

penetrating, warm, calm look, that silently exclaimed, 'Lord Jesus! and wilt thou swear?' I saw, I heard, I felt guilt and innocence.

"That testimony is very open to suspicion, which is given by a person who is evidently meditating upon the materiality and tendency of his answer, before he will let it be given, or, on the other hand, who bolts out with precipitancy, before he hears the question, an answer indicating a catechised preparation; the effect of either of these circumstances singly is greatly increased by the combination in different parts of the same testimony. But even that previous study of an answer, which has been mentioned, will have a different effect, according to the character, and situation, and habits, of the person who is examined. I have, in an earlier part of this discussion, taken notice of circumstances calculated to influence the disposition, and which, though by no means justifying prevarication in any case, diminish the suspicion of a want of substantial veracity, which results from a want of propriety in incidental particulars. The suspicion of fabrication rises highest, when the witness is one of those inferior retainers of the law, who are commonly attendant upon courts of judicature, who have a cunning acuteness in the observation of its proceedings, and who, from their occupation, are frequently in the habit of swearing to facts, in their own nature liable to misrepresentation, and placed beyond the reach of detection or contradiction.

"The general character of witnesses is also a circumstance which has naturally a considerable influence upon the credit of their testimony. . . . But, wherever there is reasonable ground to suppose a bias in the mind, with respect to the effect of the testimony, a previous criminality of conduct will very justly excite suspicions of its veracity; and the mind will naturally refuse its assent to declarations made by those whose disposition in favour of the event cannot be supposed to be counter-