

MEN AND BOOKS FAMOUS IN THE LAW

PREFACE

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The following sketches have been drawn as illustrations of the appeal which law books have when considered as the product of human needs, experience and environment. Out of the hundreds of authors and books that might have been considered, the selection of these few has been made almost at random – because they happened to be of special interest to the author. Nevertheless, it will be found that most of the great classes of law books are discussed or referred to, as well as the problems that have arisen in the progress of law-book publication. Statute law is represented by Livingston's Code, law reports by those of Blackstone, Coke, Dyer, Peters, Plowden and Wheaton; digests by Viner's Abridgment, dictionaries by Cowell's Interpreter; institutional works by Coke, Cowell, Blackstone and Kent; monographs by those of Littleton and Wheaton.

These studies deal only with Anglo-American law books. They are the outgrowth of lectures and seminar work given by the author in the Columbia University Law School, in a course on Legal Bibliography, and lectures to students in Library Economy and several Library Schools.

No pretense is made of giving an adequate picture of the contents of the books. That would require a technical presentation

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which would defeat the end sought. Nor is a complete picture of the authors of the books given. The studies are merely impressionistic sketches of men and books famous in the law, with glimpses here {8} and there of the events and people of the time in which the books were written, published and read. The last word is not said on any of the men and books treated. To some readers unacquainted with the law, this book will be the first word on the subject; to others it will be only a reminder of things already known; and to others it will supply details on matters already generally understood. To all, it is hoped that the book will give some inspiration to look further in the realms of legal literature.

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