

six to eight murders perpetrated yearly by footpads on the public roads ; and paragraphs such as the following, which we extract from this ancient journal, were comparatively common :—“ On the 23d of this month [March 1682] three highwaymen,—two on horseback and one on foot,—set upon two persons on Hind-head Heath, in Surrey, one of whom they mortally wounded, and took from them a black crop gelding near fifteen hands high ;” or such notices as the following, inserted, as a general citation of witnesses, by the keeper of Newgate :—“ Whereas many robberies are daily committed on the highways, to the great prejudice of his Majesty’s subjects,—These are to give notice, that there has lately been taken, and are now in the custody of Captain Richardson, Master of his Majesty’s jail of Newgate, several supposed highway robbers, of whom here followeth the names and descriptions,” &c. Such was the state of things in times when the earlier British novelists, desirous of making the incidents lie thick in their fictions, gave them the form of a journey, and sent their heroes a travelling over England. The evil, however, was at length put down, partly through the marked improvement which took place in the police of the country, but still more through the great increase of its provincial newspapers, and the vast acceleration in the rate of its travelling,—circumstances which have united to render the escape or concealment of the highwayman impossible. And so the highway murder has become one of almost the rarest offences in the criminal register of the country. Very different is the case, however, with murders of another kind. Our newspapers no longer contain in their English corner paragraphs at all resembling those we have just quoted, by way of specimen, from the “ London Gazette,” and which so strike, in the perusal, as characteristic of an age only half-escaped from barbarism ; but they exhibit, instead, their paragraphs, to the barbarity of which the accommodating in-