its prey. It feeds on all other insects it can catch : even frequently two ſtaphylini of the ſame ſpecies bite and tear each other. Though this insect has very ſmall elytra, yet its wings are large ; but they are curiouſly folded up, and concealed under the elytra. The insect unfolds and expands them when he chooſes to fly, which he does very lightly. Among the ſmall ſpecies of this genus, there are several whoſe colours are lively and singularly intermingled.

Some of them are found upon flowers, but they chiefly inhabit the dung of cows. Their larvae, which reſemble them ſo much as to be ſcarce diſtinguiſhable, live in damp places under ground. They are by ſome called *Rove beetles.*

STAPLE, primarily ſignifies a public place or market, whither merchants, &c. are obliged to bring their goods to be bought by the people ; as the Greve, or the places along the Seine, for ſale of wines and corn, at Paris, whither the merchants of other parts are obli­ged to bring thoſe commodities.

Formerly, the merchants of England were obliged to carry their wool, cloth, lead, and other like staple commodities of this realm, in order to expoſe them by wholeſale ; and theſe ſtaples were appointed to be conſtantly kept at York, Lincoln, Newcaſtle upon Tyne, Norwich, Weſſminſter, Canterbury, Chicheſter, Wincheſter, Exeter, and Briſtol ; in each whereof a public mart was appointed to be kept, and each of them had a court of the mayor oſ the ſtaple, for deci­ding differences, held according to the law-merchant, in a ſummary way.

STAR, in aſtronomy, a general name for all the heavenly bodies, which, like ſo many brilliant ſtuds, are diſperſed throughout the whole heavens. The stars are diſtinguiſhed, from the phenomena of their motion, &c. into fixed, and erratic or wandering ſtars : theſe laſt are again diſtinguiſhed into the greater lumi­naries, viz. the ſun and moon ; the planets, or wander­ing ſtars, properly ſo called; and the comets ; which have been all fully considered and explained under the article Astronomy. As to the fixed ſtars, they are ſo called, becauſe they ſeem to be fixed, or perfectly at reſt, and conſequently appear always at the ſame diſtance from each other.

*Falling Stars,* in meteorology, fiery meteors which dart through the ſky in form of a ſtar. See Meteor.

*Twinkling of the Spars.* See Optics, n⁰ 21. *et seq.*

Star, is alſo a badge of honour, worn by the knights of the garter, bath, and thistle. See Garter.

Star *of Bethlehem,* in botany. See OrnγthogaLUM.

*Court of STAR-CHAMBER, (camera stellata),* a famous, or rather infamous, Engliſh tribunal, ſaid to have been ſo called either from a Saxon word ſignifying to st*eer* or govern ; or from its puniſhing the *crimen stellionatus,* or coſenage ; or becauſe the room wherein it sat, the old council-chamber of the palace of Weſtminſter, (Lamb 148.) which is now converted into the lottery- office, and. forms the eaſtern side oſ New Palace-yard, was full of windows; or, (to which Sir Edward Coke, 4 Inſt. 66. accedes), becauſe *haply* the roof thereof was at the firſt garniſhed with gilded stars. As all theſe are merely conjectures, (for no ſtars are now in the roof, nor are any ſaid to have remained there ſo late as the reign of queen Elizabeth), it may be allowable to propoſe another conjectural etymology, as plauſible per­haps as any of them. It is well known, that, before the baniſhment of the Jews under Edward I.@@ their con­tracts and obligations were denominated in our ancient records st*arra* or sta*rrs,* from a corruption of the He­brew word, shetar, a covenant. (Tovey’s A*ngl. Judaic.* 32. Selden, tit. of hon. ii. 34. *Uxor Ebraic.* i. 14.) Theſe ſtarrs, by an ordinance of Richard the Firſt, preſerved by Hoveden, were commanded to be enrolled and deposited in cheſts under three keys in certain places; one, and the moſt conſiderable, of which was in the king’s exchequer at Weſtminſter : and no ſtarr was al­lowed to be valid, unleſs it were found in ſome of the ſaid repositories. *(Memorand. in Scad P.* 6. *Edw.* J. prefixed to Maynard’s year-book of Edw. II. fol. 8. Madox hist. exch. c. vii. 6 4, 5, 6.) The room at the exchequer, where the cheſts containing theſe ſtarrs were kept, was probably called the star-*chamber ;* and, when the Jews were expelled the kingdom, was applied to the uſe of the king’s council, sitting in their judicial capa­city. To confirm this, the firſt time the ſtar-chamber is mentioned in any record, it is ſaid to have been situated near the receipt of the exchequer at Weſtminſter: (the king’s council, his chancellor, treaſurer, juſtices, and other ſages, were aſſembled *en la chaumbre des esteilles pres la reſceipt al Westminster. Clauſ.* 41 *Edw.* III. m*.* 13.) For in proceſs of time, when the meaning of the Jewiſh st*arrs* were forgotten, the word sta*r-chamber* was naturally rendered in law French, *la chaunιbre del esteilles,* and in law Latin *camera stellata ;* which con­tinued to be the ſtyle in Latin till the diſſolution of that court.

This was a court of very ancient original ; but new- modelled by ſtatutes 3 Hen. VII. c. 1. and 21 Hen. VIII. c. 20. consiſting of divers lords ſpiritual and tem­poral, being privy-counſellors, together with two judges of the courts of common-law, without the intervention of any jury. Their juriſdiction extended legally over riots, perjury, miſbehaviour of sheriffs, and other noto­rious miſdemeanors, contrary to the laws of the land. Yet this was afterwards (as lord Clarendon informs us) ſtretched “ to the aſſerting of all proclamations and orders of ſtate ; to the vindicating of illegal commiſsions and grants of monopolies ; holding for honour­able that which pleaſed, and for just that which profit­ed ; and becoming both a court of law to determine civil rights, and a court of revenue to enrich the treaſury ; the council-table by proclamations enjoining to the people that which was not enjoined by the laws, and prohibiting that which was not prohibited ; and the ſtar-chamber, which consisted of the ſame perſons in different rooms, cenſuring the breach and diſobedience to thoſe proclamations by very great fines, imprisonments, and corporal ſeverities : ſo that any diſreſpect to any acts of ſtate, or to the perſons of ſtateſmen, was in no time more penal, and the foundations of right never more in danger to be deſtroyed.” For which reaſons, it was finally aboliſhed by ſtatute 16 Car. I. c. 10. to the general joy of the whole nation. See *KING's Bench.* There is in the Britiſh Muſeum (Harl. MSS. Vol. I. n⁰ 126 ) a very full, methodical, and accurate account of the conſtitution and courſe of this court, compiled by William Hudſon of Gray’s Inn, an eminent practitioner therein, A ſhort account of the ſame, with

@@@[mu] Blackest Comment. vol. iv. p. 266.