

or important cases more or less in point with the case reported. This annotation is usually prepared by the judge writing the opinion, or by the official reporter of it. Its value depends upon the care with which the cases are chosen, and the fullness and accuracy with which they are set out, the value increasing as the necessity for consulting the original reports diminishes. Of slightly more value is the annotation which purports to be an exhaustive collection of the cases in point, arranged in a few general groups, with now and then an illustrating case set out fully enough to illustrate the general application of the principle involved. Experience teaches that few cases are actually on all fours with respect to the point actually decided in them. Many may be found which will lay down the same broad principle as a basis for reasoning, or as leading to the conclusion reached; and when many cases are found grouped under one proposition, examination will disclose that the reader receives little aid beyond ascertaining the general subject to which they relate, and that he must examine them, case by case, to learn what application was made of the principle involved, and whether or not it is of value in the solution of his problem. Such general grouping can be easily and quickly done, but, unfortunately, it leaves the reader to perform the real work himself, telling him only what cases to include in his examination. -

Much more useful than the above is the annotation prepared by the competent text writer, based on elucidation of the principle involved in the decision under review, illustrated and fortified by well-reasoned cases. This annotation seldom purports to make an exhaustive collection of cases upon the subject, but intends to utilize the leading ones, and so illuminate and expound the principle involved that the reader will have difficulty in determining its scope and applicability, and will be able to settle his own problem whether he finds a case directly in point or not. Such work requires ability of a high order, incessant study, and a judicial temperament. Few annotators can produce satisfactory work of this kind.

The highest evolution in annotation, and that which the best