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# XXIX.18 On notions of uniformity

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXIX. On the manner of composing laws -

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There are certain notions of uniformity that sometimes take hold of great minds (for they affected Charlemagne) but which infallibly strike petty ones. They find in them a kind of perfection which they recognize, because it is impossible not to spot it : the same weights in administration, the same measures in commerce, the same laws in the state, the same religion in all its parts. But is that always appropriate without exception ? Is the harm in changing always less than the harm in suffering ? And would the greatness of genius not consist rather in knowing in what instance uniformity is necessary, and in what instance differences ? In China, the Chinese are governed by the Chinese ceremonial, and the Tartars by the Tartar ceremonial ; yet they are the one people on earth which is most devoted to tranquility. When the citizens follow the laws, does it matter whether they follow the same one ?