

Queen Eleanor of Castile.

BY H. M. M. LANE.

THOSE going to and fro in St. Albans are rich in possession of the lovely glimpse of the Abbey Tower from St. Peter's Street. For nearly four centuries, however, they were richer still, as in contrast to the unadorned strength of the Tower, there stood in the Market Place, the sculptured beauty of the stately Eleanor Cross: the one, a symbol of the renewed vigour the Normans brought to the English in the eleventh century; the other, of the fruition of the mingling of the two peoples in the thirteenth century, in which "science and art were combined to perfection."

The empty site of the Cross is a reminder that in the seventeenth century Parliamentary Government only took final root in England at the cost of a civil war. After the outbreak of this, the Parliament in London passed an ordinance in 1643, which led to a wholesale destruction of those pictures, statues and crosses, the influence of which the Puritans dreaded. Tradesmen no longer dared to use the customary cross in their books as a mark of payment. In Cheapside in 1643, the Eleanor Cross was torn down and burnt "while members of both Houses and the Scottish Commissioners sang the eighty-fifth psalm." By the end of 1647, the Eleanor Crosses in Charing, Lincoln, Grantham, Stamford, Stony Stratford, Dunstable and possibly Woburn, as well as the beautiful tomb of Queen Eleanor in Lincoln Cathedral, had all been destroyed by members of the Puritan party. As Parliamentary troops were quartered in St. Albans both in 1643, and in 1647, and Army officers met in council there in both 1647 and in 1648, it is unlikely that the St. Albans Cross would escape some mutilation. All that is known is that in the Mayor's Accounts there is an entry in 1701-2: "Paid to Robert Lemon for room in the Christopher Yard to lay the stone and rubbish that belonged to the old Cross." and that in 1703 the Corporation ordered that the Market Cross "be built and set upon the waste ground where the old

Cross lately stood near to the Clock House." This Market Cross stood until 1810. Later a pump stood on or near the site. In 1868 a stone dug up near by was engraved with the word "ELEANOR" and placed on the High Street side of the pump.¹ This stone now stands outside the County Museum. Mr. J. Harris records in the *Herts Advertiser* of June 25th, 1870, "That on Monday, June 20th, 1870, some workmen laying a pipe for a surface drain at the Market Cross, St. Albans, came upon the south foundation wall of the Eleanor Cross which was erected in 1291." Lately since accelerated traffic has necessitated the removal of the drinking fountain, the gift of Mrs. Worley, the St. Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archæological Society have placed a tablet on the Clock Tower to preserve the memory that near by, Edward, one of England's greatest kings, placed a memorial to the devoted wife, "in whom living he had delighted and dead could never cease to love," as he wrote to the Abbot of Cluny from Ashridge early in the January after her death.

Reminded constantly of Queen Eleanor, it is tantalising to find that the more detailed accounts of her and of the memorials Edward erected to her are not very accessible. Part of the Accounts of her Executors,² transcribed by Mr. Beriah Botfield with a sketch of the chief circumstances of her life, are to be found in "Manners and Household Expenses of England in the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," edited by Mr. T. Hudson Turner and published by the Roxburghe Club in 1841. The following year, a full account of Edward's memorials to her, written by the Rev. J. Hunter, F.S.A., appeared in Vol. XXIX. of "Archæologia." It is perhaps more tantalising still to find that nearly a century later little more can be learnt of her personality from printed sources and histories. But Mr. Lethaby's expression of surprise in his fascinating "Westminster Abbey Re-examined," that the most lovely effigy of her in Westminster has not attracted someone to write her life may even now be bearing fruit.

A member of the royal families of Castile and Leon,

¹ *Notes for Eleanor Crosses*, by J. Bailey (in the Herts County Museum).

² A facsimile of some twenty-five lines of these accounts was published in the "Souvenir of St. Alban's Pageant," p. 22.

