

Amidst all the discussions which have taken place upon this most interesting and most important subject, it has universally been allowed, that the great end of human punishment is the *prevention of crime*; and it is a fact not less acknowledged, that no motive works so powerfully upon the minds even of very depraved men, in deterring them from a violation of the laws, than the thought of those ruinous and disgraceful consequences which their misdeeds must bring upon innocent children and relatives.

These sentiments are, with his usual elegance of diction, applied by Sir W. Blackstone to the crime of Suicide, "Our island's shame!" and (vol. iv. p. 190) that valuable Commentator propounds the question— "What punishment can human laws inflict on one who has withdrawn himself from their reach? They can only act upon what he has left behind him—his reputation and fortune: on the former by an ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through his body; on the latter, by a forfeiture of all his goods and chattels to the King; hoping that his care for either his own reputation, or the welfare of his family, would be some motive to restrain him from so desperate and wicked an act."

A very just and liberal view of this appalling subject has recently been taken by Parliament, as will appear from the following

#### ABSTRACT

of " an Act" (4th George IV. cap. 52), "to alter and amend the Law relating to the Interment of the Remains of any Person found *Felo de se*." (passed 8th July, 1823.)

Sect. 1. Enacts, "That from and after the passing of this Act, it shall not be lawful for any Coroner, or other Officer having authority to hold Inquests, to issue any warrant or other process directing the interment of the remains of persons against whom a finding of *Felo de se* shall be had, in any public highway; but that such Coroner or other Officer shall give directions for the private interment of the remains of such person *Felo de se* (without any stake being driven through the body of such person) in the church-yard or other burial-ground of the parish or place in which, the remains of such person might, by the laws or customs of England, be interred, if the verdict of *Felo de se* had not been found against such person; such interment to be made within 24 hours from the Ending of the inquisition, and to take place between the hours of nine and twelve at night."

But (Sect. 2) the Act gives no authority for performing any of the rites of Christian burial on such interment; and it contains a salvo of the laws and usages relating to the burial of such persons, in all other respects.