

**SIMPLIFIED WEIGHTS AND  
MEASURES ON A NATURAL  
SYSTEM APPLICABLE TO  
MOST CIVILIZED NATIONS**

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Simplified weights and measures on a natural system applicable to most civilized nations by  
Lowis D'A. Jackson

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**LOWIS D'A. JACKSON**

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# SIMPLIFIED WEIGHTS AND MEASURES,

ON

A NATURAL SYSTEM APPLICABLE TO MOST CIVILIZED  
NATIONS.

BY

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## SIMPLIFIED WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

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### I. THE DEFECTS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEMS, AND THE NECESSITY FOR THEIR SIMPLIFICATION.

THERE can be at present few, if any, Englishmen that have so thoroughly mastered the whole collection of British weights and measures as to be able to answer correctly from memory all questions that may be put to them on the subject. A complete collection of tables, some suited to the purposes of one branch of trade, some to another, would, if classified, as they should be, into four distinct categories, those of length, surface, capacity, and weight, be found to show an extraordinary complication. The four categories themselves would also possess little or no mutual dependence of a systematic character; being totally destitute of the advantages of the French metrical system, although doubtless having in some respects a great superiority over it. Apart from their want of regularity or uniformity, some names of measures are used for two or more very different quantities, as for instance, the troy pound and the avoirdupois pound, the nautical or geographical mile, and the statute mile, the stone of meat and of living weight, as well as others. Beyond this again, some of the names given show evident traces of an absurd deviation from original intention, as a hundredweight, which is now not a hundred, but a hundred and twelve pounds; while again a thousand slates consists of twelve hundred.

In fact, the various and conflicting measures would almost appear to be designed to deceive and defraud those unacquainted with them, which in the first place constitute the great majority of the British public, and in the second place all foreigners also.

This is highly discreditable to the English nation; more, it is foolish. Why should we deceive ourselves, that is to say each other? If the trader in liquids may now gain by deceiving his customers in his own branch of business, yet when it comes to carats in jewellery, to bushels of different sorts of agricultural produce, he may be deceived in return; fraud begets fraud, and the perpetrator of it robs himself of a quality more precious than anything he may steal from others. How shortsighted then is such a policy!

The extension of knowledge is one of the most crying wants of the age; to further this, it is even proposed to alter the mode of spelling of a great number of words in the English language, which are extraordinarily incongruous; surely then it would be also advisable to systematize the weights and measures, and thus put them within the comprehension of the masses.

In fact a change, a modification, though not of a radical nature, is absolutely necessary. There are, however, large numbers of people that are opposed to any change whatever; some from simple obstructiveness, some from sheer laziness, and unwillingness to use their minds for purposes of reflection or thought of any sort; some from stupidity and the mistaken belief that they themselves would suffer in some way; others, the more sensible, from a belief that the best system and that most suited to the wants of the public has not yet been brought forward.

One of the principal pleas urged against any change whatever by the class of simple obstructives is based on an entirely mistaken idea; it is that the masses would find any

change a most serious grievance, and that they are wanting in the capability of adapting themselves to it. This might be the case in the adoption of a very sweeping change of system, as that of the French metrical system, but would not be so in a moderate modification; if the new yard, only one per cent. longer than the existing one, were adopted, the public generally, including the most ignorant, would not be slow to learn that the new yard was only about one-third of an inch longer than the old one; in the same way too with any measure of weight or capacity; they would not require any tables of conversion for habitual use, these being only necessary for tradesmen on a large scale, who must have sufficient knowledge, from the extensiveness of their business, to be able to apply such corrections or alterations with very little thought or care.

The lazy, unreflecting class require no reply, as it would give them too much trouble to think about the matter; they will of course have eventually to follow their betters, who can both think and act.

The stupid class, afraid of losing personally by any change, can only be told and eventually persuaded that any gain to the whole community must necessarily be also a gain, and not a loss, to themselves; that their convenience is that of the public also, and that they will pay proportionate prices according to whatever measure or weight may be adopted, an arrangement under which no one suffers in purse.

Last, the sensible class, who require the best system possible, and are determined to wait till they get it.

To these one would say, consider and determine frankly whether you are perfectly satisfied that a modification of our mass of incongruous English measures is really advisable; if you are assured of this, examine carefully the various systems that have been proposed, and say which is in your opinion the best or that most suited to the wants