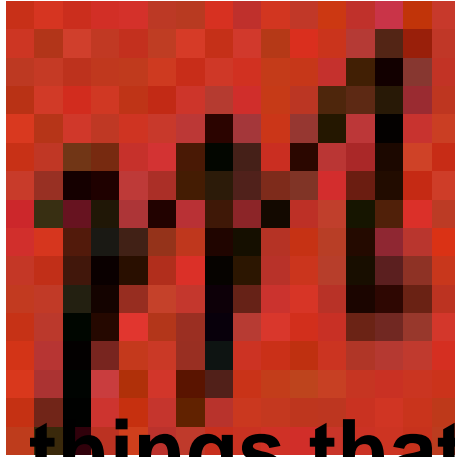


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XII.22 On things that threaten liberty in a monarchy

- The Spirit of Law - Book XII. On laws that constitute political liberty in its relation to the citizen -

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XII.22 On things that threaten liberty in a monarchy

The most useless thing in the world to the prince has often weakened liberty in monarchies : to wit, the commissioners sometimes named to judge an individual.

The prince derives so little benefit from commissioners that it is not worth his making a change in the order of things. It is morally certain that he has more of the spirit of probity and justice than his commissioners, who always deem themselves sufficiently justified by his orders, by an obscure state interest, by the choice that was made of them, and even by their fears.

Under Henry VIII, when a peer was put on trial, he was judged by commissioners chosen from the house of peers ; with that method they put to death as many peers as they wished.