

<http://montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?article2801>



XIV.7 On monasticism

- The Spirit of Law - Book XIV. On the laws in their relation to the nature of the climate -

Publication date: jeudi 6 septembre 2018

Copyright © Montesquieu - Tous droits réservés

XIV.7 On monasticism

Monasticism there does the same harm ; it was born in the warm Oriental countries where a person is less inclined to action than to speculation.

In Asia, the number of dervishes or monks seems to increase with the warmth of the climate : the Indies, where it is excessively warm, are full of them ; in Europe we find that same difference.

To overcome the indolence of the climate would require laws that sought to suppress all means of living without working ; but in the south of Europe the laws do just the opposite : they give positions suited to the speculative life to persons who wish to be idle, and attach immense wealth to them. Those persons who live in an abundance which they find onerous rightly donate their surplus to the populace : they have lost the property of goods, and are compensated for it by the idleness they are made to enjoy, and thus they manage to embrace even their poverty.