The proposal to supersede the numberless local times by a single notation, synchronous in every longitude, had a somewhat utopian aspect. Many indeed regarded it as a revolutionary innovation, for it came into direct conflict with the customs and the habits of thought which had descended from a remote antiquity. Nevertheless, the potent agencies, Steam and Electricity, which have co-operated in making astonishing transmutations in human affairs, have forced on our attention the investigation of time and its notation, and demanded some change to meet the altered circumstances of daily life.

If we consider the nature and attributes of that which we know as time, we will find that it is wholly independent of material bodies and uninfluenced by space or distance; that it is essentially non-local and an absolute unity; that it is not possible for two times to co-exist, or for time to be divided into two parts having a separate entity, in the sense that material things can be divided. This view of time incontrovertibly established, there is no ground for the theory that there are many local times. We may, therefore, sweep away the ordinary usages based on that theory as being unsound and untenable, and the way is made clear for a comprehensive system of time reckoning to embrace the whole globe.

About fourteen years ago the effort was first made to introduce a reform which would satisfy the requirements of the age. Whatever system might be adopted, it was felt that it should be based on the fundamental principle that *there is only one time*. It was, moreover, held to be expedient that there should be only one reckoning of time common to all nations; and to secure a common reckoning, one established zero and one common unit of measurement became necessary.

With the attainment of these objects in view, preliminary discussions took place at the meetings of several scientific associations in Europe and America, and it was held that in a matter of such widespread importance the unit of time should be a measure which could be readily referred to as a perpetual standard for the use of the entire human family. It was likewise felt desirable, if not indispensable, that all nations should acquiesce in its recognition.

It was accordingly proposed at an International Geographical Congress at Venice, in 1881, and confirmed at a Geodetic Congress at Rome held two years later, that the Government of the United States should be invited formally to call a conference of representatives to be specially appointed by the Governments of all civilized nations, to consider the subject and determine the zero and standard of reckoning to be used in common throughout the globe.

Six years ago this conference assembled under the auspices of the United States, in the City of Washington, the Governments of twenty-five nations sending fully accredited delegates. Their deliberations extended over the month of October, 1884; with substantial unanimity they passed a series of resolutions, in which the unit of measurement was constituted, and they recommended that time be computed according to the solar passage on a recognized zero meridian of the earth's surface.

The resolutions of the Washington conference thus authoritatively established the fundamental principles which underlie the scheme for a general unity of time reckoning; each nation being left in its discretion to accept the details of the reform whenever deemed expedient in each individual case. To facilitate the acceptance of the new system, the circumference of the globe has