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# XIV.13 Effects that result from the English climate

- The Spirit of Law - Book XIV. On the laws in their relation to the nature of the climate -

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In a nation whose soul is so affected by a climatic disease that it could extend the disaffection for all things even to life itself, it is clear that the government best suited to people to whom everything is unbearable would be one where they could not blame anyone for what causes their sorrows, and where, since laws govern rather than men, the laws themselves would have to be overturned in order to change the state.

Now if the same nation had further received from the climate a certain character of impatience that did not allow it to bear the same things for long, it is clear that the government which we have just evoked would again be the most appropriate.

That character of impatience is not great by itself, but can become so when it is combined with courage.

It is different from frivolity, which makes a person undertake, and likewise abandon, for no reason ; it is more like obstinacy, because it comes from such an intense feeling of afflictions that it is not diminished even by the habit of bearing them.

This character, in a free nation, would be very capable of disconcerting projects of tyranny, [1] which is always slow and weak in its beginnings, as it is quick and forceful in its ending ; which first shows only a hand to assist, and later oppresses with a multitude of arms.

Servitude always begins with sleep. But people who are at rest in no situation, who are constantly checking themselves out and finding all the painful spots, could hardly go to sleep.

Politics quietly files things down and comes slowly to its goal. Now the men about whom we have been speaking could never sustain the delays, the details, the dispassionate nature of negotiations ; they would often succeed less in them than any other nation, and would lose by treaties what they had won with their weapons.

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[1] I take this word here as the intention of overturning the established power, and especially democracy ; that is the meaning that the Greeks and Romans gave to it.