

<http://montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?article3193>



# Annex 6 (Book XV, chapter 9)

- The Spirit of Law - Annexes to the edition of 1758 -

Publication date: samedi 8 septembre 2018

---

Copyright © Montesquieu - Tous droits réservés

---

### **On nations where civil liberty is generally established**

We hear it said every day that it would be a good thing if we had slaves here.

But to judge well on this matter, one should not examine whether they would be useful to the small wealthy and sensual portion of each nation. Doubtless they would be useful to them ; but taking another point of view, I do not think any of those who make it up would wish to draw lots to see who would be part of the free nation, and who would be a slave. Those who speak the most in favor of slavery would be the most horrified by it, and the most miserable of men would similarly be horrified by it. The cry for slavery is therefore the cry of luxury and sensuality, and not the cry of the love of public felicity. Who can doubt that every man taken singly would be quite content to be master of the property, honor, and the lives of others, and that that all his passions would instantly come alive at the thought ? In these things, if you want to know whether the desires of the individual are legitimate, examine the desires of all.