

LETTER ELEVENTH.

From the Evening Post, Tuesday, Feb. 28.

"AN EXAMPLE OF THE EFFECT OF PROTECTION.—Among the commodities which have hitherto not been permitted to be brought into France from foreign countries is cutlery. It is now included in the list of merchandize to which the late treaty with Great Britain opens the ports of France.

"Those who have made a comparison of French cutlery with the cutlery of the British Islands must have been at first surprised at the difference in the quality. Nothing can exceed the perfection of workmanship in the articles turned out from the workshops of Sheffield. The symmetry and perfect adaptation of the form, the excellence of the material, the freedom from flaws, and the mirror-like polish which distinguish them, have for years past been the admiration of the world. French cutlery, placed by its side, has a ruder, rougher appearance, an unfinished look, as if the proper tools were wanting to the artisan, or as if it was the product of a race among whom the useful arts had made less progress.

"This is not owing to any parsimony of nature, either in supplying the material to be wrought or the faculties of the artisan who brings it to a useful shape. The ores of the French mines yield metal of an excellent quality, and the French race is one of the most ingenious and dexterous in the world. In all manufactures requiring the nicest precision and the greatest delicacy of workmanship the French may be said to excel the rest of mankind. Out of the most unpromising and apparently intractable materials their skilful hands fabricate articles of use or ornament of the most pleasing and becoming forms. What, then, is the reason that their cutlery is so much inferior to that of Great Britain?

"In all probability the reason is that which at one time caused the silk trade to languish in Great Britain, which at one time made the people of the same country complain that their glass was both bad in quality and high in price. In both these instances the competition of foreign artisans was excluded; the British manufacturer having the monopoly of the market, there was nothing to stimulate his ingenuity; he produced articles of inferior quality, his vocation did not flourish, and both he and the community were dissatisfied. So with regard to the cutlery of France, the difficulty has been the prohibition of the foreign article. Let the foreign and the French commodity be looked at side by side for a few years in the shop-windows of Paris, if the duty to which cutlery is still to be subject will permit it, and we think we may venture to pledge ourselves that the French workmen will show themselves in due time no way behind their English rivals. We may expect the same result to take place which has so much astonished and puzzled the friends of protection in Sardinia, where the removal of prohibitions and protective duties has caused a hundred different branches of manufacturing industry to spring to sudden and prosperous activity."

DEAR SIR:—Anxious that all the protectionists of the Union should, as far as possible, have it within their power to study both sides of this question, I here, as you see, lay before my readers your latest argument against protection, thereby affording them that opportunity of judging for themselves which you so systematically deny to the readers of the *Post*. Why is it that it is so denied? Is it that the British system can be maintained in no other manner than by such concealment