

despotism which may, indeed, be exercised for a short time by the many, but whose inevitable tendency it is to pass into the hands of the few.

A few of the causes which have tended to shut up to so great an extent the older sources of intelligence may be briefly enumerated. Some of them have originated *within*, and some *without* the church.

The benefits conferred on Scotland by the Presbyterian Church, during at least the two centuries which immediately succeeded the Reformation, were incalculably great. Somewhat of despotism there might, nay, must have been, in the framework of our ecclesiastical institutions. The age was inevitably despotic. The church in which the Reformers had spent the earlier portion of their lives was essentially and constitutionally so. Be it remembered, too, that the principles of true toleration have been as much the discovery of later ages as those principles on which we construct our steam-engines. But whatever the framework of the constitutions of our church, the soul which animated them was essentially that spirit "wherewith Christ maketh his people free." Nay, their very intolerance was of a kind which delighted to arm its vassals with a power before which all tyranny, civil or ecclesiastical, must eventually be overthrown. It compelled them to quit the lower levels of our nature for the higher. It demanded of them that they should be no longer immoral or illiterate. It enacted that the ignorant baron should send his children to school, that they, too, might not grow up in ignorance; and provided that the children of the poor should be educated at the expense of the state. A strange despotism truly, which, by adding to the knowledge and the virtue of the people among whom it was established, gave them at once that taste and capacity for freedom