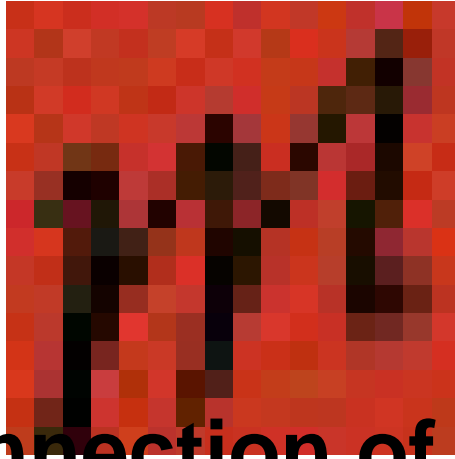


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XVI.9 Connection of domestic government with the political

- The Spirit of Law - Book XVI. How the laws of domestic slavery relate to the nature of the climate -

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XVI.9 Connection of domestic government with the political

In a republic, the station of citizens is limited, equal, mild, and moderate : everything is imbued with public freedom. Ascendency over women could not be so well exercised there ; and when the climate has called for such ascendency, government by one man alone has been the most appropriate. That is one of the reasons which have always made popular government difficult to implant in the Orient.

Contrariwise, the servitude of women is very much in keeping with the genius of despotic government, which likes to abuse everything. And so in all times in Asia has been seen the parallel progress of domestic servitude and despotic government.

In a government where people want tranquility above all, and where extreme subordination is called peace, wives must be locked away : their intrigues would be fatal to the husband. A government which has no time to examine its subjects' conduct holds it suspect for the sole reason that it is patent and perceptible.

Suppose for a moment that flippancy of mind and indiscretions, the tastes and distastes of our women, their passions large and small, had been transposed into an Oriental government, with the activity and freedom they know here : who is the paterfamilias who could be tranquil for a moment ? Suspicious persons everywhere, enemies everywhere : the state would be shaken and rivers of blood would flow.