

THE ANCIENT STANNARY OF ASHBURTON.

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It is not the object of this paper to deal with the Stannaries of Devon as a whole, or indeed to be exhaustive, so far as the particular Stannary under review—that of Ashburton—is concerned. To write a complete history of the Stannaries would be a work of great labour and time, and I cannot now pretend to do more than illustrate the history of that which was named after the ancient town in which we are assembled.

In the present day it may be needful to commence by explaining what a Stannary was. Tin-mining in Cornwall and Devon dates from a period of very remote antiquity, before even the dawn of history; and the very earliest records present it to us in the light of an organized industry, carried on by men who formed a kind of corporation, bound to certain duties, and endowed with certain privileges. Originally the whole of the tin miners of Cornwall and Devon formed one body, and met for the regulation of their affairs on Hingston Down. Subsequently the two counties were separated in this matter: and the tin-bearing lands in both divided into four districts, each of which had its court; with a parliament in each county, composed of representatives from the districts or Stannaries—so called from *stannum*, the Latin for tin. These parliaments had power to make laws for the conduct of all matters connected with tin mining in their counties, and the courts were empowered to enforce them. The head of the Stannaries under the king was an officer called the Warden, whose deputy was the Vice-Warden. Prior to the organization of the Stannaries in this form, the miners were in charge for the Crown of an officer called the Custos, or Keeper, through whom the king collected duties on the metal raised, and exercised, if he so willed, his rights of pre-emption. From the Norman Conquest down to the present day (and probably from a much earlier period), the

tin mines of Cornwall and Devon have thus been an appanage of the Crown, directly or indirectly, though the legal rights exercised over them have varied. When the dukedom of Cornwall was created they were attached thereto, and have continued in the duchy ever since, reverting to the Crown whenever the duchy was vacant. Tin, therefore, so far as England is concerned, is as much entitled to be regarded a royal metal as gold and silver, still ranked part of the regalia of the Crown.

Ashburton finds mention in the very earliest of our mining records—a letter in the Black Book of the Exchequer, concerning the proceedings of William de Wrotham, appointed Custos or Keeper of the Stannaries in the place of Geoffrey Fitz Peter, Justiciary of England, in 1197. Two months afterwards, on the 19th of January, 1198, Wrotham took the Stannaries of Devon in hand; and on that day, with the sheriff and various men of note, made enquiry, on the oaths of twenty-six wise and discreet jurors, concerning the weights by which the tin was accustomed to be weighed, and the custom to the king paid. One of these jurors was Osbert Prigge, of Ashburton. There was likewise a John Prigge, who may or may not have been related. Other jurors for the district were, Walter the Good [le Bon], of Totnes, and Alured, of Brent.

In this document* elaborate regulations for the management of the Stannaries were laid down, in which (themselves based upon more ancient customs still) we find the germ of the system of tin coinage, which continued in force for more than six centuries, until abolished in 1838.

Mention is made of tin of the first and of the second smelting. Tin of the first smelting was the metal as smelted on the spot by the rude furnace of the miner himself; tin of the second smelting was what we should now call refined tin. This smelting took place in the market towns, and the waste in the process was such that the proportion is stated at eight to nine. This second smelting, limited to certain towns, became in process of time what was known as the coinage; though as the art of smelting developed, a second smelting was no longer required, and the coinage consisted simply in striking off a corner or "coin" of each block of tin to ascertain its quality, and then stamping it with the duchy arms, in token that the quality was right and the dues paid.

* A translation is given in the Appendix to De la Beche's *Report on Cornwall and Devon*.

De Wrotham found the dues 5s. per thousand weight in Cornwall, and 2s. 6d. in Devon. He added one mark (13s. 4d.) on the second smelting, which made the united duties 18s. 4d. in Cornwall, and 15s. 10d. in Devon. For centuries before the coinage dues were abolished, the duties were 40s. per 1,000 lbs. in Cornwall and 15s. 6d. in Devon.

In 1201 John granted the tanners a charter.

