



An Unemployed Poet

A letter has been written to a Devizes paper by Mr. Edward Stevens, auditor of the Wiltshire Workhouse accounts, recording an interesting incident in connection with the unemployed, showing, as he says, that "the unemployed in Wiltshire are not so invariably ungrateful for the relief afforded them by the poor law system as their brethren in London appear to be. The following was written, in, I am told, a tolerably good hand, upon the whitewashed walls of a casual ward within my district:-

I cannot take my walks abroad,
I am under lock and key;
And much the public I applaud
For all their care of me.

How many poor out in the street,
Half naked I behold;
Whilst I am kept in a nice tramp's ward
And sheltered from the cold.

This poetic effusion was surmounted by a device of three fish laid across each other, which may, or may not, have had some hidden significance."

Gloucester Citizen, 31 October 1887