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XXIII.20 That the Romans found it necessary to make laws for the propagation of the species

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIII. On laws in their relation to the number of inhabitants -
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XXIII.20 That the Romans found it necessary to make laws for the propagation of the species

The Romans, by destroying all the others, were constantly destroying themselves in action, effort and violence ; they were using themselves up, like a weapon that is always in use.

I shall not speak here of the attention they devoted to supplying themselves with citizens as they were losing them, [1] of the associations they made, the privileges they bestowed, and that immense seed bed of citizens they found in their slaves. I shall say what they did, not to replace the citizens, but to replace the men ; and as they were the best people on earth for matching their laws to their projects, it is not indifferent to examine what they did in this regard.

[1] A modern writer [i.e., Montesquieu] has treated this in his *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and of their Decline*, 1748.