

of life more easily attainable by the labouring classes, we think it is a most fatal mistake, and time will prove it so. We believe it is a well established fact, that with all the vast amount of manufacturing and commercial wealth now in Britain, the condition of the working classes is not much improved. Large accumulations of wealth in the hands of individuals is seldom found to produce much advantage to the poor, particularly when these accumulations are made from the labour of the poor. It appears an absurdity in the advocates of free trade, who may have acquired great wealth in displacing labour by the introduction of machinery in manufactures, &c., to attribute the privations of the labouring classes to agricultural protective laws, when the actual cause of these privations is the want of employment, or when employed, the vast disproportion between the wages of labour and the profits of the manufacturer or merchant. Ireland is a practical example in the proof of our proposition. The condition of the labouring classes in that country is almost constantly deplorable, though the land abounds in all the necessaries of life. She exports the best of her agricultural productions, that would give ample food and clothing to all her vast population, if they could only be employed at a fair rate of wages, that would enable them to keep this produce for their own use. Notwithstanding the failure in potatoes, she would not require the Indian corn of the far west to keep her poor in existence, if they could only have the means of retaining for their own use the produce of their own country. What, we would ask, has agricultural protection to do with the privation and suffering of the Irish poor? Provisions are seldom dear in that country, because they are generally in greater abundance than money to purchase them in the hands of those who may require them. Free trade advocates may pretend that when England can have provisions from foreign countries, she will not require the Irish provisions. But if this were so, would absentee landowners forego the rents of their Irish properties, or how would they be paid? This would be the difficulty; and, therefore, trade however free, will not be likely to make the necessaries of life more accessible to the Irish poor, unless their labour can find constant employment at remunerating wages, that will enable them to purchase what they may require, or keep what they may raise. We do not offer these observations from any objection to the principle of free trade, but we wish to prove that agricultural protection has not been the cause of privation and suffering to the labouring classes, particularly not to those who suffer most, the Irish poor. We have constantly advocated the expediency of augmenting the quantity and value of the productions of our own land, convinced, as we are, that those productions are the only permanent basis of wealth for every country, and that all other dependence is uncertain and transitory. If the contemplated changes will not have the effect of en-

couraging our own productions, we hesitate not to say, that they cannot benefit Canada generally. It may be possible that some interests may benefit, but unless every species of protective duties are done away, the change cannot fail to injure the prospects of agriculture. By the abrogation of all protective duties, we might gain as much perhaps, on one side, as we would lose on the other.

The great evil from which humanity suffers most in civilized communities, is, the want of constant employment at a fairly remunerating rate of wages, for all those who are dependent upon the wages of labour. We know that high prices may be consistent with comfort and abundance to all classes; and that those in a state of destitution and starvation may be surrounded by plenty and cheapness; and that these two states are solely produced by full employment and the want of it. A manufacturer introduces a steam engine, that will execute the work of thousands in his manufactory, and which will make no complaints for the want of sufficient food or clothing,—he discharges his labourers,—telling them how rejoiced he is to save human labour; because that, according to political economy, any machinery that will execute the labour of man, should be considered a blessing to the human race. He congratulates them on not being obliged to work; and tells them there is nothing further required to secure them in idleness and abundance, but an abrogation of the corn laws,—that corn and provisions grow without much labour in other countries, and all that these other countries require is a free permission to send them for their use. That if they should be disappointed in obtaining a free supply without labour or money, there are poor houses for them, where they will be provided for, and where they will not be troubled with a family, or any increase of it during their stay. We appeal to any true Briton, if he would wish to see the labouring class, or any portion of them that are able to work, consigned to such degrading wretchedness as a poor house. Whatever political economists may say, it would be better that machinery should be buried in the depths of the ocean, than have human beings, able and willing to work, confined in poor houses, and fed by ounces, like felons in a cell, instead of being employed in productive labour. Poor houses are necessary in all populous countries; but to be obliged to confine able-bodied healthy men in idleness, and not more than half fed, when the British dominions contains so many millions of acres of uncultivated and excellent land, is a state of things that is very much to be deplored. The general constitution of man is adapted to active employment, and it is changing his very nature, to shut him up in a poor house, where his mind and feelings must be utterly prostrated, and his state brought very nearly to that of the brute. These observations are not intended to apply to the old and infirm poor, who certainly have a