

Touching unity of degrees, a few words may be said. It is confidently assumed by many that the degrees of a single State University would possess a far higher relative value than those of any one of several competing Universities could possibly possess. But what is it that gives value to a degree? Is it the wealth of the University conferring it? By no means. Is it the number of Professors and the amplitude of educational appliances? Not at all. Is it even the distinguished ability of the Professors constituting the Faculty? Scarcely that. Undoubtedly the honorable history and venerable traditions of some of the Universities of Europe give a certain value, in popular estimation, to their degrees, so that a pass graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, though a veritable dolt, will be regarded by the multitude as a highly educated man; but in this land, where our Universities are yet too young to have any venerable traditions, the value of a degree will depend chiefly upon the standard maintained by the University, the comprehensiveness of the curriculum, and the known thoroughness alike of the class-room drill and the final examinations. And all this will be more certainly secured by several competing Universities, whose very existence will depend upon the thoroughness of their work, than by a single institution, whose aim is to produce a few brilliant specialists rather than a high average of general scholarship. To quote again from Dr. Playfair:—

“Any one University may easily raise a fancy standard, and, supported by public funds in the shape of scholarships, exhibitions, and gold medals, make its graduates double-buttoned instead of single-buttoned mandarins, and yet fail in its national purpose. For the object of a University is not merely to have an honor list, but also to promote efficient study among many, as proved by their attaining degrees on fair and reasonable, though adequate, conditions. Unless it does that, the general higher education of the country is sacrificed to the glory of a few select graduates.”

It is argued, again, that by entering this Confederation the influence of Methodism in higher education will be greatly increased, and we shall accomplish far more in the matter of moulding our young men than we have done in the past. Such a statement may show how easy it is for some men to believe what they wish to be true, but as an argument it is contradicted by all our past experience. For more than a hundred years it