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VII.17 On the administration of women

- The Spirit of Law - Book VII. Consequences of the different principles of the three governments with respect to sumptuary laws, to luxury, and to the condition of women -

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It is unreasonable and unnatural for women to be heads of the house, as had been established among the Egyptians, but not for them to govern an empire. In the first case, their state of weakness does not allow them preeminence ; in the second, their very weakness ordinarily endows them with more sensitivity and moderation, which can make for a good government, rather than hard and fierce virtues.

In the Indies they do very nicely with government by women, and it is established that if the males do not come from a mother of the same blood, it is the daughters whose mother is of royal blood who succeed. [1] They are assigned a certain number of persons to help them bear the weight of the government. If to that we add the example of Muscovy and of England, we will see that they are succeed equally well in moderated and despotic governments.

[1] *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, 14th volume.