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XXIX.6 That laws that seem the same do not always have the same effect

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

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Cæsar made it illegal to keep more than sixty sesterces at home. [1] This law was regarded in Rome as very appropriate for reconciling debtors with creditors, because by obliging the rich to lend to the poor, it put the latter in a position to satisfy the rich. A law just like it made in France during the time of the System was catastrophic, because the circumstance in which it was made was terrible. After taking away every means of investing one's money, they took away even the recourse of keeping it at home, which was equivalent to seizing it by violence. Cæsar made his law so that money would circulate among the commoners ; the minister of France made his so that money would be placed in a single hand. The first, for money gave parcels of land or engagements on individuals ; the second, for money, proposed effects that had no value, and which could not by their nature have any, [2] for the reason that his law made it obligatory to take them.

[1] Dio, book XLI.

[2] [Montesquieu refers to the paper money issued by the state bank under John Law's "System."]