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# XVIII.6 On countries created by human industry

- The Spirit of Law - Book XVIII. On laws in their relationship to the nature of the terrain -

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Countries which human industry has made inhabitable, and which require the same industry in order to exist, call for moderated government. There are principally three of this kind : the two fair provinces of Kiang-nan and Chekiang in China, Egypt, and Holland.

The ancient emperors of China were not conquerors. The first thing they did to expand was the one that best proved their wisdom. The two fairest provinces of the empire emerged from the waters : they were man-made. It is the inexpressible fertility of those two provinces that gave Europe its notions of the felicity of that vast land. But a continual and necessary attention to protecting such an important part of the empire from destruction required the ways of a wise people rather than of a sensual one, rather the legitimate power of a monarch than the tyrannical authority of a despot. Power had to be moderated as it once was in Egypt, and as it still is today in that part of the Turkish empire. Power had to be moderated there as it is in Holland, which nature made to look after herself, and not to be abandoned to negligence or caprice.

Thus, despite China's climate, where people naturally lend themselves to servile obedience, despite the horrors that follow the excessive size of an empire, China's first legislators were obliged to make very good laws, and the government was often obliged to follow them.