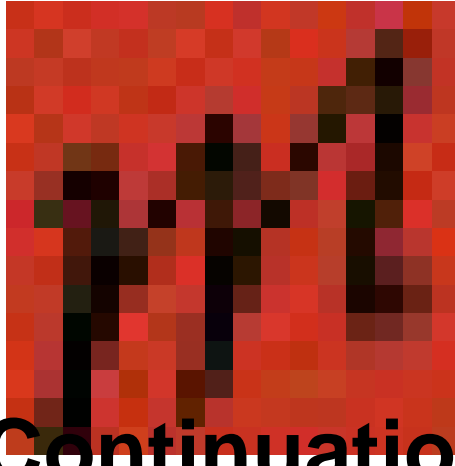


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XIX.25 Continuation of the same subject

- The Spirit of Law - Book XIX. On the laws in the relation they have to the principles that constitute the general spirit, the morals, and the manners of a nation -

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XIX.25 Continuation of the same subject

Roman law allowed a couple the freedom to make gifts to each other before marriage ; after the marriage, it was no longer allowed. That was based on the morals of the Romans, who were inclined to marriage only for reasons of frugality, simplicity and modesty, but could allow themselves to be induced by domestic duties, kindnesses, and the contentment of an entire life.

The law of the Visigoths [1] limited the husband's gift to the woman he was to marry to the tenth part of his possessions, and he could give her nothing in the first year of his marriage. That again came from the country's morals. The legislators wanted to put an end to the kind of Spanish ostentation motivated solely to show excessive liberalities with a grandiose act.

The Romans, through their laws, ended some disadvantages of the world's most durable dominion, which is that of virtue ; the Spanish, through theirs, wanted to prevent the ill effects of the world's most fragile tyranny, which is that of beauty.

[1] Book III, tit. i, §5.