Introduction of Decimal Reckoning

Our decimal system came to us from India, (possibly by way of Bactria) through Arabia; supplanting Roman methods and numerals. The principal stages in this westward march of progress are thus marked:—Aryabhata wrote in Sanscrit on algebra and arithmetic in the fifth century. Mohammed Ben Musa made these Hindoo sciences known to his Arabian countrymen in the ninth, and they came into general use throughout Arabia in the tenth century. In the eleventh, the Moors and Arabs had established themselves in Spain, whither they carried their decimals with their victorious arms. And in the twelfth century this new method of notation spread into Italy, and so into the rest of Europe. It is curious how the old notation clings on here and there; you will find it on the title-pages and in the preface-pagination of many books, on tombs and tablets which bear commemorative inscriptions, on most of our clocks and watches. It is still more curious to reflect how recent is the introduction of the present method of writing numbers. Chaucer, who died in 1400, alludes to it as a novelty. In his "dream" he sees so many wonders that even Argus could not number them, though he

> "Ysate to rekin in his comtour,
> "And rekin with his figures ten;
> "For by the figures newe, a ken—
> "If they be crafty—rekin and number and tell
>   of everything the nomber."

If particular credit is to be given to one of the many mathematicians and publicists who from that time forward gave