

requiring months of patient research, and diligent and skillful labors, as well as large outlays of money to readjust and put them in proper order.

Some of the land records of recent date, conveying the titles to large landed estates, are written with such bad ink, and so pale, that they are now almost illegible, and in a few years will become wholly so—insomuch, that your committee think it advisable to cause the same to be re-copied. Others, in which are recorded the plats of estates in partition, and by which the boundaries of the several parts of the various proprietors are marked out and secured, have the plates torn out and defaced. Many others, and particularly the indexes, both daily and general, to the land records, have the leaves torn from the binding and laying loose in the volume, at the hazard of being lost. In others whole leaves are lost, and in others parts of the leaves are torn off and lost, insomuch that it will require skillful and patient examination of the volumes they refer to, in order to collate and recopy the names of the parties to estates. In the pursuit of their investigation, your committee discovered an instance in one of the extract books, where nearly double the price allowed by law had been charged for the matter recorded; it is due however, to the late incumbent to state, that in this instance, as well as in others of a similar character, for copying matter, he had been taken advantage of by some of his subordinates. Many of the plats of roads and highways, of much importance to the city and people of Baltimore, are torn and lying loose and disordered about the office.

The deeds lying in the office not called for, of years standing, but which the owners are entitled to on demand, at any moment; the insolvent debtors records and papers, left over in the office under the late judicial system of the State, in which the present as well as the succeeding generation may be deeply interested, as tending to ascertain the rights of parties, are in much confusion, disordered and covered with dust.

The condition of every department of said office manifests an entire want of system in its management under the late administration; and unless speedy measures be adopted to repair the errors of the past, the future must suffer, and the business relations of the people of Baltimore city and county greatly disturbed, and estates of large value put to the hazard of being lost to the heirs and representatives of the present generation, for want of the means to trace the titles.

Your committee herewith subjoin as part of this report, a complete schedule of all the books in said office, with their proper designation, numbers and dates, and describing their condition, which require to be put in order.