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VI.11 That when a people is virtuous, few penalties are required

- The Spirit of Law - Book VI. Consequences of the principles of the various governments with respect to the simplicity of the civil and criminal laws, the form of judgments, and the establishment of punishments -

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The Roman people had probity. That probity had such force that often the legislator needed only to show them the good for it to be followed ; it was as if in lieu of decrees it was enough to give them advice.

The penalties of royal laws and the laws of the Twelve Tables were almost all suppressed under the republic, either by a sequel to the Valerian Law, [1] or by a consequence of the Porcian Law. [2] It was not observed that the republic was for that less well ordered, and it resulted in no rupture in political administration.

This Valerian Law, which forbade magistrates any violence against a citizen who had appealed to the people, imposed no other penalty on the man who would violate it than to have a mean reputation. [3]

[1] It was made by Valerius Publicola, soon after the expulsion of the kings ; it was twice renewed, both times by magistrates of the same family, as Livy says in book X. It was not a matter of giving it more force, but of perfecting its provisions. *Diligentius sanctam* ['a more carefully established law'], says Livy, *ibid.*

[2] *Lex porcia pro tergo civium lata* ['The Porcian law was made to protect the citizens'] ; it was made in year 454 of the foundation of Rome.

[3] *Nihil ultra quam improbe factum adjecit* ['It added nothing other than that it be deemed a wicked act'] (Livy).