Richard, his second son, created by his brother Henry, Earl of Cornwall, is said to have derived immense wealth from the mines, which went with the earldom, and with a portion of that wealth to have purchased his proud dignity of King of the Romans. After his time the mines fell into decay. Carew* attributes this to the banishment of the Jews who had worked them. It is quite as likely that it arose from Richard, in his haste to get rich, laying upon the tanners burdens too grievous to be borne. In order to remedy the decay, certain Cornish gentlemen, who had plenty of tin on their lands, obtained a charter from Richard's son Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, "with sundrie Priuileges: amongst which, it was graunted them to keepe a Court, and bold plea of all actions, life, lymme, and land excepted: in consideration whereof the sayd Lords accorded to pay the Earle a halfpenny for every pound of Tynne which should be wrought; and that for better answering this taxe, the sayd Tynne should bee brought to certayne places purposely appointed, and there peized, coyned, and kept vntill the Earles due were satisfied." †

Following this, a few years later, in the 33rd of his reign (1305), Edward I. granted charters to the tanners of Cornwall and Devon, which for the first time recognized them as distinct bodies. Lydford was appointed as the Stannary prison in Devon; and it was decreed that all tin, whether white or black (metal or ore), wheresoever found or worked in the county, should be weighed by the king's weights, and coined at "Tavystok, Asperton, vel Chaggeford." In Cornwall, Lostwithiel was named as the prison, and Lostwithiel, Bodmin, Liskeard, Truro, and Helston the Stannary towns.

It is abundantly evident that this charter merely confirmed in many respects that which was already practised, as the charter of John had rather reaffirmed old conditions than created new ones. One fact will make this clear. There is now in the Public Record Office a tin coinage roll of two years' earlier date than this charter, in which Chagford, Ashburton, and Tavistock are named as the coinage towns.

Plympton was made a Stannary town in 1328; not addi-

* *Survey of Cornwall*, p. 17.

† Carew, *Survey*, p. 17.

tional, but in lieu of Tavistock. The words of the record are very explicit: "Because the town of Tavistock is far distant from the sea, and the tin there weighed and coined cannot without great expense be brought to the sea, for which reason merchants and others rarely come to the aforesaid town of Tavistock to buy tin," to the loss of the Crown and the injury of the said Stannaries; therefore coinage was to take place at Ashburton, Chagford, and Plympton, "which are near the sea, and *not* at Tavistock."* However, it could not have been a very great length of time before Tavistock got its privileges back, since it is always mentioned as a Stannary in the records of the Crockerntor Parliament.

The earliest record with which I am acquainted of the produce of the tin mines of Devon is in a Pipe Roll of 19 Edward I. (1290-1). In that year 87,785 lbs. of tin were raised, and dues of various kinds paid to the amount of £77 2s. 8½d. There were then 473 black tanners in the county, and 302 white tanners. The black tanners were, I should explain, those who got the ore; the white tanners those who smelted it. The number of white tanners greatly fell off in the next decade, there being in 1300-1 but 93 against 440 of their black brethren. The price of tin charged on the white tanners varied during this period from 8s. 6d. to 10s. per cwt. The black tanners originally paid a tax of 2d. yearly; and the white tanners one of 2 lbs. of tin.

In 1296 [24th Edward I.] one William de Wymundham was keeper of the king's mines in the county; and some of his accounts are extant. They make no allusion to Ashburton, though including payments for mines on Dartmoor. This brings us to the Coinage Roll of 1303, from which I extract the details of one of the Ashburton coinages. The roll is the earliest detailed statistical record of our mines in existence.

Asperton. Cunagium ibidem die Jovis proxime post festum Beate Marie Virginis. Anno, &c., xxxi.mo.†

Walterus Weallyng, CCC. i. qtr. xiiii. li.	v. s. iii. d. ob.
Ricardus de Lancscorford, C. i. qtr. xiiii. li.	ii. s. ii. d.
Sarra uxor Gilberti, C. dimid.	ii. s. iv. d. q.
Hugo Matheu, DC. i. qtr.	ix. s. viii. d. ob.
Galfridus Cole, C. i. qtr.	xxiii. d. ob.
Walterus Weallyng, dimid. C.	ix. d. ob.

* Patent Roll, 2nd Edward III.

† *Queen's Remembrancer's Miscellanous*. "Mines" Tin Coinage Roll, 31st Edward I., 44A

Walterus Attecombe, DCCCC. di. i. qrter.	xv. s. i. d. qr.
Rogerus Obelyn, C. i. qrter.	xxiii. d. ob.
Ricardus de Middelworthi, CCCC. i. qrter. xiiii. li.	vi. s. x. d. qr.
Johannes Bythebroke, CCCC. di. vi. li.	vii. s. i. d. ob.
Johannes Hervy, CCC. xiiii. li.	iii. s. x. d. ob. q.
Stephanus Wymound, CC.	ii. s. i. d. ob.
Willielmus de Schirewill, C. xiiii. li.	xxi. d. q.
Hugo de Corndon, CCCC. i. qrter. vii. li.	vi. s. ix. d.
Michael Cole, DC. i. qrter.	ix. s. viii. d. ob.
Johannes Attatorre, DCC.	x. s. x. d. ob.
Ricardus Clericus, C. i. qrter. xix. li.	ii. s. ii. d. ob. q.
Galfridus Mogge, DCC. di. xxiiii. li.	xii. s. ii. d.
Stephanus Mugge, CCC. i. qrter. xxiii. li.	v. s. v. d.
Walterus Weallyng, DiC.	ix. d. ob.
Summa Stagni, vii. Mill. C. ix. li.	
Summa denariorum, CXI. s. ob. cum incremento.	

