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# XVIII.28 The sanguinary spirit of the Frankish kings

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

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Clovis had not been the only one of the Frankish princes to undertake expeditions into the Gauls. Several of his kin had led individual tribes there ; and as he had greater triumphs, and could give considerable establishments to those who had followed him, the Franks flocked to him from all the tribes, and the other chiefs found themselves too weak to stand up to him. He conceived the plan of exterminating his entire house, and he succeeded. [1] He feared, says Gergory of Tours, lest the Franks take another chief. [2] His children and his successors followed this practice as well as they could ; the brother, the uncle, the nephew, nay even the son and the father, were perpetually conspiring against the whole family. The law constantly separated the monarchy ; fear, ambition, and cruelty attempted to reunite it.

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[1] Gregory of Tours, book V.

[2] *Ibid.*