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XIV.5 That bad legislators are those who have favored vices of the climate, and good ones are those who have countered them

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- The Spirit of Law - Book XIV. On the laws in their relation to the nature of the climate -

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The Indians believe that repose and oblivion are the foundation of all things, and the end to which they lead. Thus they regard utter inactivity as the most perfect state and the object of their desires. They give the surname "unmovable" to the sovereign being. [1] The Siamese believe that supreme felicity [2] consists in not being obliged to animate a machine and make a body act.

In those countries where excessive heat enervates and overwhelms, repose is so delightful, and movement so unpleasant, that this system of metaphysics appears natural ; and Foe, [3] the legislator of the Indies, followed what he was feeling when he put men in an extremely passive state ; but his doctrine, spawned by the indolence of the climate, and in its turn favoring it, has caused a thousand kinds of harm.

The legislators of China were more sensible when, considering men not in the peaceful state where they will be some day, but in appropriate action so they will fulfill the duties of life, they made their religion, their philosophy, and their laws all practical. The more physical causes incline men to repose, the more moral causes must keep them from it.

[1] Panamanack ; see Kircher.

[2] La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam*, page 446 [in fact [part III. ch. xxii. p. 498](#)].

[3] "Foe wants to reduce the heart to pure emptiness ; we have eyes and ears, but perfection is neither to see nor to hear ; a mouth, hands, etc. ; perfection is that these members be inactive." This is taken from the "Dialogue of a Chinese Philosopher" related by Father du Halde, vol. III.