the eighth were taken by the prothonotaries, or chief ſcribes of the court, at the expenſe of the crown, and publiſhed *annually*, whence they are known under the denomination of the *year books*. And it is much to be wiſhed that this beneficial cuſtom had, under proper regulations, been continued to this day: for, though king James the firſt at the inſtance of lord Bacon appointed two reporters with a handſome ſtipend for this purpoſe, yet that wiſe inſtitution was ſoon neglected, and from the reign of Henry the eighth to the preſent time this taſk has been executed by many private and cotemporary hands; who ſometimes through haſte and inaccuracy, ſometimes through miſtake and want of ſkill, have publiſhed very crude and imperfect (perhaps contradictory) accounts of one and the ſame determination. Some of the moſt valuable of the antient reports are thoſe publiſhed by lord chief juſtice Coke; a man of infinite learning in his profeſſion, though not a little infected with the pedantry and quaintneſs of the times he lived in, which appear ſtrongly in all his works. However his writings are ſo highly eſteemed, that they are generally cited without the author's name[r].

BESIDES theſe reporters, there are alſo other authors, to whom great veneration and reſpect is paid by the ſtudents of the common law. Such are Glanvil and Bracton, Britton and Fleta, Littleton and Fitzherbert, with ſome others of antient date, whoſe treatiſes are cited as authority; and are evidence that caſes have formerly happened in which ſuch and ſuch points were determined, which are now become ſettled and firſt principles. One of the laſt of theſe methodical writers in point of time, whoſe works are of any intrinſic authority in the courts of juſtice, and do not entirely depend on the ſtrength of their quotations from older

[r] His reports, for inſtance, are ſtiled, κατ' εξοχην, *the reports*; and in quoting them we uſually ſay, 1 or 2 Rep. not 1 or 2 Coke's Rep. as in citing other authors. The reports of judge Croke are alſo cited in a peculiar manner, by the name of thoſe princes, in whoſe reigns the caſes reported in his three volumes were determined; *viz.* queen Elizabeth, king James, and king Charles the firſt; as well as by the number of each volume. For ſometimes we call them 1, 2, and 3 Cro. but more commonly Cro. Eliz. Cro. Jac. and Cro. Car.

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