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PRESBYTERIAN AND METHODIST UNION.

Ecclesiastical Unions are the order of the day. It is not so very long ago since, in most strong Churches, the authority of the ruling powers was so peremptorily asserted, and the value of "every pin of the Tabernacle" so inflexibly maintained, that men of strong individuality and imperious conscientiousness, and men with a "kink" or a "bee in their bonnet," could not help becoming separatists. We are the last people that should speak disparagingly of Dissenters of any kind. The fact is, that the attractions of a mother church are so strong, and the sacrifices required of seceders so great, as to prevent any reasonable man from going out into the cold except upon occasion of the direst necessity. Nor can we doubt that while in some cases revolt against established authority has arisen more from self-will than from any worthier motive, for the most part these movements have been dictated by convictions so clear and strong, that to repress or violate them would have been to commit suicide upon the soul.

The Reformation in Germany, France, Holland, Britain, and Switzerland, is a conspicuous case in point. The emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers is another, as is the exodus of the 2000 Nonconformists in 1662. In later days we may refer to the Secession from the Church of Scotland, to the coming out of the Free Church, and to the upspringing of the several offshoots from the original Methodist body.

But Churches are growing wiser now-a-days. Authority is not pressed so far, and is exercised in a gentler spirit. A greater liberality is applied to the interpretation and enforcement of "Standards". The distinction between substantial unity and precise uniformity is better appreciated, and Christians find that they can agree though they differ. Hence the drift of the age is strongly in the direction of reuniting the scattered fragments of homogeneous organizations. After much slow wooing, and in spite of not a few coy protestations, some ecclesiastical marriages have been already celebrated; and the parties concerned find the wedded state so much better than single blessedness, that they want companions in their joy. Our Presbyterian brethren, in England, in the Colonies, and in