There were eight coinages during the year, the details of the whole of which are entered on this roll. There were also eight for Chagford, and five for Tavistock. The roll ends with the following total :

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“Summa tocius stagminis, iiii. x. mill. C. i. qrt. vii. li.
 Summa denariorum, lxxix. li. xvii. s. i. den.
 Summa incrementi per quadrantes, vi. s. xi. den.
 Et per medietates et minutas partes quadrantum.”

The total quantity of tin raised in Devonshire for the year was therefore just 40 tons and a quarter; and an examination of the details of the coinages shows that of this quantity about 21½ tons were coined at Ashburton, 17½ at Chagford, and rather more than 1½ only at Tavistock.

The names of the Ashburton tanners who had tin coined at the other coinages of this year, in addition to those already given, are—

Bartholomew Attarmede, William Attafenne, John Benet, John Brende, Stephen Cole, Walter de Coomb, Richard Cole, John de Chitelford, Hugo de Fenton, John Faber de Blakedon, Adam de Blakedon, Richard Gwynne, John le Harpour, Thomas de Lylsyngton, Richard de Leustor, Robert le Myllour, Robert Pole, Bartholomew de Prato, Richard Stenylake, Robert Schire, Walter de Smalcomb, Walter Syward, Robert Uppahulle, Walter Withecomb. Richard the Clerk appears again as Ricardus Clericus Attafenne. Sarah, the wife of Gilbert, had by the next coinage become his widow, “Sarra relicta Gilberti,” and subsequently appears as “Sarra de holne.” The names of several of these tanners occur also as coining at Chagford, but more particularly at Tavistock.

An Ashburton man filled an important office under the

Crown in connection with the mines of Devonshire in 1327. We find the following entry in a roll 20th Edward II.

Rex vicecom : Ballivis, &c., in Comit Devon and Cornub, &c. Sciatis quod assignavimus Will: de Somerhill de Asperton ad colligend : per se and per alios ad opus nrm totam minam auri que inveniri possint in mineris, and minis de Stanno apertis & aperendis in com supradictis, &c. : Ita eciam quod idem Wills et deputando ab eo de auro predicto nobis respondeat ad Scaccarium nrm, &c. : quod sub gravi forisfaitura nostra non emant neque vendant minam auri nec lavent seu lavari faciant aliquam minam stanni nisi certis diebus ad quos pefat Willelms vel deput.

This, I think, evidently shows that the Stannary of Ashburton continued to hold its foremost place. We may infer as much also from an Act of Parliament passed in 1391 (14th Richard II.), which enacted that the passage of tin out of the realm should be at the port of Dartmouth, and nowhere else, although in the following year the restriction was removed.

There is an interesting entry in the accounts of Exeter Cathedral (1372-3) relating to the founding of two bells. The tin was bought from William Ryka, of Ashburton, at 2d. per lb., and the copper of John Brasyer, of Dartmouth, at 3½d. "In vj^o xvi libris stagni Williemo Ryka de Ayschperton emptis v^o £ ij^s x^d precium libré ij^d."

Cornwall was now, however, speedily overtaking Devon in the production of tin; and when the tables were once turned went very rapidly ahead. Thus, while in 1471 the tin raised in Devon amounted to 242,624 lbs., Cornwall produced 851,116. The coinage rolls of this date show that Ashburton held its own fairly. We no longer, however, meet with the quaint surnames heretofore recorded. In 1464 (3rd Edward IV.) the chief tanners in the Ashburton district were Arthur Clye, John Clye, senior and junior, John and Robin Baker, Thomas Fallot, John Dairelle, John Gray, Thomas Fisherton, Thomas Halye, John Hawe, John Haneworthy, John Martyn, Thomas Miller, John Vytry, and Thomas Underhay.

