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XXVI.25 That one must not follow the general provisions of civil law when it comes to things that ought to be subjected to individual rules drawn from their own nature

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- The Spirit of Law - Book XXVI. On laws in the relation they must have with the order of things on which they bear -

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Is it a good law that all civil obligations concluded between seamen in the course of a voyage be null and void ? François Pyrard tells us that in his time it was not observed by the Portuguese, [1] but was by the French. Men who are together only for a short while, who have no needs because the prince provides for them, who can have but one objective, which is that of their voyage, who are no longer in society but citizens of the ship, must not contract the kinds of obligations that have been introduced only to support the costs of civil society.

It is in that same spirit that the law of the Rhodians, made for a time when they always followed the coasts, decreed that those who remained aboard ship during a tempest should have the ship and its cargo, and that those who had left the ship should have nothing

[1] Ch. xiv, part 12.