

theoretical perfection (which, I shall show, may be done). We may, too, retaining, all the convenience of our existing denominations (*so far as they are convenient*) superadd to them, by permissive legislation, the additional convenience of a decimal system for facility of calculation: relying on its holding its ground if really affording such facility, or working its way into general use, and ultimately driving out the old system, if found by the mass of the population to be practicably preferable. This last is the course I would myself prefer, and I think it best to say so in the outset, lest those who may take a contrary view should imagine a foregone conclusion to be urged upon them under the semblance of free inquiry.

(3.) It is unnecessary, of course, to observe that, the measurement of length being required for almost every purpose of construction as well as for every intelligible statement of the sizes of material objects, the lengths of journeys, the distances of places, &c.—renders indispensable the recognition, in every community, of some common standard, some well-known and identifiable *unit*, by whose repetition great, and by whose aliquot subdivision small lengths, distances, sizes, &c., may be expressed in words and numbers. The common sense of mankind, moreover, would naturally point, in the selection of such unit, to some object of common occurrence, of moderate linear dimension, and of which individual exemplars differed but little, or, if possible, not at all in this respect; so that appeal might at once be made to such exemplar in case of a question