nexing a penalty to non-compliance, here I apprehend conſcience is no farther concerned, than by directing a ſubmiſſion to the penalty, in caſe of our breach of thoſe laws: for otherwiſe the multitude of penal laws in a ſtate would not only be looked upon as an impolitic, but would alſo be a very wicked thing; if every ſuch law were a ſnare for the conſcience of the ſubject. But in theſe caſes the alternative is offered to every man; "either ab-"ſtain from this, or ſubmit to ſuch a penalty;" and his con-ſcience will be clear, whichever ſide of the alternative he thinks proper to embrace. Thus, by the ſtatutes for preſerving the game, a penalty is denounced againſt every unqualified perſon that kills a hare. Now this prohibitory law does not make the tranſgreſſion a moral offence: the only obligation in conſcience is to ſubmit to the penalty if levied.

I HAVE now gone through the definition laid down of a mu-nicipal law; and have ſhewn that it is "a rule---of civil con-"duct---preſcribed---by the ſupreme power in a ſtate---com-"manding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong:" in the explication of which I have endeavoured to interweave a few uſeful principles, concerning the nature of civil government, and the obligation of human laws. Before I conclude this ſection, it may not be amiſs to add a few obſervations concerning the *inter-pretation* of laws.

WHEN any doubt aroſe upon the conſtruction of the Roman laws, the uſage was to ſtate the caſe to the emperor in writing, and take his opinion upon it. This was certainly a bad method of interpretation. To interrogate the legiſlature to decide parti-cular diſputes, is not only endleſs, but affords great room for partiality and oppreſſion. The anſwers of the emperor were called his reſcripts, and theſe had in ſucceeding caſes the force of per-petual laws; though they ought to be carefully diſtinguiſhed, by every rational civilian, from thoſe general conſtitutions, which had only the nature of things for their guide. The emperor Ma-crinus, as his hiſtorian Capitolinus informs us, had once reſolved

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