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XVIII.10 On the number of men related to the manner in which they obtain their living

- The Spirit of Law - Book XVIII. On laws in their relationship to the nature of the terrain -

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When nations do not cultivate the land, here is the proportion of the number of men there are. As the product of a fallow terrain is to the product of a cultivated terrain, so is the number of savages in one country to the number of farmers in another ; and when the people who cultivate the land also cultivate the arts, the number of savages is to the number of these people in compound proportion to the number of savages to that of farmers and of the number of farmers to that of men who cultivate the arts.

They can hardly make up a great nation. If they are shepherds, they need wide areas to subsist in any number ; if they are hunters they are even fewer in number, and for their living make up a smaller nation.

Their region is generally full of forests ; and as men there have not channeled the water, it is full of marshes, where every group confines itself and constitutes a small nation.