Eleanor inherited stirring memories. Her great-grandfather, Alfonso VIII. of Castile, whose wife was Leonora of England, had won a notable victory over the Muslims at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, thus retrieving the terrible disaster of 1196. Her father, Ferdinand III., King of Castile and Leon from 1230, had conquered Cordova from the Muslims in 1236, and by 1248 had succeeded in wresting Seville from them, thus leaving them little more than the tributary kingdom of Granada at his death in 1252. It was largely owing to the wisdom and self-denial of her grandmother, Berengaria, that her father had been able to unite the kingdoms of Castile and Leon. That grandmother's sister, Blanche, became Queen of France and mother of St. Louis. Such traditions must have been invaluable when two years after their father's death, Alfonso the Wise, for political reasons, arranged that his half-sister, "Alianora," should marry Edward, the heir of Henry III. of England. Edward was only fifteen and Eleanor certainly younger, hence it was wise of Alfonso to stipulate that Edward should fetch his bride. Henry III. accordingly sent his Queen, Eleanor of Provence, with Edward and a train of attendants, to Burgos in August, 1254. Fortunately Edward won golden opinions from all, and with many others was knighted by Alfonso with much ceremonial. The marriage probably took place in October, and was solemnised in the convent church of Las Huelgas founded by Leonora, Edward's great-aunt. Alfonso presented Edward with a charter renouncing any claims he might have inherited from Leonora to Gascony, and Henry III. sent Eleanor a charter settling on her the revenue from the towns and castles of Tickhill, Grantham, Stamford and the Peak, promising to add other lands if this did not provide her with a yearly income of a thousand pounds. Edward and his youthful bride returned with Queen Eleanor to Bordeaux, where they were welcomed by Henry III. Edward had been given as an appanage, the Earldom of Chester, and his father's lands in Wales, Ireland and France, seemingly a rich provision, but Edward found that the income that it yielded was quite inadequate for the work that he had to do, in spite of

his own personal economy, a difficulty that pursued him to the end of his life. Nevertheless, Eleanor must be considered fortunate, for her husband's family were united by unusually strong bonds of affection, and Edward never failed in his devotion to her or to his parents.

Eleanor first came to England in October, 1255, landing at Dover. Henry III. began to make preparations for her arrival in July, when he sent orders to his goldsmith, William of Gloucester, to make her a silver alms dish. He also directed Edward of Westminster to purchase twelve silken cloths, six of arras and six of gold, and to send them without delay to Dover, that they might be ready for Eleanor to offer as oblations at the various monasteries she would visit on her journey to London. Two golden fermails (brooches) were also ordered for her to offer at the shrines of St. Thomas of Canterbury and of Edward the Confessor. The King sent Reginald of Cobham to meet her and her attendants, and conduct them to London, arranging for her to stay two nights at Canterbury that she might observe the anniversary of Edward the Confessor with due solemnity. Her entrance into London took place on St. Etheldreda's Day, Sunday, October 17th. She was met by the King and Court, the Clergy, the Mayor and the citizens, who conducted her to Westminster "with songs and music and other joyful devices," London being decorated in her honour. Through her brother's care (the Archbishop Elect of Toledo was in London on an embassy to Henry III.) she found her rooms adorned with hangings and carpeted after the Spanish custom. The Londoners who associated costly hangings only with churches, murmured at this luxury. King Henry usually ordered the rooms in his palaces to be painted green, and if not decorated with Biblical scenes to be starred or scintillated with silver or gold. He used herbs and rushes for the floors. Edward, when King, sending to Paris for mantles for the Queen and himself to wear at the great tournament held in Windsor Park in 1278, also sent for four carpets for his chamber, two green and two red.

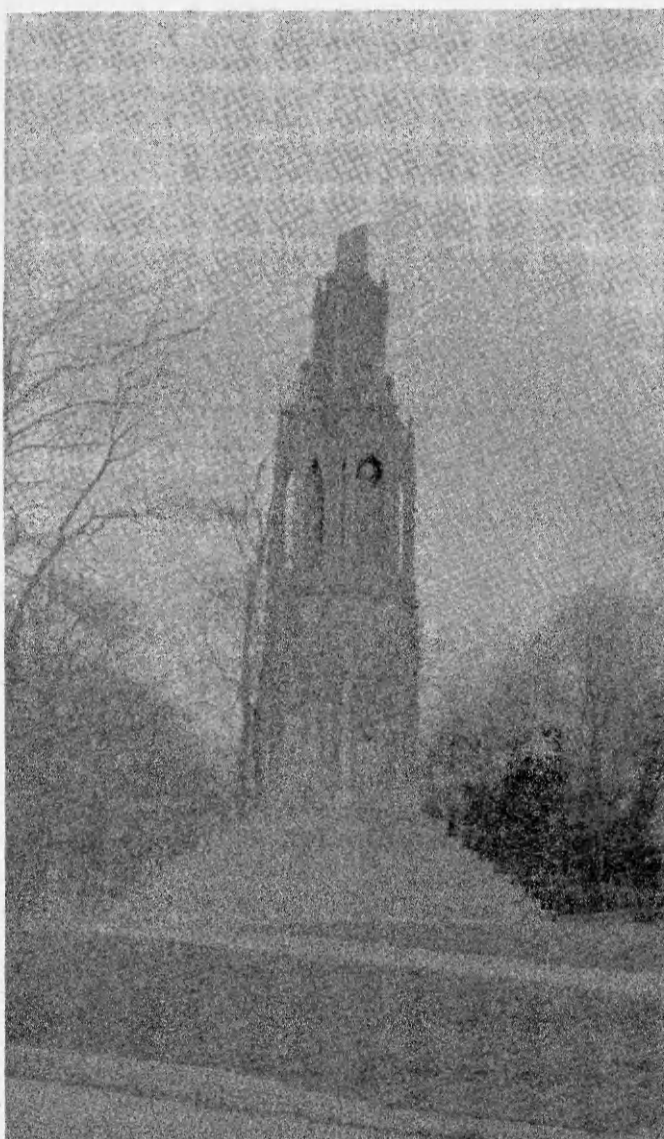
In the month that elapsed before Edward returned from Gascony, Eleanor would see much of his sister, Beatrice, who was about her own age and who would