There is other evidence than the coinage rolls afford, that the tin works in the neighbourhood were carried on with activity. All these early workings were stream works, not mines. The miners washed over the stanniferous gravels in the beds of the streams and on the low-lying moors, but did not dig shafts. Their workings were on the surface simply, and so long as the deposits continued rich, or there were

virgin deposits to be worked, the tin produce of Devon kept up. Productive tin lodes in Devon are few and far between, and hence when the stream works were exhausted, the mines, though often tried, were unable to supply their places. The stream works in the 15th and 16th centuries were so extensive and so vigorously worked, that great quantities of gravel and sand therefrom washed down the rivers into the harbours, choking them to such a degree that several Acts of Parliament were passed to stop the practice. As the Dart is one of the rivers said to be specially injured, it is clear that there could not have been much falling off in the activities of the tin works of the Ashburton Stannary, when these Acts were first passed in the reign of Henry VIII. But by the end of the century, when mining proper had commenced, the returns tell quite another tale.

Those for the Michaelmas coinage of 1595, preserved in the State Paper Office, are as follows :

Chagford,	12th and 13th June,	169 pieces,	33,348 lbs.
Ashborton	14th and 15th "	30 "	5,037 "
Plympton	16th "	32 "	5,096 "
Tavistock	17th and 18th "	195 "	31,610 "
	Total of Devon . .	<u>426 "</u>	<u>75,091 "</u>
Liskeard	21st and 22nd June,	79 pieces	19,230 "
Listidiell	23rd, 24th, & 25th "	73 "	24,030 "
Truro	4th, 5th, & 6th July	388 "	136,038 "
Helston		302 "	110,962 "
	Total of Cornwall . .	<u>842 "</u>	<u>290,260 "</u>

The detailed account for Ashburton runs :—

	pieces			
Richard foster	2	2	3	14
Thomas Michel	3	4	3	7
W ^l m Beard	4	5	1	14
Willm Cristofore	2	2	1	14
Bartholomew Pomrey	5	9	3	9
Thomas Philips	3	4	1	15
Willm Barne	6	11	0	8
Gregory Trend	5	9	2	6

William Barne and Gregory Trend also coined at Chagford; the former 70 pieces, and the latter 40.

During the next few years the falling off in the produce of Devon was so rapid, that in 1602, while the tin coinage of Cornwall amounted to £2,623 9s. 8d., Devon produced only £102 17s. 9½d.

As years passed on matters grew still worse, and the tin produce of Devon dwindled into utter insignificance. Thus at the Devonshire Christmas coinage of 1706 there were 83 pieces of tin coined, weighing 21,348 lbs. Only one of these pieces was coined at Ashburton, by Nathaniel Symons, the weight being 206 lbs. At Tavistock there were ten tanners. These figures were trifles in comparison with the produce of Cornwall; for in the same return it is stated that the surplus tin coined in that county at Midsummer in the same year, with the Michaelmas coinage, amounted to 2,958 pieces, weighing 799,964 lbs. Of these 1827 were coined at Truro, weighing 505,228 lbs.

The records of the Ashburton Stannary Courts show that tin mining still lingered within its ancient centre, and that the old forms were still observed down to within the past hundred years. At length there came a time when there was no tin to coin, no tanners to hold a court, and when the Stannary of Ashburton ceased to exist, save in name. Nor in that respect was it worse off than its neighbours. The Stannaries of Chagford, Tavistock, and Plympton had fallen into decay likewise; and tin coinage in Devonshire came for the time to an end.

At the end of the last century there were very few mines working in the vicinity of Ashburton. Some of these were of copper; and most of them were discontinued before Lysons' *Devon* appeared, in 1822. According to that work, the average quantity of tin raised in Devon annually in the six years ending March, 1820, was but 1,171 blocks (*sic* query 171), weighing 586 cwt. 9 lbs; and this was taken into Cornwall to be coined. Subsequently the Devonshire tin was coined at Morwellham; and this was the last place in the county where the coinages took place prior to their abolition in 1838. From Midsummer, 1837, to Midsummer, 1838, the number of blocks coined at Morwellham was 756, which would give a total produce of 120 tons.

