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XVIII.7 On human works

- The Spirit of Law - Book XVIII. On laws in their relationship to the nature of the terrain -

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XVIII.7 On human works

Men have through their application and good laws made the world a more accommodating place to host them. We see rivers flowing where there were lakes and marshes : that is an asset which nature did not make, but which nature maintains. When the Persians were masters of Asia, they allowed anyone who could bring spring water to some place which until then had no water to benefit from it for five generations [1] ; and since there are many streams that flow from Mount Taurus, they spared no expense to bring water from there. Today, without knowing where it might be coming from, they find it in their fields and gardens.

Thus, as destructive nations do damage that outlasts them, there are industrious nations that bring benefits that do not end even with them.

[1] Polybius, book X. [Adaptation of a passage from Du Ryer translation, *Les Histoires de Polybe avec les fragments du même auteur, contenant la plupart des ambassades* (Paris : Augustin Courbe, 1655, p. 492.)