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VI.20 On fathers' punishment of their children

- 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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In China, fathers are punished for their children's misdeeds. That was the custom in Peru. [1] This is again taken from despotic ways of thinking.

There is no point in saying that in China the father is punished for not making use of the paternal authority which nature has instituted, and which the laws have even increased. That still supposes that the Chinese know no honor. For us, fathers whose children are condemned to die and children whose fathers have undergone the same fate are punished as much by shame [2] as they would be in China by losing their lives.

[1] See Garcilaso, *History of the Civil Wars of the Spanish*.

[2] "Instead of punishing them," said Plato, "they should be praised for not resembling their father." (Book IX of *Laws*.)