

Great Seal to six Persons in every County, where of two should be of the best Quality, two Knights, and two Men of the Law, and that they should have Power to hear and determine Trespasses and Felonies; and that they should sit four times in every Year.

Thus began that Court which is now called the *Quarter-Sessions*: And because these Persons had Power by their Commission to hear and determine Causes, they were from thence called *Justices of the Peace*; and about two Years afterwards they were distinguished by that Name, by the Statute 36 Ed. 3. and from that time they were Judges of Record.

But it was not many Years before this Number of six greatly increased, insomuch that in the 12th Year of R. 2. the Parliament thought it necessary to reduce them to the first Institution, (*i.e.*) that there should be no more than six in each County.

But still they would be increasing, for about two Years afterwards, there were eight in every County.

This Law is still in force and not abrogated, but the Number of Justices still encreased, which made Mr. *Lambard* above one hundred Years since, complain in a Book which he wrote concerning the Office of a Justice of Peace; and his Countryman Sir *Henry Spelman*, takes notice after him, that in his time there were above three-score in most Counties.

'Tis true, in *Wales* there were but eight in each County; they were restrained to that Number by a particular Clause in the Statute 35 H. 8. Entituled, *An Act for certain Ordinances in the Dominion and Principality of Wales*; by which 'tis enacted, *That there shall be no more in any of the Shires,*