

family dependent on him, and much in terror of the neighbouring workhouse. The evidence of Mr M. Gibson, Inspector of Prisons in England, is peculiarly valuable on this head :—“ There are certainly many,” he says, “ who poach and are sent to prison, who would not commit a robbery.” “ There are poachers,” he adds, “ from the love of adventure and of sport, who are the most irreclaimable of any ; there are poachers from poverty ; and there is the young man, always in the fields, who from early life has set his bird-trap, and cannot resist the impulse of subjugating the wild animals.” Such is Mr Gibson’s opinion of a numerous class of poachers ; and their opinion of themselves seems, as might be expected, not greatly worse than his. “ Have you had any opportunity,” he is asked by the Committee, “ of ascertaining the opinions of chaplains and officers of prisons at all generally as to the operation of the present game-laws ?” The reply is eminently worthy of being carefully noted and pondered. “ Yes,” he says : “ with regard to the effect on the prisoners, the opinion of the chaplains generally is, that they can produce no moral effect whatever upon them under the game-laws ; that they leave the prison only to return ; frequently replying to the proffered advice by saying, that *the game was made for the poor as well as the rich, and that God made the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea for all.*” It so happens, curiously enough, that Judge Blackstone, and most of the philosophic thinkers which the country has yet produced, were of the same opinion ; but, more curious still, not a few of even the more zealous game-preserving proprietors seem also to entertain it, though of course in a greatly more covert style. They are indisputably gentlemen, and would neither employ as their servants habit-and-repute thieves, nor yet act the part of the Jonathan Wilds of the last age, by being receivers of stolen goods. And yet there are two facts which come fully out in the evidence. They have no hesitation