

reasoning, for the just interpretation of the laws. We see the same crimes punished in a different manner at different times in the same tribunals; the consequence of not having consulted the constant, and invariable voice of the laws, but the erring instability of arbitrary interpretation.

THE disorders, that may arise from a rigorous observance of the letter of penal laws, are not to be compared with those produced by the interpretation of them. The first are temporary inconveniences which will oblige the legislator to correct the letter of the law, the want of preciseness, and uncertainty of which has occasioned these disorders; and this will put a stop to the fatal liberty of explaining; the source of arbitrary and venal declamations. When the code of laws is once fixed, it should be observed in the literal sense, and nothing more is left to the judge, than to determine, whether an action be, or be not conformable to the written law. When the rule of right which ought to direct the ac-
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