

First division.

In relation to the important office of Sheriff the Committee has from various causes felt much difficulty in determining the precise merits and demerits of the system by which its details are usually regulated.

Not practicable to institute local inquiries in the several districts into the office of Sheriff.

Were it necessary for the Committee to report fully on the manner in which business has been conducted by the several Sheriffs, particularizing the various merits or imperfections of the several offices of the department, it would be absolutely necessary to institute local inquiries in the several districts, or to depute some qualified individuals to prosecute the requisite investigations on the spot.

Such a course being at present impracticable, the Committee is constrained to act on the materials which it has been enabled to collect, and the general information which its members possess.

Credit due to some others charged with laxity and irregularity.

It is not doubted that the duties of Sheriff are performed in the several districts with different degrees of comparative efficiency, according to the character, zeal, and ability of the several incumbents and their necessary assistants—that, in some great credit is due, while in others great laxity and irregularity have prevailed.

Various causes might be assigned for the existence of irregularities in an office, the details and operations of which are so extensive and over which a vigilant and increasing superintendence is required to prevent derangement and confusion.