

devising methods and forms of books suitable to the needs of their times. They have so far done it well, and so long as 'man can do what man has done,' we may expect them to do it well.

"Of the writers there are three prime classes, viz., the reporters, the digesters, and the commentators whose work is now principally done by the annotators. None of these classes is very distinct, though their functions cleave sharply. Ofttimes the work of performing two or more of these functions, such as reporting and annotating, has been done by one writer and published in the same book or set of books. Often, if not usually in the present day, such work is done by a highly organized and co-ordinated staff of writers, for in no other way can the mass of current and past decisions be managed.

"The work of the reporter and that of the digester of cases is familiar, and the forms in which their work appears in print are not greatly various. They need no testimonial or any introduction to a profession that has known them both by name for hundreds of years. But the commentator and his modern progeny, the annotator, is a writer of many degrees and differences. His work and methods have been forced through many developments, and undergone many changes. Some have taken the name of annotator who were not worthy, while there are 'commentaries' and treatises that are really nothing but digests. There are real commentaries nevertheless in this day, such as the Criminal Law Treatises of Wharton, Wigmore's Evidence, and Labatt's Master and Servant, and others equally well-known. We can pass from all these to the annotators, for this is frankly a special plea in their behalf. They are now doing what may, perhaps, be as great a work for the common law as ever has been done, and that is the rectification and harmonizing of it into uniformity and systematic accuracy.

"For several centuries in the history of the common law the need for such work was amply supplied by the great commentatorial and institutional works of Coke, Hale, Blackstone, and Kent, and the special treatises contemporary with them. Precedents were not numerous then as compared to now, and the