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XIV.4 The cause of the immutability of religion, of morals, manners, and laws in Oriental countries

- The Spirit of Law - Book XIV. On the laws in their relation to the nature of the climate -
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If, to this weakness of organs that makes Oriental peoples receive the most powerful impressions in the world, you add a certain indolence of mind, naturally linked to that of the body, which makes that mind incapable of any act, effort, or contention, you will understand that the mind which has once received impressions can no longer change them. That is why the laws, the morals, [1] and the manners, even those that appear indifferent, such as the manner of dressing, are today in the Orient what they were a thousand years ago.

[1] We see from a fragment by Nicolas of Damascus in the compendium of Constantine Porphyrogenitus that the custom was ancient in the Orient to have a governor strangled who did not please ; it dated from the time of the Medes.