OF all the parts of a law the moſt effectual is the *vindicatory*. For it is but loſt labour to ſay, "do this, or avoid that," unleſs we alſo declare, "this ſhall be the conſequence of your non-com-"pliance." We muſt therefore obſerve, that the main ſtrength and force of a law conſiſts in the penalty annexed to it. Herein is to be found the principal obligation of human laws.

LEGISLATORS and their laws are ſaid to *compel* and *oblige*; not that by any natural violence they ſo conſtrain a man, as to render it impoſſible for him to act otherwiſe than as they direct, which is the ſtrict ſenſe of obligation: but becauſe, by declaring and exhibiting a penalty againſt offenders, they bring it to paſs that no man can eaſily chooſe to tranſgreſs the law; ſince, by reaſon of the impending correction, compliance is in a high degree preferable to diſobedience. And, even where rewards are propoſed as well as puniſhments threatened, the obligation of the law ſeems chiefly to conſiſt in the penalty: for rewards, in their nature, can only *perſuade* and *allure*; nothing is *compulſory* but puniſhment.

IT is held, it is true, and very juſtly, by the principal of our ethical writers, that human laws are binding upon mens conſciences. But if that were the only, or moſt forcible obligation, the good only would regard the laws, and the bad would ſet them at defiance. And, true as this principle is, it muſt ſtill be underſtood with ſome reſtriction. It holds, I apprehend, as to *rights*; and that, when the law has determined the field to belong to Titius, it is matter of conſcience no longer to withhold or to invade it. So alſo in regard to *natural duties*, and ſuch offences as are *mala in ſe*: here we are bound in conſcience, becauſe we are bound by ſuperior laws, before thoſe human laws were in being, to perform the one and abſtain from the other. But in relation to thoſe laws which enjoin only *poſitive duties*, and forbid only ſuch things as are not *mala in ſe* but *mala prohibita* merely, an-