According to the official report of Mr. Hunt, keeper of the Mining Records, the total produce of the mines in the Ashburton district in 1874 was as follows: Brookwood, copper, Buckfastleigh, 1,755 tons, value £8,544 2s. 6d.; Bulkamore, iron, Buckfastleigh, 1,000 tons, £750; Devon and Cornwall, umber, Ilsington, 504 tons, £479 4s.; Gobbet, tin, Exworthy, 1 ton 10 cwt. 1 qr. 20 lbs, £85; Haytor, magnetic iron, 1669 tons, £1,500; Roborough, umber, Ashburton, 850 tons, £637; Smallacombe, iron, Ilsington, 2,069 tons, £1,626 10s.; Smallacombe, umber, 37 tons, £19; South Devon, iron, 255 tons,

£191 5s. No figures are given for the Chase mine, whence a gossan is raised for the manufacture of silicate paint.

The only mines that were worked in the district in 1875 were: East Ashburton, Ilsington, tin; Brookwood, Buckfastleigh, copper; Bulkamore, Buckfastleigh, iron; Dean, Buckfastleigh, copper and iron; Devon and Cornwall, Ashburton, umber; Wheal Emma, Buckfastleigh, copper; Haytor Vale, Ilsington, iron; Riley, Ilsington, manganese; Chase, Holne, gossan.

The minerals found in the district include the following: Amphibole (Haytor), agate (Haytor), axinite (Brent), arragonite (Buckfastleigh), calcedony (Haytor—the pseudo morphous form after calcite and datholite is called Haytorite), calcite (Ashburton, &c.), cassiterite (Buckland, Ilsington, Widdecombe, &c.), chalcocite (Buckfastleigh), chalcopyrite (Ashburton, Buckfastleigh, &c.), native copper (Ashburton), felspar (abundant on Dartmoor), fluor spar (Buckfastleigh), garnet (Haytor), gold (? in the streams on Dartmoor), hematite (Buckfastleigh, Ilsington, &c.), kaolin (Dartmoor), lithomarge (Haytor), limonite (Buckfastleigh, Ashburton, Ilsington), magnetite (Buckland, Ilsington, Haytor), malachite (Buckfastleigh), mica (abundant on Dartmoor), manganese (Ashburton, Buckfastleigh), opal (Haytor), pyrites (Buckfastleigh, &c.), pyrophyllite (Buckfastleigh — this mineral has been discovered here for the first time in this country by Dr. C. Le Neve Foster), quartz (abundant on Dartmoor), tourmaline (Ashburton, Buckfastleigh, Haytor), umber (Ashburton, Ilsington).

And now for a few words concerning the ancient Tinnors' Parliament, which was wont to be held in the open air on Crockerntor, where seats had been formed and hewn in the granite. Crockerntor may or may not have been the seat of an ancient British court of judicature, to which opinion Polwhele fancifully inclines. I am content to believe it was selected by the tinnors as their place of meeting, because it was as nearly as possible equidistant between the Stannary towns of Chagford, Ashburton, Plympton, and Tavistock and the Stannary prison of Lydford. Hither, when summoned by the Lord Warden, would twenty-four tinnors for each Stannary, elected in the court of that Stannary, assemble to enact laws for the good governance of the whole, and for the punishment of anybody who meddled with what they conceived to be their rights, which at one time were held to extend so far as digging for tin in any man's ground, without tribute or

satisfaction, whereas their Cornish brethren only made such claims in support of waste or wastrell.

The first parliament of which I have been able to ascertain the date was held September 11th, 1494.

I find the following lists of jurats—the official title of these ancient Parliament-folk—for the Stannary of Ashburton in an old black letter treatise on the laws and customs of the Stannaries published in 1574 :

“The great court of our Sovereign Lord the King in his Duchy of Cornwall,” held at Crockentorre, before Thomas Deneys, for Henry Merney, warden of the Stannaries, 2nd Henry VIII. (1510), was attended by the following jurats of Ashburton :

Richarde Hamlyn, John Vele, John Bonycombe, John Maddocke, Willyam Myller, John Baron, Willyam King of Hole, John Eyre, Richarde Langworthy, Thomas Mathewe, John Exte of Brenston, Richarde Forforde, Richarde Baker, John Wydecombe, Richarde Hart, Willyam Widecombe, John Clyffe, Willyam Edwarde, John Saunder, Thomas Ganerocke, Michell Sperekewill, John Baker, Robert Tomlyn, Willyam Berde.

Parliament held before Sir Philip Champernown, for the warden, Henry, Marquis of Exeter, October 28th, 24th Henry VIII. (1533) : John Vele, Willyam Smith, Robert Hamlyn, John Ferres, Willyam Myller, John Horsehame, John Lägworthie, of Bokelande, Thomas Philip, Richarde Coyshe, Richarde King, Walterus Rowe, Nicholas Brende, John Pethybrygge, John Wydecombe, Willyam Baron, Willyam Elys, Thomas Predyaux, John Voyse, Richard Tayler, John Forforde, John Maddock of Huishe, Thomas Jamlyn, Elias Hert, Willyam Snowdon.

