not to be sneezed at, I assure you. I happen to know from actual experience during a course—

Sir John—Excuse me, I think that's about all. Everything's arranged so that from whatever quarter the wind blows, it is entirely taken out of the sails of the *Globe*.

L—n—The *Globe*, Bah ! the *Globe* will say we but pull wool over the eyes of the people—say, it is all arranged for the party.

Sir John—Shouldn't wonder ! just like Annanias' impudence to say so. All the same, not having a party organ to fight with this election, he'll have to exercise himself with raking up old issues and making the air blue with big cuss-words, for the *Telegram* to compile a Grit dictionary out of. Gents, it's a compliment to be slandered by a man like that ! Whew ! didn't think it was so late—Foster, like a good fellow, oblige me by calling up McCarthy and Bunting—I'd like to see them as soon as possible.

At the telephone—[Exit Sir John and two members.]

F—r—Ah ! Hello ! ah, yes, yes, all right, hello ! ah, tell McCarthy and Bunting that the chief wants to see them soon. Hello ! eh ? oh ! splendid. People are bound to be gulled—gull them and they worship you—be honest and they repudiate you. You came out honest and independent, and we repudiate you—ha ! ha !—eh ? Hello ! yes, yes, the hugest joke of the season ! ha ! ha ! That independent ticket's the racket ! Tra-la !

POET AND PEER.

TIME by thy spell of rapture and tremulous tears,
Thine in the sway of thy wisdom, the world cried,

" Too short, O Bard, thy song !"

To-day, a thousand asses lift their ears

Unto thy singing, and bray, dissatisfied,

" How long, O Lord, how long ?"

W. J. H.

THE world moves because it cannot pay rent.