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XIII.5 On a monarchy in the same situation

- The Spirit of Law - Book XIII. On the relations which the levying of tributes and the magnitude of public revenues have with liberty -

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XIII.5 On a monarchy in the same situation

When in a monarchy the nobility has the land tilled for its benefit by the conquered people, again the debt must not be subject to increase. [1] Moreover, it is good for the prince content himself with his domain and military service. But if he wishes to levy tributes in specie on the slaves of his nobility, the lord must be the guarantor of the tribute [2] : he must pay it for the slaves and collect it back from them ; and if this rule is not followed, the lords and those who levy the prince's tribute will extort the slave by turns, and harass him one after the other until he dies of misery or flees into the woods.

[1] That is what led Charlemagne to make his fine Institutions on that basis. See book V of the Capitulaires, art. 303.

[2] It is so practiced in Germany.