Parliament held before the same, 25th September, 25th Henry VIII. (1534) : Thomas Predyaux, Willyam Cowarde, John Bery, senior, John Veal, John Voyse, Robart Hamlyn, Richarde Taylor, John Maddock of Blakeal, Thomas Hamlyn, John Dolbeare, Ri. Lägworthy of Lesewel, John Horsham, Jo. Langworthy of Bucklād, Willyam Smith, Jo. Widecombe of Bukelād, Willyam Bonicombe, John Stiddeston, Thomas Wodde, Thomas Philip, Richard Quoyshe, William Leer, J. Dybell, Henry Paty, Robert Hanworthe.

Parliament held before Sir John Charles, for John Count of Bedford, 26th March, 6th Edward VI. (1553) : William Burgin, Christofer Warrin, Thomas Hamlin, Richarde Tayler, John Forforde, John Stydson, John Hoseham, John Widecombe, John Debyll, John Seyger, Laurence Withecombe, Wylliam Hole, Richarde Langworthy, Thomas Bickeforde,

James Maddicke, Edwarde Hanworthy, Walter Stephen, Peter Kyng, Thomas Pers, Richarde Hamlyn, William Wottō, *alias* Bill, Quirinus Rowge, William Yollande, Richard Maye.

The next list is from Pearse's *Laws and Customs of the Stannaries*, 1725. The name given by him Foxforde, is the Forforde of the preceding lists.

"The great court or Parliament of our Soueraigne Lady Elizabeth," held at "Crockerentoore," before the Earl of Bedford, 6th August, 16th Elizabeth (1576): John Rowe, younger gent; John Furselande, gent; Olyuer Franklyn, gent; Christofer Warring, Willia Wotton, alia Gale, John Heale, William Ussher, Aungell Maddocke, Adrian Foxe-forde, Richarde Foster, William Meacombe, Augustine Herte, Richard Chafe, William Lammeshed, Phillip Peterffielde, Thomas Abraham, William Ellis, John Caunter, Edwarde Hannaforde, William Foster, Richarde Meacombe, Richard Wydecombe, Frauncis Dodde, John Mayger.

I cannot say when the last Parliament was held at Crockern. There were no set times for the holding of these assemblies, which were convened when the Lord Warden of the Stannaries saw fit. Prince, writing in 1697, mentions Crockern as the place where the Stannary parliament was wont to be held. Polwhele, just a century later, says that the "legislators of the last generations" had been accustomed merely to open commission and swear the jurors on Crockern, and then to adjourn to one of the Stannary towns. I question whether when Polwhele wrote any one was living who had taken part in one of these parliaments. The latest that I have heard of was held in 1703, when Lord Granville was Warden, and the Hon. Samuel Rolle Vice-Warden. This "Parliament of Tanners" was summoned to meet at eight o'clock in the morning of 23rd September. The writs for the return of the jurors were addressed to the bailiffs of the Stannaries, directing them to proclaim the said parliament publicly at the accustomed and usual place. Each Stannary Court was also to be proclaimed at the accustomed place for Tuesday, the 9th September, and the bailiffs were to "summon all tanners, bounders [owners of tin rights obtained by bounding] and owners of tin and works and adventurers in the same, and all spalyers [labourers] and other persons within your said Stannaries concerned in tin or tin works to be personally present," and to choose "twenty-four of the most sufficient, able, good, and lawful men of the stannatory."* It is clear,

* I am indebted to Mr. J. S. Amery for the sight of the interesting writ of summons quoted.

therefore, that the tanners of Devon were a most democratic constituency. In Cornwall the stannators (six in number only for each Stannary) were chosen by the mayors of the Stannary towns.

The last convocation (or Parliament) of tanners in Cornwall was held in 1752-3. There is every reason to believe, as I have said, that the Parliaments of Devon had been discontinued long before. The courts of the Stannaries, however, remained, and indeed in modified form continue still, in the Court of the Vice-Warden of the Stannaries held at Truro, though no longer concerned with tin mining only. Stannary courts were held at Ashburton in 1757, when John Hill, of Ashburton, proclaimed "one pair of tin bounds," called Broomshill, in the presence of William Pascoe and Joseph Andrew, tanners; and continued for many years subsequently, when it would have been impossible to find a dozen tanners in the Stannary, much less twenty-four, to make into jurats.