

were entirely dispersed, seven of the thieves were in actual custody, and the rest driven, some out of the town, and others out of the kingdom."

For the last six or eight years, however, there has certainly been *no* improvement of the nature which took place in the criminal records of the country during the previous quarter of a century ; on the contrary, the course has been retrograde ; and at the present time we seem as if passing to the state of matters which obtained during the days of Justice Fielding and Jonathan Wild. Murders have been committed during the last month of the old mercenary class, that, in circumstances of merciless barbarity, do not yield to any in the "Newgate Calendar;" assaults on the person for the same object have rendered the new term *garrotting* a completely naturalized one of familiar use ; and housebreakings on a large scale have become such common events, that almost every succeeding newspaper records their occurrence. In some cases the respectable trader goes to his bed *square with the world*, and rises in the morning a ruined man. And yet never was there a time when certain of the causes which formed so powerful a check on crime in the past were so influentially in operation as now. Never were there so many newspapers to spread over the country the intelligence of every offence in all its details, and to direct public attention on the offenders ; never was there a time when such intelligence could be transmitted with even a tithe of the present speed,—the act of Sir Robert Peel has certainly not been suffered to fall into desuetude ; and never had the country a more active or intelligent magistracy. What, then, can be the more than neutralizing causes of such various circumstances of advantage, under which crime of what we have termed the professional class is so obviously on the increase ? The question is easily answered. The causes are two. In the first place, that change through which Britain no longer possesses penal