



Free Whiskey to Boot

Date
c. 1888

Primary Maker
Thomas Nast

Medium
Wood engraving on paper

Description
This illustration depicts a worried man seated at a table, who looks at two snakes emerging from his boots. A sign in the background reads “The protective system must be maintained. Its abandonment has always been followed by general disaster to all interests, except those of the usurer and the sheriff.” This is a direct quote from the 1888 Republican Party Platform, as are the words that appear at the lower right: “The Republican party cordially sympathizes with all wise and well-directed efforts for the promotion of temperance and morality.” On the table next to the man sits a bottle and a glass, besides which are the words “The tax upon spirits used in the arts = free.” “The protective system” is referring to the protective tariffs, which Republicans believed should be increased, raising price of imported goods and encouraging people to buy domestic goods instead, which also protected domestic jobs. A whisky tax was implemented in 1888.

Dimensions
Composition: 6 1/2 x 6 in. (16.5 x 15.2 cm) Sheet (Irregular): 11 x 9 1/2 in. (27.9 x 24.1 cm)