

## A CONDEMNED SERMON IN NEWGATE.

The following is an extract from Mr. E. G. Wakefield's *Book on Punishment in the Metropolis* (London). Mr. Wakefield, it may be recollected, was sentenced to a long imprisonment for the abduction of Miss Turner ; this book has been the result of his prison observations and reflections.

" THE condemned service is conducted with peculiar solemnity, being attended by the Sheriffs in their great gold chains, and is in other ways calculated to make a strong impression on the minds of the congregation, who may be considered as representing the criminals of the Metropolis. Whether the impression be a good or a bad one, I leave the reader to decide : but in order that he may have the necessary materials for deciding justly I lay before him the following description of a condemned service, premising only this—that not a circumstance is stated which I have not witnessed.

" The Sheriffs are already seated at their own pew, accompanied by their under Sheriffs, and two friends drawn thither by curiosity. Not far from them appear two tall footmen, swelling with pride at their state liveries. The ordinary is in the desk ; his surplice is evidently fresh from the mangle, and those who see him every day observe an air of peculiar solemnity, and perhaps of importance in his face and manner. The Clerk is busied, in searching out the Psalms proper for the occasion. The tragedy begins. Enter first the schoolmaster and his pupils—then the prisoners for trial ; next the transports, amongst whom are the late companions of the condemned men ; and then the women. Lastly come the condemned. They are four in number. The first is a youth, about eighteen apparently. He is to die for stealing in a dwelling house goods valued at more than £5. His features have no felonious cast ; on the contrary, they are handsome, intelligent, and even pleasing. Craft, and fear, and debauchery have not yet had time to put decided marks on him. He steps boldly with his head upright, looks to the women's gallery and smiles. His intention is to pass for a brave fellow with those who have brought him to his ultimate end ; but the attempt fails ; fear is stronger in him than vanity.—Suddenly his head droops, and he sits down, his bent knees tremble and knock together. The second is an old criminal, on whose countenance villainy is distinctly written. He has been sentenced to death before, but reprieved and transported for life. Having incurred the penalty of death by the act, in itself innocent of returning to England, he is now about to die for a burglary committed since his return. His glance at the Sheriffs and at the Ordinary tells of scorn and defiance. The third is a sheep stealer, a poor ignorant creature, in whose case are mitigating points, but who is to be hanged in con-