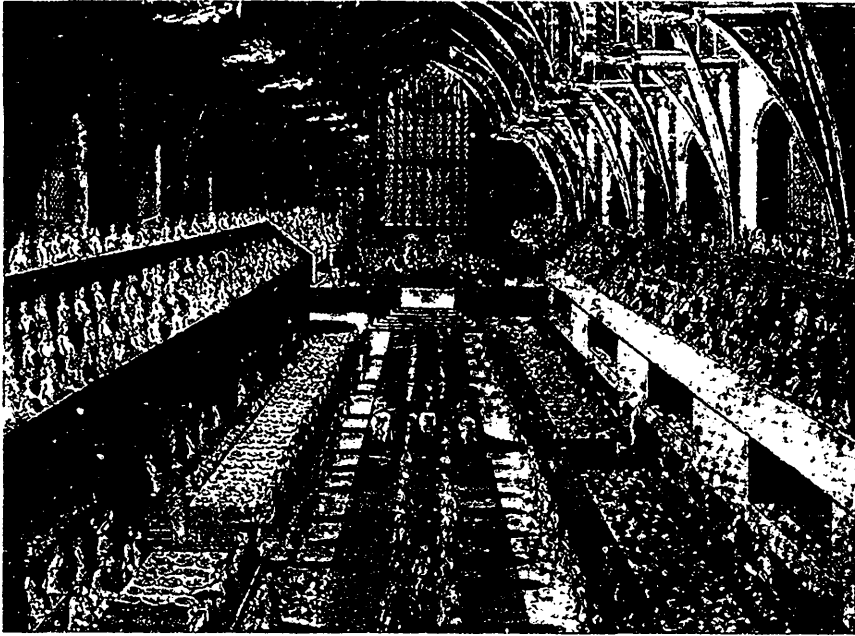




CORONATION OF WILLIAM IV.

Banquet in Westminster Hall, Kings Champion performing the ceremony of the Challenge.
In this Hall Charles I. was tried and condemned to death.

court and sometimes to the galleries. Occasionally he rose up and turned about to behold the guards and spectators, and then sat down again, but with a majestic composed countenance, unruffled by the slightest emotion, till the clerk came to the words Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, etc., at which the king laughed, as he sat, in the face of the court. A brass plate in the floor shows where the King received the sentence of death.

Westminster Hall was the scene of all the Coronation banquets from the time of William Rufus to that of George IV. On these occasions, ever since the reign of Richard II., the gates have been suddenly flung open, and, amid a blare of trumpets, the Royal Champion (always a Dymok or Dymoke of Scrivelshy) rides into the hall in full armour,

and, hurling his mailed gauntlet upon the ground, defies to single combat any person who shall gainsay the rights of the sovereign. This ceremony having been thrice repeated as the champion advances up the hall, the sovereign pledges him in a silver cup, which he afterwards sends to him.

On ordinary days—

“The great Hall of Westminster, the field
Where mutual frauds are fought, and no
side yield,”

was, for many years, almost given up to the lawyers. Nothing in England astonished Peter the Great more than the number of lawyers he saw there. “Why,” he said, “I have only two lawyers in all my dominions, and I mean to hang one of those when I get home.”

In February, 1788, Warren