initiate her into all the ways of the English Court. But the daughter of a Frenchwoman, her mother being Countess of Ponthieu in her own right, Eleanor would probably be prepared for the differences in etiquette between the English and the Spanish Courts. King Henry would probably have much to tell her of Chartres Cathedral and La Sainte Chapelle of Paris, which he had visited on his way to England after Eleanor's marriage. But his chief delight would be in showing her all he had achieved at Westminster Abbey in the last ten years, and all his plans for still adding to the beauty of the surroundings of the shrine of Edward the Confessor. The stained glass windows were already in preparation; later Eleanor's own coat of arms would appear in some of them, as they still appear in the Tower of St. Albans Abbey. She would certainly be taken to see the "incomparable" Chapter House; its tiled floor was laid in 1255, and there she would see or hear of the beautiful lectern that the King had commissioned John of St. Omer to copy, "more beautifully" if possible, from the one in St. Albans Abbey. She may have seen Master John of St. Albans, the Sculptor of the King's Images, at work, and then or later would see the beautiful figures representing the Annunciation over the inner door of the Chapter House and the lovely angels in the spandrils high up in the Transepts, which it is pleasant to think may have been carved by Master John of St. Albans himself, as they are among the loveliest of English sculptures. It is to be hoped that Henry's enthusiasm would kindle or heighten Eleanor's appreciation of beautiful craftsmanship, for it can have fallen to the lot of few to have seen as much lovely work straight from the hands of its creators as she was privileged to see. For this was the time when deep religious fervour spurred men on to wonderful achievement, and everywhere in Western Europe men were eagerly rebuilding or adding to their churches to make them still more worthy of their high purpose. Here in England, architecture had a most vigorous life, and churches flooded with light and adorned with delicate ornament were springing up. Inspired by the magnificent French cathedrals, English craftsmen yet developed a national style. One of the first great ceremonials in which

Eleanor took part with the whole Royal Family was the dedication of the noble cathedral at Salisbury, built on a virgin site, thus contrasting with the Westminster she knew, where the Norman nave was still standing, and with the Abbey of St. Albans, which she was so often to visit. Later she was to take her part as Queen of England in great ceremonies in the cathedrals of Chichester, Worcester, Norwich, Lincoln and York. Staying at Glastonbury, she can hardly have failed to visit Wells to see the splendid sculptured figures of the West Front of the Cathedral. Another year she spent Christmas at Exeter. Later she was to visit the churches in Sicily, Spain and Gascony, and in Northern France, La Sainte Chapelle, built by her cousin Louis IX. before her marriage, and the cathedrals at Amiens and Chartres.

The people of St. Albans would probably first see their future Queen in the autumn of 1257, though they may well have heard much of her beauty. In that year Queen Eleanor, the wife of Henry III., recovering from a serious illness, came on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Alban accompanied by "the Lady Eleanor, wife of Edward, the King's eldest son," and many others. In thanksgiving for her recovery she offered a costly "pall" commonly termed a baldekyn. It would be interesting to know if Eleanor preferred the lectern at St. Albans Abbey or the copy John of St. Omer made for the Chapter House at Westminster, and if she was thrilled to see vestiges of Roman buildings in England as in Spain.

Shortly after this, troublous times began for all in England. The old methods of government were plainly inadequate to new conditions, and the failure of Henry III. to realise this led to a determined effort in 1258 on the part of many of his barons, led by his brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, to obtain the changes they felt essential. Henry's inability finally led to an outbreak of hostilities in 1263, and peace was not restored until 1267, after a terribly bitter struggle. Early in 1263, Edward took his wife to Windsor Castle, which he garrisoned, but later was forced by Simon de Montfort to withdraw his troops. Eleanor seems to have been left in charge, as after the defeat at Lewes in



THE ELEANOR CROSS AT NORTHAMPTON.

In the Parish of Hardingstone. From the top of the steps to the base of the broken shaft the height is thirty-four feet. The figures of the Queen are six feet high.

(Copyright photograph by Mr. J. R. Judkin, Northampton.)

