

<http://montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?article2982>



XXIII.13 On seaports

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIII. On laws in their relation to the number of inhabitants -

Date de mise en ligne : vendredi 7 septembre 2018

Copyright © Montesquieu - Tous droits réservés

XXIII.13 On seaports

In seaports, where men expose themselves to a thousand dangers and go to die or live in remote climes, there are fewer men than women, yet we see more children there than elsewhere : this is owing to the ease of subsistence. It could even be that the oily parts of fish are better at supplying the material that goes into generation. That would be one of the causes for the infinite population there is in Japan [1] and in China, [2] where they live almost exclusively on fish. [3] If so, certain monastic rules which require living on fish would be contrary to the spirit of even the legislator.

[1] Japan is made up of islands ; there are many shores, and the sea is rich in fish.

[2] China has innumerable streams.

[3] See Father du Halde, vol. II, p. 139, 142 and following.