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## XII.23 On spies in the monarchy

- The Spirit of Law - Book XII. On laws that constitute political liberty in its relation to the citizen -

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Must a monarchy have spies ? It is not the usual practice of good princes. When a man is faithful to the laws, he has satisfied what he owes to the prince. He must at least have an asylum in his house, and security for the rest of his conduct. Spying would perhaps be tolerable if it could be done by gentlemen ; but the necessary infamy of the person is an indication of the infamy of the thing. With his subjects a prince should act with candor, with straightforwardness, with confidence. The one who has so many anxieties, suspicions, and fears is an actor unsteady in his role. When he sees that in general the laws are enforced and that they are respected, he may deem himself secure. The overall demeanor answers to him for the security of all individuals. Let him have no fear : he would never believe how disposed they are to love him. And why would they not ? He is the source of almost everything good that is done ; and almost all punishments are blamed on the laws. He never appears in public but with a serene countenance ; we even share his glory, and his strength sustains us. One proof of his people's love is that they have confidence in him, and that what a minister refuses they always imagine the prince would have granted ; even in public calamities his person is not impugned ; they complain about what he does not know, or that he is beset by corrupt men : "If the prince knew," say the people : these words are a sort of invocation, and a proof of the confidence they have in him.