

SECTION IX.

THE TWENTY FOUR HOUR NOTATION.

1. The practice of dividing the day into halves, numbered 1 to 12 in each case, distinguished as A.M. and P.M., has long been in use, but there is nothing to recommend it but custom and antiquity.

2. If this system of division be attended by any special benefit, it may be asked would it not equally be an advantage to have the hour, the week, the month, similarly divided into half hours, weeks and months, the one half in contra-distinction to the other?

3. If the practice be good and wise why not extend it to the currency and reckon by half dollars of fifty cents, in place of whole dollars of one hundred cents?

4. The division of the day into halves at noon, is productive of so much inconvenience, that the feeling must be one of surprise that it was ever made.

5. Since the introduction of railways, countless mistakes and delays involving loss have occurred, owing to the misprinting of the letters A. M. or P.M. Even when these letters are correctly given, the detail of the Time table is very often understood with difficulty. There is scarcely a traveller who has not to regret some misunderstanding, and disappointment, arising from this imperfect distinction.

6. The old usage offers no single advantage. The new system of reckoning the hours from one to twenty-four is without a single objection. It is in use on thousands of miles of railway with singular success.

7. The adoption of the new Notation completely removes all doubt as to the hours of the day. In special cases during its introduction, it may be well to add some explanatory words; thus, it could be stated with reference to an important engagement, "It will take place at 19:45 (7.45 o'clock, P.M. Old style)." Generally such addenda will not be necessary, and in a short period the new nomenclature may be used without explanation in any case.

8. It is suggested that a "colon," two vertical dots between the hours and minutes (thus 19:45 or 17:05), will be a sufficient distinctive mark for all ordinary purposes. A "colon," so placed, will at once denote Time and separate the hours from the minutes in the same manner as a single dot denotes *decimals* and separates whole numbers from parts of numbers. Generally there will be no necessity for adding the words "o'clock," or "hours" or "minutes." A "colon" so placed will be taken to denote *time* as unmistakeably as % denotes *per cent.*, as the sign \$ stands for *dollars*, and as £ s. d. are the symbols for *pounds, shillings and pence.*