

as concluded from the immense series of great Trigonometrical Surveys carried on now during nearly two centuries, have quite recently, and in two distinct and independent quarters,* undergone a fresh, and most searching and elaborate inquiry. And the conclusion from both is, that our knowledge on this point is not likely to be improved in any material degree by any further operations of the kind; at least until the time, probably yet far distant, when the Australian Continent shall have become easily and conveniently traversable from North to South, and when the wastes of Patagonia and Terra del Fuego shall afford to future geodesists the opportunity of winning a hard-earned distinction. Till then (and most probably then also), we must rest satisfied with the conclusions arrived at,—conclusions, be it observed, which have disclosed a numerical relation of singular simplicity between our British unit of measure and the length of the earth's polar axis.

(4.) Moreover, in ignorance probably of this last-mentioned fact, and therefore with too gratuitous a contempt for our national and time-honoured standards, and too hasty a preference for the apparently more scientifically, and certainly more symmetrically, constructed system of our continental neighbours, an agitation is and has for some time been going on, headed by persons of considerable influence, and strongly, no doubt, though we think unduly, impressed with the advantage of the change; with the object of abolishing *in toto* our British

* By Gen. de Schubert (Mem. Imp. Acad. Petersburg, 1859), and Capt. A. R. Clarke, R.E. (Mem. R.A.S., 1860).