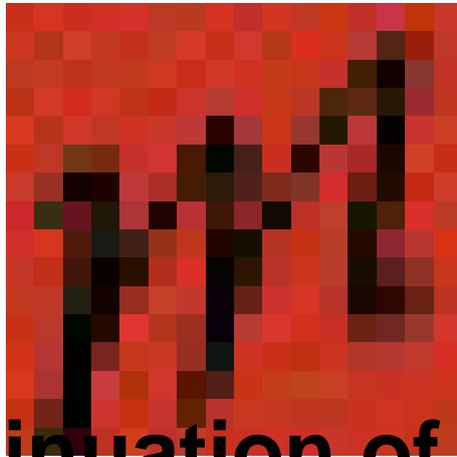


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XI.4 Continuation of the same subject

- The Spirit of Law - Book XI. On the laws that constitute political freedom in their relation to the constitution -

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XI.4 Continuation of the same subject

Democracy and aristocracy are not by nature free states. Political freedom is found only in moderated governments. But it is not always found in moderated states. It is found only when power is not abused ; but timeless experience tells us that any man who holds power is inclined to abuse it : he continues until he encounters limits. Strange to say, virtue itself requires limits.

In order to prevent abuse of power, things must be contrived so that power checks power. It is possible to have a constitution such that no one can be forced to do the things which are not required of him by law, and not to do those which the law permits him to do.