

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE  
PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE  
DECIMALIZATION OF THE  
WEIGHTS, MEASURES & MONIES  
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649466276

An Inquiry into the Principles Involved in the Decimalization of the Weights, Measures & Monies of the United Kingdom by Robert Slater

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ROBERT SLATER**

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE  
PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE  
DECIMALIZATION OF THE  
WEIGHTS. MEASURES & MONIES  
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**



AN INQUIRY  
INTO THE  
PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE DECIMALIZATION  
OF THE  
WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND MONIES,  
OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM:  
AND INTO  
THE PRACTICABILITY AND EXPEDIENCY OF AN ALTERATION  
IN THEM.

AN  
INQUIRY  
INTO THE  
PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE DECIMALIZATION  
OF THE  
WEIGHTS, MEASURES & MONIES.  
OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM;  
AND INTO  
THE PRACTICABILITY AND EXPEDIENCY  
OF AN ALTERATION IN THEM.

BY  
ROBERT SLATER,  
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ISSUED TO INQUIRE AND ASCERTAIN HOW FAR THE MERCANTILE  
LAWS IN THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM MAY BE  
ADVANTAGEOUSLY ASSIMILATED.

London:  
ARTHUR HALL, VIRTUE & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

1855.

232. h. 14.



## Dedication.

---

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND HONORABLE HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO CONSIDER HOW FAR IT MAY BE PRACTICABLE AND ADVISABLE TO INTRODUCE THE PRINCIPLE OF DECIMAL DIVISION INTO THE COINAGE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg leave most respectfully to dedicate the following Treatise to you, in the presumption that the facts, if not the suggestions, therein offered, are not unworthy of consideration in the prosecution of the object to which your labours are directed; and in the belief that it supplies that kind of practical evidence which is indispensable to the proper understanding of a question of such immense importance, not only to the community at large, but to the foreign connexions of the country.

I have the honour to be,

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient Servant,

ROBERT SLATER.

LONDON, (29, MILTON STREET,)

1st November, 1855.





# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	ix
CHAPTER I.	
Introduction— <i>Idea of a universal coin—Metrical system of France—Difficulties attending any attempt to assimilate weights and measures</i> . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II.	
Standard Weights and Measures— <i>Troy and Avoirdupois—Suggestions as to decimal division—Incongruity of present system and denomination of weights—Decimal comparison of Troy and Avoirdupois</i> . . . . .	8
CHAPTER III.	
Reasons for preserving Avoirdupois pound— <i>Distilled water a test of both weight and length—Decimal comparison of yard, foot, and inch—Other points of Long Measure</i> . . . . .	18
CHAPTER IV.	
On Superficial or Square Measure . . . . .	25
CHAPTER V.	
On Cubical or Solid Measure . . . . .	27
CHAPTER VI.	
On Liquid and Dry Measure . . . . .	29
CHAPTER VII.	
Suggestions as to principles of decimalization— <i>Importance of affinity between Weights, Measures, and Coins</i> . . . . .	32
CHAPTER VIII.	
On the unit for Decimal Coinage— <i>Public convenience the best rule for the unit—Motives which governed the French Commission—Importance of a low unit—Loss on Coins by abrasion—Influence of Machinery on prices</i> . . . . .	34

	PAGE
CHAPTER IX.	
State of Silver Currency in 1826—Gold and Silver Coinage compared—French Franc and English Tenpence—Copper Coinage—Postage Stamps . . . . .	40
CHAPTER X.	
Decimals of £1. inconvenient for accounts and calculations—Compared with decimals of 10 <i>d.</i> —Mental and Decimal Calculations—Properties of Numbers 10 and 12—Numbers of Figures used in each system—Equivalents of £. s. d. and Farthings, in decimals of £. and 10 <i>d.</i> . . . . .	48
CHAPTER XI.	
Objections to Silver Unit answered by an aggregate in Gold—Proposed New Coinage and displacement of old—Foreign Exchanges compared by decimals of £1. and 10 <i>d.</i> . . . . .	55
CHAPTER XII.	
Early history of arithmetic in England—Necessity for an affinity between weights, measures, and coinage—Advantages of duodecimal system—Division of £1. in £. s. d. and decimals by 20—Desire to maintain £1. as the integer under any circumstances—Its advocates have not established their case—Plans of different writers—Postscript . . . . .	59
APPENDIX . . . . .	65