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XXIII.5 On various orders of legitimate wives

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIII. On laws in their relation to the number of inhabitants -

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XXIII.5 On various orders of legitimate wives

Sometimes the laws and the religion have instituted several kinds of civil conjunctions, and that is the case among the Mohammedans, where there are various orders of wives, whose children are recognized by being born in the home, or by civil contracts, or even by the mother's slavery and subsequent recognition by the father.

It would be contrary to reason for the law to stigmatize in children what it has approved in the father : all these children must therefore inherit, unless there is some particular reason to oppose it, as in Japan, where it is only the children of the wife given by the emperor who inherit. Politics there requires that possessions given by the emperor not be too much shared, because they are subject to a service, as our fiefs once were. [1]

[1] [In the edition of 1758, [Annex 20](#) is added here.]