moderate, and to explain them. What equity is, and how impoſſible in it's very eſſence to be reduced to ſtated rules, hath been ſhewn in the preceding ſection. I ſhall therefore only add, that there are courts of this kind eſtabliſhed for the benefit of the ſubject, to correct and ſoften the rigor of the law, when through it's generality it bears too hard in particular caſes; to detect and puniſh latent frauds, which the law is not minute enough to reach; to enforce the execution of ſuch matters of truſt and confidence, as are binding in conſcience, though perhaps not ſtrictly legal; to deliver from ſuch dangers as are owing to misfortune or overſight; and, in ſhort, to relieve in all ſuch caſes as are, *bona fide*, objects of relief. This is the buſineſs of our courts of equity, which however are only converſant in matters of property. For the freedom of our conſtitution will not permit, that in criminal caſes a power ſhould be lodged in any judge, to conſtrue the law otherwiſe than according to the letter. This caution, while it admirably protects the public liberty, can never bear hard upon individuals. A man cannot ſuffer *more* puniſhment than the law aſſigns, but he may ſuffer *leſs*. The laws cannot be ſtrained by partiality to inflict a penalty beyond what the letter will warrant; but, in caſes where the letter induces any apparent hardſhip, the crown has the power to pardon.