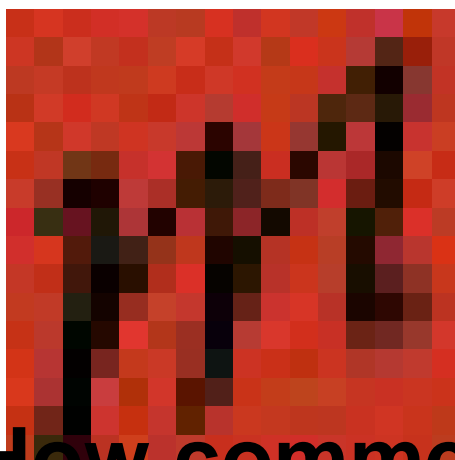


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# XX.7 How commerce of economy has sometimes been constrained

- The Spirit of Law - Book XX. On laws in their relationship with commerce, considered in its nature and its distinctions -

Publication date: jeudi 6 septembre 2018

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## XX.7 How commerce of economy has sometimes been constrained

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Laws have been made in certain monarchies which are well designed to humble states engaged in commerce of economy. They have forbidden merchants to import any merchandise except that produced in their own country ; they have permitted them to come and trade only in ships made in the countries from which they hail.

The state that imposes these laws must be in a position to trade easily ; otherwise it will do itself at least as much harm. It is better to deal with a nation that makes few demands, and which the needs of commerce make in some sense dependent ; with a nation which, by the breadth of its views or its business, knows where it can place all its excess merchandise ; which is rich and can take in many commodities ; which will pay for them promptly ; which moreover finds it, so to speak, necessary to be dependable ; which is pacific by principle ; which seeks to profit and not to conquer : it is better, I say, to deal with this nation than with other nations, ever rivals, which would not offer all these advantages.