

did not wish to commit himself to. The year-books had everything about them in external form that was repulsive. From first to last the language of the year-books and of the other earlier reports down to the Restoration period purported to be French. In the earlier portion it was real French—that was, the French spoken by the educated people and persons of rank, but it became subsequently an English dialect of French. The court of Edward III., however, deliberately adopted English as the spoken language, and after that the spoken language in the Courts became English. The lawyers, however, continued taking their notes and writing their records in French, and the result was 'law French,' which became more and more degraded and mixed with English words till, in the sixteenth century, it was a mere jargon. Sixty years ago it was supposed no lawyer had occasion to read the year-books. Since then they had found those books were not obsolete, and that it might be necessary to refer to them even for practical purposes. In any other civilised country those year-books would have been re-edited at the expense of the State. Law reports by private reporters began in the sixteenth century, and the modern system of reports might be stated to be not more than a century old—the system of having reporters permanently attached to each Court to keep up continuous reports, and who were more or less assisted by the judges in their work. He could not say when the modern practice of judges assisting law reporters by revising the judgments was first adopted. Douglas, one of the best of the eighteenth century reporters, made no mention of it in the preface to his first volume of reports, and therefore it might be inferred that up to that time no reporter had been bold enough to ask the judge for such assistance. By that time the distinction between good and bad reporting had been thoroughly established, and the distinction between authorised reports and reports which were not authorised. The only meaning of a report be-