

tice has thereby been complained of. A vast amount of expense has been saved, and the delay in the trials of accused persons has been largely obviated. And another great feature is that instead of perhaps an innocent man being put in the dock and held up to the reproach of a crowded court-room, these trials have been uniformly conducted quietly, fairly, and without any injustice, and the morbid curiosity which abounds at every trial of importance before grand and petit juries has been properly held in a great measure in abeyance. We ask, then, for an example, one solitary instance, in which grand juries in the past ten or twenty years have, by reason of their intervention, protected the innocent or in any way furthered the punishment of the guilty? If no evidence of this can be given, in what does their usefulness consist?

It is urged that their visits to the gaols and other places of restraint are and must be productive of good. This contention would, under certain circumstances, have weight; but in view of the fact that responsible and trusted officers of the Government have all such places under their direct supervision, and that boards of visitors in special cases have been constituted, we do not think any one would seriously urge such an argument in favor of the grand jury system.

In these days of an irreproachable and painstaking judiciary, composed of men of the highest moral character, men who are removed from political, personal, and local feelings, and whose sense of duty outweighs any other influence—the grand jury is a useless and very often a dangerous incumbrance to our system of administering criminal justice. And in speaking as we do, we have no intention of reflecting in any way upon the individual reputation of grand jurors. We attack the system, not the men, for it would be difficult indeed to see how the system could work to any advantage to the public interests, no matter who composed the Grand Inquest.

Everything connected with a criminal trial ought to be carried out in the full light of public criticism, and no man, be he innocent or guilty, should be put upon his trial as a result of a secret and wholly irresponsible inquisition. It may be said that if the grand jury system were abolished, men might be put upon trial who would not be placed in that position if grand juries were continued. We propose to deal in a future number with the question of appointing permanent Crown Counsel, who, along with the local Crown officer, would be competent to determine in what cases the accused should go before a petit jury. We venture to say that a responsible officer, being a lawyer of good standing in his profession, and of necessity entirely removed from local influences and prejudices, would be a much safer authority to determine the only question which a grand jury has to consider than a body of local men, amongst whom, in too many instances, there are either warm friends or personal enemies of the accused.