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XXIX.15 That it is sometimes good for a law to correct itself

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIX. On the manner of composing laws -

Date de mise en ligne : vendredi 7 septembre 2018

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The law of the Twelve Tables allowed killing the night thief as well as the day thief who, being pursued, tried to defend himself [1] ; but it expected the man who killed the thief to cry out and call the citizens [2] ; and that is something which laws that allow people to exact their own justice should always require. It is the cry of innocence which at the moment of action calls for witnesses, calls for judges. The people must become aware of the act, and become aware of it at the moment it was taken, at a time where everything speaks : the demeanor, the face, the passions, the silence, and where every word condemns or justifies. A law that can become so contrary to the security and freedom of the citizens should be carried out in the presence of the citizens.

[1] See law IV following *ad Legem Aquilia*.

[2] *Ibid*. See decree of Tassillon, appended to the law of the Bavarians, *De popularibus legem* art. 4.