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VIII.10 On corruption of the principle of despotic government

- The Spirit of Law - Book VIII. On the corruption of the principles of the three governments -

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The principle of the despotic government is constantly being corrupted because it is its nature to be corrupt. Other governments perish because particular accidents violate their principle ; this one perishes from its inner vice when some accidental causes do not prevent its principle from corrupting. Therefore, it maintains itself only when circumstances drawn from climate, religion, and the situation or the genius of the people, force it to follow some order and suffer some rule. These things force its nature without changing it ; its ferocity remains, but for the time being it is tamed.