

possible, and in default of a common language that our forefathers had adopted and which in the present day would be more embarrassing than useful, it is possible it seems to us without running against any serious obstacle to advocate the adoption by different nationalities of a uniform system of weights and measures. It is this that has been demanded and long since obtained by the German physicians; it is this which is demanded and will, without doubt, be obtained in the future by the physicians of the United States. Assuredly no one will be astonished at seeing the medical profession at the head of this campaign of unification, as it particularly suffers from the present state of things.

The relatively recent and already fruitful introduction of scientific methods in the teaching and practice of medicine, renders indispensable the adoption of a *modus vivendi*, or pardon the expression, of a *modus intelligendi* to which all nations may conform, in, we trust, the near future. Is it necessary then to obtain so desirable a result, to seek from afar this system, or to create from all parts this international instrument? By no means; there is nothing to seek for, nothing to create, there is only occasion to generalize the employment of a decimal metrical system which forces on the conviction of all, the advantages it offers, and before all its perfect simplicity. It is not an easy thing to upset, we will not say in a day, but even in several years, the national and medical customs of a vast multitude of practitioners. With this object in view it is necessary that the proposed system should recommend itself not only by its practical utility, but also by extreme simplicity. Better than any other, the metrical system realizes this necessary condition. There is no man of ordinary intelligence who could not in two hours comprehend its admirable mechanism, and master the fundamental idea in such a manner as to acquire rapidly the habit of putting it in practice. And this is not a national illusion which might be considered excusable in those who have employed the system from their childhood. The fact is that it is not from France that the unification movement has started. Since 1851, commissions have been formed at the instigation of the English Association for a reform in weights and measures, reassembling successively in 1855, 1867 and 1873. Finally it is scarcely a month (the 2nd of September, 1878,) since an International Congress assem-

bled to discuss anew this question at the Palace of the Trocadéro. It was there stated, that since 1867 especially, a great number of States had adopted the metrical system, if not in an exclusive fashion, at least by giving it a legal status. Prussia has long since put it in practice. In England, it is legally recognized and perfectly understood by scientific men. Commerce and industry come to the rescue and require its exclusive adoption in the interest of simplicity in dealing. Russia has already taken preliminary measures which should secure the regular use of it, and in Sweden it will become obligatory in 1880. Almost all the other nations have adopted it without reserve. But it is the country which has been the first, or at any rate one of the first to favourably entertain it, that to-day loudly calls for its general use. Our confrères in the United States are truly those who hold the first rank in this campaign in favour of unification. There is scarcely any Medical Association in America that has not discussed this question, and that has not determined upon it in the sense that we have indicated. The *New York Medical Record*, the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, the *Chicago Medical Journal and Examiner*, and many other journals entertain the same feeling on the subject of the necessity for the change. Not content with employing their energies in their local sphere of action, the scientific societies of the United States have sent delegates to all the Congresses, and these, in the first rank of which must be placed Dr. Seguin, have missed no occasion for starting anew the discussion on unification and of hastening the solution of the problem.

Still more recently at the Congress of the French Association for the advancement of sciences M. Seco Baldor from Madrid, has afresh called for unification of methods in the language and teaching of medicine. By a very laudable sentiment of courtesy, but one that we may be allowed to consider as excessive, the members of Congress thought that it was preferable to leave this question to be discussed by the Congresses held in other countries. A commission besides has been nominated by the Congress of Geneva to study this important reform, and it will forward its report to the Congress of Amsterdam. These notices will suffice to show in what shape the question at present is to be found, and what is the distance separating us from its consummation. The way is clear, but the