

choice of becoming a bad christian, or a martyr. For this reason, oaths become, by degrees, a mere formality, and all sentiments of religion, perhaps the only motive of honesty in the greatest part of mankind, are destroyed. Experience proves their inutility; I appeal to every judge, whether he has ever known that an oath alone has brought truth from the lips of a criminal; and reason tells us, it must be so; for all laws are useless, and, in consequence, destructive, which contradict the natural feelings of mankind. Such laws are like a dike, opposed directly to the course of a torrent; it is either immediately overwhelmed, or, by a whirlpool formed by itself, it is gradually undermined and destroyed.

C H A P. XIX.

Of the Advantage of immediate Punishment.

THE more immediately, after the commission of a crime, a punishment is inflicted, the more just and useful it will be.