

the able young sculptor who lived in Florence, and who had just begun to make people realize what a wonderful talent he had.

"So Piero, who, as ruler of the city, was very powerful, and could ask what he would of even its noblest people, sent for Michelangelo, and when the young sculptor came Piero bade the artist make for him a snow statue within the palace yard.

"Perhaps, in spite of his usually grave demeanor, Michelangelo entered into the spirit of frolic which prevailed throughout the city, for he made the statue, as Piero had requested, molding the ready snow, I doubt not, into one of the strong and powerful figures which he so delighted to carve out of marble.

"When it was done, Piero was so well pleased that he had the young sculptor come to live in the palace with him, and eat at his table.

"Michelangelo was then about twenty years old, and he afterward made some of the finest

statues that are in the city of Florence, and became one of the greatest sculptors that the world has ever known."

"How I wish I could have seen that snow statue!" exclaimed Helen.

"I suppose it was well worth seeing," her father answered. "But in Florence and in Rome to-day there are marble statues Michelangelo carved which have remained unchanged during all the four hundred years since the maker of the snow image lived. Perhaps, when you are older, you may go to those cities and see them."

"I mean to," said John, with an earnest shake of his head.

"I suppose the snow image did not last long," Helen said, after echoing John's determination.

"No," their father answered. "The climate of Italy is so warm that the snow very soon melted; and I believe that was the only time Italy was visited by so great a fall of snow."

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## THE ROYAL CHAMPION OF ENGLAND.

BY JENNIE DAY HAINES.

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WHENEVER England has had a new sovereign the coronation ceremonies have been both grand and impressive. Westminster Abbey, within whose venerable walls cluster so many memories, is the scene of action. There, in the presence of a vast, gorgeously attired and bejeweled assemblage, the Archbishop of Canterbury solemnly crowns the future king or queen, as the case may be. The stately throne-chair, too, used on these occasions, is rich in historical associations. Its seat is only a rough-looking flat rock; but, as the noted "Stone of Scone," the Scottish kings, from time out of memory, had been crowned upon it. After the last war between England and Scotland, far back in the days of King Edward I. and Robert Bruce, this stone was captured and carried in triumph to England, where, ever since the year 1296, it has been used during the coronation of the English crowned heads.

After the rites at Westminster Abbey are over, all such as are entitled attend the royal banquet served in Westminster Hall. It is at this feast that the "Royal Champion," completely clad in armor, makes his appearance, and, in virtue of his office, proceeds to challenge to mortal combat any who would gainsay the title of the new sovereign.

There have been twenty-seven successive champions of England, from the time of William the Conqueror down to King William IV., who dispensed with the office. Queen Victoria did not revive it, although the office has not yet been abolished by Parliament, and the present champion, by right of heredity, is Francis Seamen Dymoke, who numbers the twenty-ninth in the line.

The latest appearance of England's champion was at the coronation of King George IV., on July 19, 1821. Dressed in armor, he ap-



peared on horseback just as the second course had been served at the royal banquet. A herald proclaimed that if any one dared to deny that the newly crowned monarch was the lawful King of England, "here was a champion that could fight with him"; and at these words he flung down his glove. The ceremony was thrice repeated. No one answering after the third defiance, the champion advanced to the king's table, where his Majesty drank to him, and presented him with the gold cup, to keep as his own.

The office of champion is a very ancient one, even antedating the Conquest, when the Marmions, lords of Fontenay, served the dukes of Normandy in this function. It is popularly supposed that William the Conqueror brought over the custom to England, as he granted Robert de Marmion, one of his distinguished followers, the castle and town of Tamworth, also the feudal manor of Scivelby, in Lincolnshire.

Although Sir Walter Scott has used the titles of this old family for his hero Marmion,—

They hail'd Lord Marmion,  
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,  
Of Lutterwood and Scivelbaye,  
Of Tamworth tower and town,—

still the character of Marmion in the poem is pure fiction.

After the castle and estate of Tamworth had passed down to four successive barons from Robert de Marmion, the family ended in the person of Philip de Marmion, who died, without sons, in the reign of Edward I.

The Tamworth estates went to his granddaughter Mazera, who married Alexander de Freville, and their descendant, Baldwin de Freville, in the reign of Richard I. claimed the office of Royal Champion; but it was given, instead, to Sir John Dymoke, to whom the manor of Scivelby had descended, by another of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion, and it remains in that family to the present day.

When Charles Dymoke, the sixteenth champion,—who had appeared at the coronation of the unfortunate Charles I.,—died childless, in 1625, his honors passed to a cousin, Sir Edward,

who was champion at the Restoration, and who left three sons.

At this point there is a romantic story in the history of the office. The second son, Edward Dymoke, having for some reason fallen out with his kin, settled far away from them as a yeoman in Tetford, where he lived and died, bringing up his children in ignorance of their lineage. His great-grandson was but a worthy mercer in the town of Lincoln, when, in 1760, the wealthy Squire Lewis Dymoke of Scivelby Manor died without issue, and the estate, with all its privileges, descended to a younger branch of the family, in the person of John Needham Dymoke, who thus became the twenty-second champion, and threw down the challenge for George III.

The office descended in this branch of the family to Henry Lionel Dymoke, who, at the coronation of George IV., became the twenty-seventh champion; but having no children nor any near relatives of his own name that he knew, he started an investigation to discover, if possible, some Dymoke to whom he might bequeath the estate and the championship. On examining the registers of Scivelby, a surprising fact came to light:

It was found that the yeomen Dymokes of Tetford were not only of the true blood, but also had a better right to the championship than the squire himself. So, like the honorable gentleman that he was, Mr. Dymoke, "as an act of reparation," willed back to the yeoman branch the property of which it had been deprived since 1760. Thus, on the death of the squire's widow, in 1883, the heir of the Tetford family, Francis Seamen Dymoke, succeeded to Scivelby; and it is his son and namesake who is to-day the twenty-ninth hereditary champion in descent from Sir Robert de Marmion.

Contrary to history, there are many popular legends and myths in which the champion's challenge has been accepted, especially with every eighteenth-century coronation, while a Stuart Pretender to the throne existed. Usually it is a woman, old and infirm, or young and beautiful, who, pushing her way through the crowd, takes up the champion's gauntlet and leaves her own in its place. One version



makes the Pretender himself, disguised in female attire, accomplish the daring feat.

It is also said that upon the coronation of George III., when the champion appeared in Westminster and, in the language of chivalry, solemnly wagered his body to defend, in single combat, the right of the young king to the crown of these realms, at the moment when he flung down his gauntlet as the gage of battle, an unknown female stepped from the crowd and lifted the pledge, leaving another gage in

place of it, with a paper on which it was written that if a fair field or combat were allowed, a champion of rank and birth would appear with equal arms, to dispute the right of King George to the British realm.

Readers of Sir Walter Scott will recall how in "Redgauntlet" he avails himself of this curious legend, and makes Lilius, his heroine, under the orders of her Jacobite uncle, pick up the "parader's gage" and leave in its stead another, in loyalty to "Bonny Prince Charlie."



"NOW, DOLLY, IT 'S TIME YOU BEGAN TO TALK! I 'VE SEEN A WAX DOLL NO OLDER THAN YOU, AND SHE SAYS 'PAPA' AND 'MAMA.' EVEN TOWSER CAN SPEAK FOR A LUMP OF SUGAR."