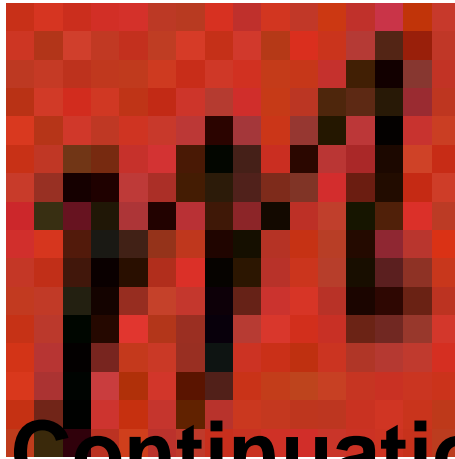


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XXIV.17 Continuation of the same subject

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIV. On laws in their relation with religion, considered in its doctrines and in itself -

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XXIV.17 Continuation of the same subject

When wrath is easily provoked in a state, religion must provide many means of reconciliation. The Arabs, a bandit people, often inflicted harm and injustices on each other. Mohammed made this law : "If someone forgives his brother's blood, [1] he may pursue the malefactor for damages and interest ; but he who does harm to the villain after receiving satisfaction from him will suffer painful torments on Judgment Day." [2]

Among the Germans, animosities and enmities were inherited from one's family members, but they were not eternal. Homicide was expiated by offering a certain quantity of livestock, and the whole family received satisfaction : a very useful thing, says Tacitus, because enmities are more dangerous among free people. [3] I expect that ministers of religion, who had such influence among them, played a role in these reconciliations.

Among the Malays, where reconciliation is not instituted, he who has killed someone, sure of being assassinated by the family or friends of the deceased, unleashes his fury and wounds and kills everyone he encounters. [4]

[1] By renouncing the law of retaliation.

[2] In the Coran, book I, ch. on "The cow."

[3] *De moribus Germanorum*.

[4] *Recueil des voyages qui ont servi à l'établissement de la Compagnie des Indes*, vol. VII, p. 303. See also *Mémoires du comte de Forbin*, and what he says about the Macassars.