if not in favour of absolute unanimity, certainly of requiring a considerable preponderance, in order to authorize a verdict to be received, so that the decision would have to encounter the dissent of merely a trifling minority. Forces entirely out of present calculation may disturb the social system. They may even be of such a character that the community has no resource except in a temporary suspension of privileges which, abused in their exercises, cannot otherwise ultimately be preserved."

This address was followed by a paper by Mr. Joseph Brown, Q.C., also on the subject of proposed alterations in the jury laws. He advocated majority verdicts, and the raising of the rating qualifications so as to exclude the less educated classes. With regards to the former he stated a fact of which we were not aware, that *most of the British Colonies* have reduced the number of a jury and adopted the verdict of a fixed majority, and have found the change satisfactory after many years' trial.

LEGAL PROCEDURE IN ENGLAND.

The report of the Committee on Legal Procedure, appointed by the Lord Chancellor of England in January, has now been published, and will be found in the Weekly Notes for October 15th. The Committee represented all branches of the profession, its members being Lord Chief-Justice Coleridge, the late Lord Justice James, Sir James Hannen, Mr. Justice Bowen, Lord Shand, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, Mr. (now Mr. Justice) J. C. Matthew, Mr. R. T. Reid, Mr. John Hollams, and Mr. Charles Harrison. At this time, when the fervour for the reform of legal procedure is strong in the land, the Report will be read with great interest. It is carefully reviewed by our excellent contemporary the *Irish Law Times*, in its issue for October 15th. The article is too long to reproduce in full, but we shall make free use of it.

In the first place, then, the Committee have decided, after an examination of the Judicial statistics for 1879, that the writ of summons in its present form is effective in bringing defendants to a settlement at a small cost, and that it is inadvisable to make any alteration by uniting with it a plaint or other statement of the plaintiff's cause of action, which would add to the cost of the first step in the litigation.

The Committee had next to consider how far it was possible, in those cases in which litigation was continued after the appearance of the defendant, to adopt a procedure (1) for ascertaining the cases in which there is a real controversy between the parties; (2) for diminishing the cost of litigation in cases which are fought out to judgment. They arrived at the opinion that, as a general rule, the questions in controversy between litigants may be ascertained without pleadings. And accordingly it was resolved that the defendant shall, within, say 10 days after appearance, give notice of any special defences —such as fraud, the Statute of Limitations, payment, &c.; after which the plaintiff shall give notice of any special matter by way of reply on which he intends to rely; and that no pleadings shall be allowed unless by order of a Judge.

The effect of the rest of the Report is thus given by the *Irish Law Times*:

"Their next recommendation is that every action shall be assigned to a particular Master's list; and that at any time after the writ, appearance, and time for notice of defence, a summons for directions may be taken out by either party before the Master to whom the cause is assigned for directions as to any one or more of the following matters:—Further particulars of writ, further particulars of defence or reply, statement of special case, venue, discovery (including interrogatories), commissions, and examination of witnesses, mode of trial (including trial on motion for judgment and reference of cause), and any other matter or proceeding in the action previous to trial. They, furthermore, distinctly approve of the happy-despatch style of procedure by 'omnibus' summonses,