

and named the others in a certain order as its successors in the event of its destruction or loss, omitted the clause identifying its length with any numerical multiple of the pendulum. In fact, then, our yard is a purely individual material object, multiplied and perpetuated by careful copying; and from which all reference to a natural origin is studiously excluded, as much as if it had dropped from the clouds. Apart, then, from the extraordinary pains taken in its construction, and from the singularly fortunate but at the same time purely accidental coincidence which I shall presently mention, it has no pretensions whatever to be regarded as a scientific unit.

(13.) Let us now consider the claim which the pendulum, in the abstract, as a measure of the earth's gravitation, can advance for its reception as a fundamental and universal standard of length (and here, incidentally it may be remarked that, *as a length*, it is not more inconvenient than the metre, being within about a quarter of an inch the same).* One of the reasons assigned by the French *Savans* for their rejection of it in favour of the metre, and, as would appear, the only one which weighed with them (for their other reason ostensibly advanced is a mere appeal to the political passions of the time) was the dependence of the length of the pendulum

* The metre has this inconvenience, as compared with the yard—that while the latter can be readily extemporized by a man of ordinary stature (and often is so in practice) by holding the end of a string or ribband between the finger and thumb of one hand at the full length of the arm extended horizontally sideways, and marking the point which can be brought to touch the centre of the lips (facing full in front); the former is considerably too long to afford the same facility.