

# 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 8 — Earl Marshal

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**EARL MARSHAL**, in England, a functionary who ranks as the eighth of the great officers of state. He is the head of the college of arms, and has the appointment of the kings-of-arms, heralds and pursuivants at his discretion. He attends the sovereign in opening and closing the session of parliament, walking opposite to the lord great chamberlain on his or her right hand. It is his duty to make arrangements for the order of all state processions and ceremonials, especially for coronations and royal marriages and funerals. Like the lord high constable he rode into Westminster Hall with the champion after a coronation, till the coronation banquet was abandoned, taking his place on the left hand, and with the lord great chamberlain he assists at the introduction of all newly-created peers into the House of Lords.

The marshal appears in the feudal armies to have been in command of the cavalry under the constable, and to have in some measure superseded him as master of the horse in the royal palace. He exercised joint and co-ordinate jurisdiction with the constable in the court of chivalry, and afterwards became the sole judge of that tribunal till its obsolescence. The marshalship of England was formerly believed to have been inherited from the Clares by the Marshal family, who had only been marshals of the household. It was held, however, by the latter family, as the office of chief (*magister*) marshal, as early as the days of Henry I. Through them, under Henry III., it passed to the Bigods, as

their eldest co-heirs. In 1306 it fell to the crown on the death of the last Bigod, earl of Norfolk, who had made Edward I. his heir, and in 1316 it was granted by Edward II. to his own younger brother, Thomas “of Brotherton,” earl of Norfolk. As yet the style of the office was only “marshal” although the last Bigod holder, being an earl, was sometimes loosely spoken of as the earl marshal. The office, having reverted to the crown, was granted out anew by Richard II., in 1385, to Thomas Mowbray, earl of Nottingham, the representative of Thomas “of Brotherton.” In 1386 the style of “earl marshal” was formally granted to him in addition. After several attainders and partial restorations in the reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts, the earl marshalship was granted anew to the Howards by Charles II. in 1672 and entailed on their male line, with many specific remainders and limitations, under which settlement it has regularly descended to the present duke of Norfolk. Its holders, however, could not execute the office until the Roman Catholic emancipation, and had to appoint deputies. The duke is styled earl marshal “and hereditary marshal of England,” but the double style would seem to be an error, though the Mowbrays, with their double creation (1385, 1386) might have claimed it. His Grace appends the letters “E.M.” to his signature, and bears behind his shield two batons crossed in saltire, the marshal’s rod (*virga*) having been the badge of the office from Norman times. There appear to have been hereditary marshals of Ireland, but their history is not well ascertained. The Keiths were Great Marischals of Scotland from at least the days of

Robert Bruce, and were created earls marischal in or about 1458, but lost both earldom and office by the attainder of George, the 10th earl, in 1716. (See also [MARSHAL](#); [STATE, GREAT OFFICERS OF.](#))

See “The Marshalship of England,” in J. H. Round, *Commune of London and Other Studies* (London, 1899); G. E. C(okayne)’s *Complete Peerage*.

([J. H. R.](#))



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