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IX.7 Reflections

- The Spirit of Law - Book IX. On the laws in their relations to the defensive force -

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IX.7 Reflections

The enemies of a great prince who reigned for so long have accused him a thousand times - based rather on their fears, I think, than their reasoning - of having created and implemented the project of universal monarchy. If he had succeeded in that, nothing would have been more fatal to Europe, to his former subjects, to himself, and to his family. Heaven, which knows true advantages, better served him through his defeats than it would have with victories. Instead of making him the sole king of Europe, it favored him more by making him the most powerful of all.

His people, who in foreign countries are never moved except by what they have left behind ; who when they leave home regard glory as the highest good, and in distant countries as an obstacle to their return ; who put others off even with their good qualities, because they seem to add disdain to them ; who can bear wounds, perils and fatigue, but not the loss of their pleasures ; who love nothing so much as their gaiety, and get over the loss of a battle when they have sung the general's praise, would never have made it to the completion of an enterprise that cannot fail in one country without failing in all the others, nor fail for one moment without failing forever.