

true religion, or popular education, or true freedom, could no more flourish than the palm tree on the glaciers of Spitzbergen.

It will doubtless be objected, that despotic governments have often been liberal patrons of learning and of art, and that countries thus governed have produced many splendid examples of genius and scholarship. And why has this patronage been extended? Because such governments have learned that knowledge is power, and so long as it is confined to comparatively few, they can monopolize it, and make it instrumental in upholding their authority. But they would not dare to extend its blessings to the community at large, because their power would be apt to change hands. Accordingly, we do not find that despotic governments encourage or permit the great body of their subjects to seek the blessings of an enlightened system of education; or if, in a few instances, they have made education somewhat popular, they have found themselves compelled, ere long, to allow more liberty to their subjects.

All the ancient republics, and most of the modern, furnish us with examples of the blighting influence of false religion upon popular education and freedom. It will not be doubted that, in the ancient republics, much freedom of thought and action was enjoyed by certain classes; and we know that literature and speculative philosophy were carried to a high degree of perfection, and that the fine arts, also, were most successfully cultivated. We are apt, however, to be dazzled and deceived by the splendor of those literary and artistic productions that have escaped the ravages of time, and are yet the models of style and taste. We need to ascertain what was the character of the freedom enjoyed in those republics, and what the condition of the mass of the people. Accord-