From their nature, pleadings in equity do not in general admit of the same precision as pleadings at law; but in equity, as well as at law, the pleadings must be substantially sufficient. The plaintiff is not tied down to any particular form of stating his case in his bill; for, however loosely or awkwardly its statements may be made, yet he may obtain the relief he seeks, if, upon a fair reading of the whole, it appears, that a sound case has been substantially set forth. But if a defendant in equity puts in a *plea*, considerable precision is required; because he thereby proposes to reduce his case to a single point.(*r*) And therefore, as to pleas in equity, there does not appear to be any material difference between the rules of a court of common law, and those of a court of chancery. Where the case, as stated in the bill, appears to involve several distinct subjects as component parts of one complex whole, and the defendant offers a plea in bar, it must be so framed as to be exactly applicable to the case; for if it be impossible to know to which of the several subjects spoken of in the bill it precisely refers, it will be deemed bad in form as well as in substance.(*s*) So too a plea in equity, as well as at law, must tender a *material* issue; it must not only reduce the defence to a single point, but that point must be of such a nature as, when determined, will enable the court to put an end to the case.(*t*) In equity, as at law, a plea of the statute of limitations must be properly applicable to the particular nature of the case; as where a note was given for the payment of an annuity during the life of the annuitant, the defendant pleading, that he did not promise to pay within six years is bad; he should have pleaded the cause of action hath not accrued within the six years.(*u*) And so, in an action of trespass, the statutory limitation to which is *four* years, where the defendant, instead of relying upon that lapse of time as a bar, pleaded not guilty within *six* years; the plea upon demurrer was held bad; because it did not precisely disclose, and rely upon that which had been made a bar by the statute.(*v*) Whence it appears to be necessary, that the plea of this defendant *Richard Henderson*, should be found to have reduced the defence to a single material point, the determination of which will enable the court at once to put an end to the case.

(*r*) Carew *v.* Johnston, 2 Scho. & Lefr. 305; Rowe *v.* Teed, 15 Ves. 377.—(*s*) Meder *v.* Bert, Gilb. Eq. Rep. 185; Talbot *v.* May, 3 Atk. 18.—(*t*) Jones *v.* Davis, 16 Ves. 264; Morrison *v.* Turnour, 18 Ves. 181; Steff *v.* Andrews, 2 Mad. Rep. 5; Co. Litt. 126.—(*u*) 3 Atk. 70; Gould *v.* Johnson, 2 Salk. 422.—(*v*) Blackmore *v.* Tiddertey, 2 Ld. Raym. 1099; Macfadzen *v.* Olevant, 6 East, 389.