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**XVII.5 That when the peoples
of northern Asia and those of
northern Europe have
conquered, the effects of the
conquest were not the same**

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- The Spirit of Law - Book XVII. How the laws of political servitude are related to the nature of the climate -

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The peoples of northern Europe conquered it as free men ; the peoples of northern north Asia conquered it as slaves, and have vanquished only for a master.

The reason is that the Tartar people, the natural conquerors of Asia, have themselves become enslaved. They conquer repeatedly in the south of Asia, they form empires ; but the part of the nation that remains in the country finds itself subjected to a great master who, despotic in the south, wants to do the same in the north, and who with an arbitrary power over the conquered subjects pretends the same over the conquering subjects. That appears clearly today in that vast country we call Chinese Tartary, which the emperor governs almost as despotically as China itself, and which he extends daily with his conquests.

We can further see in the history of China that the emperors sent Chinese colonies into Tartary. [1] These Chinese have become Tartars and mortal enemies of China, but that does not mean they did not bring the spirit of Chinese government to Tartary.

Often a part of the Tartar nation that has conquered is itself driven out, and it brings back to its wilderness a spirit of servitude which it has acquired in the climate of slavery. The history of China furnishes us with great examples of this, and our ancient history as well. [2]

That is why the genius of the Tartar or Getæ nation has always been like that of the empires of Asia. The peoples in these empires are governed by the rod, the Tartar peoples by long whips. The spirit of Europe has always been opposed to these ways, and what the peoples of Asia have in all times called punishment, the peoples of Europe have called abuse. [3]

The Tartars destroying the Greek empire established servitude and despotism in the conquered countries ; the Goths conquering the Roman empire founded monarchy and liberty everywhere.

I do not know whether the famous Rudbeck, who in his *Atlantica* has so praised Scandinavia, [4] has spoken of that great prerogative that should place the nations living there above all the peoples on earth, which is that they have been the resource of liberty in Europe, which is to say of almost all there is of it today among men.

Jornandes the Goth has called the north of Europe the workshop of the human race. [5] I shall call it rather the workshop of the instruments that broke the chains forged in the south. That is where are formed those valiant nations that emerge from their country to destroy tyrants and slaves, and teach men that, nature having created them equal, if reason made them dependent it could only be for their happiness.

[1] Like Ven-ti, fifth emperor of the fifth dynasty.

[2] The Scythians conquered Asia three times, and were driven out all three times (Justinus, book II).

[3] This is not contrary to what I shall say in book XXVIII, ch. xx, on the manner of thinking of the Germanic peoples about the rod ; whatever the instrument, they always saw as an affront the power or the arbitrary act of beating.

[4] [Olaus Rudbeck, *Atlantica*, 1679-1702.]

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[5] *Humani generis officinam.*