

being rendered unnecessary by requiring the weight in a vacuum. On account of the smallness of the gramme the legal standard has been constructed to weigh a kilogramme or 1000 grammes ($= 2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. about,) and is a cylinder of platinum whose height is equal to its diameter and is therefore about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. high. The unit of area is a square metre, and of capacity is the capacity of a cubic decimetre (or something less than our quart) which is thus defined with direct reference to the unit of length. A mixture of 9 parts of pure silver and 1 part copper weighing 5 grammes is selected as the unit of money, and is called the *Franc*.

The units of *velocity, force, work, &c.* in this system, differ as much from the same units in the English system as do those which we have already considered, and an investigation of them would be interesting and may possibly serve as

the subject of a paper at some future meeting of this Association.

The use of the Metric system is continually being extended. It was rendered legal in England in 1864, the weight of a kilogramme being declared equal to 15432.3487 grs. It has the advantage of being the only system scientifically constructed, and is destined, no doubt, sooner or later to supersede other systems, as the decimal system of estimating money has already done in many cases. As one of the benefits to result from its adoption, and one too which concerns us all here very intimately, I may add that it has been estimated that the assimilation of our system of weights and measures to that of numeration and notation would reduce by one-half, the time required in our public schools to teach the elements of Arithmetic.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT.

COWPER.

Sketch of his life.—William Cowper was born in Hertfordshire, England, on the 26th of November, 1731. His parents were related to some of the most aristocratic families in England, so that we are told that "the highest blood in the realm flowed in the veins of the modest and unassuming Cowper." On the death of his mother, which occurred when he was only six year old, he was sent to a school a few miles distant from his father's residence. His experience here was so unhappy that it seems probable that he formed here those unfavorable opinions of public schools which are to be met with in his *Tirocinium*. He completed his academical studies at Westminster without acquiring, according to the

best authorities, a reputation for very varied or extensive learning. Cowper was next sent to London to engage in the study of the Law—a pursuit, as may readily be imagined, little suited to the disposition of the future poet. At the termination of his nominal apprenticeship he took chambers in the Temple, where he resided about twelve years. Here he lived as a man of the world, though free from its grosser vices, and became acquainted with several of the eminent literary men of the day. He was nearly all his lifetime subject to fits of melancholy, during which he seems to have neglected his favorite literary pursuits.

The greater portion of his fortune being at length spent, he solicited a