

9.E1 John Napier's Preface to *A Description of the Admirable Table of Logarithms*

Seeing there is nothing (right well beloved students in the Mathematics) that is so troublesome to Mathematicall practise, nor that doth more molest and hinder Calculators, than the Multiplications, Division, square and cubical Extractions of great numbers, which besides the tedious expence of time, are for the most part subject to many slippery errors. I began therefore to consider in my minde, by what certaine and ready Art I might remove those hindrances. And having thought upon many things to this purpose, I found at length some excellent briefe rules to be treated of (perhaps) hereafter. But amongst all, none more profitable than this, which together with the hard and tedious Multiplications, Division, and Extractions of rootes, doth also cast away from the worke it selfe, even the very numbers themselves that are to be multiplied, divided and resolved into rootes and putteth other numbers in their place, which performe as much as they can do, onely by Addition and Subtraction, Division by two or Division by three; which secret invention, being (as all other good things are) so much better as it shall be the more common; I thought good heretofore to set forth in Latine for the publique use of Mathematicians. But now some of our good Countrymen in this Island well affected to these studies, and the more publique good, procured a most learned Mathematician to translate the same into our vulgar English tongue, who after he had finished I sent the copy of it to me, to be seene and considered on by myself. I having most willingly and gladly done the same, finde it to be most exact and precisely conformable to my minde and the originall. Therefore it may please you who are inclined to these studies, to receive it from me and the Translatoe, with as much good will as we recommend it unto you. Fare yee well.