In this juridical university (for such it is insisted to have been by Fortescue, and sir Edward Coke²) there are two sorts of collegiate houses; one called inns of chancery, in which the younger students of the law were usually placed, "learning and studying, "says Fortescue," the originals and as it were the elements of the law; who, profiting therein, as they grew to ripeness so were they admitted into the greater inns of the same study, "called the inns of court." And in these inns of both kinds, he goes on to tell us, the knights and barons, with other grandees and noblemen of the realm, did use to place their children, though they did not desire to have them thoroughly learned in the law, or to get their living by it's practice: and that in his time there were about two thousand students at these several inns, all of whom he informs us were filii nobilium, or gentlemen born.

HENCE it is evident, that (though under the influence of the monks our universities neglected this study, yet) in the time of Henry the fixth it was thought highly necessary and was the universal practice, for the young nobility and gentry to be instructed in the originals and elements of the laws. But by degrees this custom has fallen into disuse; so that in the reign of queen Elizabeth sir Edward Coke b does not reckon above a thousand students, and the number at present is very considerably less. Which seems principally owing to these reasons: first, because the inns of chancery being now almost totally filled by the inferior branch of the profession, they are neither commodious nor proper for the resort of gentlemen of any rank or figure; so that there are very rarely any young students entered at the inns of chancery: secondly, because in the inns of court all sorts of regimen and academical superintendance, either with regard to morals or studies, are found impracticable and therefore entirely neglected: lastly, because persons of birth and fortune, after having finished their usual courses at the universities, have seldom

y c. 49.

a ibid.

z 3 Rep. pref.

b ibid.