

their enthusiastic support to the decimal notation, we must select Simon Stèvin, or Stevinus, born at Bruges, Belgium, whom we may call the Dutch Leonardo. He was, *inter alia*, director of fortifications for the Prince of Orange, hydraulic engineer in charge of river improvements and canals, and the author of a work upon decimals called "De tiende," issued in 1585, at Gouda. It was translated into English in 1608, by one Norton, under the title "Disme, the art of tenths, or decimal arithmetic, teaching how to perform all computations whatever by whole numbers, without fractions." But that title is by no means explanatory of all Stèvin's views. He proposed the decimalisation of weights and measures, but as he was two centuries in advance of the most progressive people in the world, his idea had to undergo a long period of development, and is not yet fully carried into effect.

It is happily needless now to say more about decimal numeration, for its use—much aided in England two hundred years ago by one Mr. Cocker, whose arithmetic reached nearly forty editions, and gave rise to the familiar proverb, "that's not according to Cocker"—is now co-extensive with civilization, though school children still suffer from the antiquated methods of reckoning, being over-much troubled with the fractions once in common use, and therefore called "vulgar." Such survivals are often long-enduring. Arabic figures were not adopted in the public accounting of England until 1831.