May, 1264, Henry, evidently at the command of Earl Simon, directed her to leave Windsor with her daughter and household and go to Westminster, promising to excuse her departure to her husband. The daughter must have been her eldest child, Eleanor, probably born at Windsor in the spring. From this time until Edward overcame his father's enemies in 1267, Eleanor's life must have been full of anxiety. Her income dwindled, for the King excused her certain dues "until he could provide for her more adequately." Her husband was in frequent danger. Her two eldest boys, John and Henry, were born during this period, but both died in early childhood. In 1269 the infant Henry was sent as a hostage for his father's compact with Louis IX. of France, by which St. Louis advanced his nephew money charged on the revenues of Gascony to enable Edward to accompany him on Crusade in August, 1270. Louis, however, promptly returned his delicate great nephew to England.

King Louis started in July and died in Tunis before Edward, his wife Eleanor, and the scanty English contingent reached the appointed port of departure at the time arranged. Though Edward found when he reached Tunis that the French were returning to France, he determined to do all that he could to help the waning power of the Christians in Syria. Wintering with his uncle, Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily, he reached Acre in the spring in time to save its surrender to the Sultan of Egypt. Hoping vainly for reinforcements, he waited at Acre for eighteen months, unable to do more than keep the Saracens at bay. The June before he left he narrowly escaped assassination. Though wounded severely in the arm, he was able to overcome his assailant. Fearing a poisoned weapon, he made a will immediately, providing for Eleanor and his children. The contemporary English chroniclers relate that his life was only saved by the drastic surgery of his doctors after the removal of the agitated Eleanor at his command. The story of her heroism in sucking the poison from the wound seems to be of later origin. Two daughters were born to Edward in Acre, but only the younger, Joan, survived. Making a ten years' truce with the Sultan, Edward left Acre and arrived in Sicily in Octo-

ber, 1272. Here the sad news reached him of his eldest son's death, and then of his father's. His passionate grief on hearing of his father's death amazed the callous King Charles. Realising that his presence in England was not needed for a time, Edward determined to visit the newly appointed Pope who, before his election, had been with him at Acre, then pay homage for his French possessions to Philip III., and visit Gascony before his coronation. Queen Eleanor took the opportunity of visiting her brother Alfonso X., who had been even more unfortunate than Henry III., as civil strife in his case had been led by one of his sons. She left Seville in June to meet King Edward in Gascony. Her Spanish relatives insisted on keeping the baby Joan with them. Possibly the cold climate of England was dreaded for a child born in Syria. Troubles in Gascony prevented Edward from reaching England until August, 1274. Here they were met in Kent by Queen Eleanor of Provence, who brought her grandchildren with her to greet their parents and the baby Alfonso, who had been born at Bayonne the year before.

The long-delayed Coronation took place on Sunday, August 19th, and the family union was complete, as Edward's two sisters, Margaret, Queen of Scotland, and Beatrice of Brittany, were there with their husbands. Great preparations had been made, as the King and Queen entertained all comers at Westminster for fifteen days, necessitating the erection of innumerable temporary kitchens. Among the supplies ordered were 440 head of cattle, 450 sheep, 430 hogs, 2,340 fowls, and eighteen wild boars. On the day of the Coronation the conduit in Cheapside ran red and white wine all day. Great festivities followed later at Windsor, where the royal children lived until they were old enough to bear the incessant travelling that was the lot of the King and Queen. Edward was rarely anywhere more than a month, and as a rule moved once or twice a week. Fortunately their grandmother, Eleanor of Provence, loved to be with them.

In the Coronation year Queen Eleanor came to St. Albans to find there serious friction between Abbot Roger and the townspeople.³ The fast-increasing wealth

³ A full account is to be found in Mr. W. Page's *St. Albans*, pp. 31-36.

of the burgesses made the Abbot's feudal right to compel them to grind their corn and full their cloth at the Abbey mills most irksome. At the same time the steady growth of taxation by Pope and King made it necessary for the Abbot to lose no source of income. Thus, when the townsmen defied the Abbot by setting up hand mills in their houses, he sent his bailiff to seize them. This was only done by forcibly entering the houses of the offenders. The townsmen united and levied a forced contribution to enable them to sue the Abbot for trespass, but judgment was given against them. Hearing that the Queen was to pass through St. Albans, they drew up this Petition⁴ to her:—

“A lur trechere Dame par la grace de deu Reyne de Englet'e les sons Burgeis de seynt Alban saluz. Chere dame mont W^s enmercium de vos eydes ke a nous souent auet fet e en ky tote nostre esperance remeynt a tous iours cum a cele dame ky pleyne est de misericorde e de pite a tous iceus ky de W^s euunt mester. Trechere dame a W^s m'ci crium si il w^s venge a pleysir ke endev'ts nostre seynur le Roys ky deu gard voylet prier e requere pur nous ke si ly plect face comaunder al abbe de Seynt Alban ke il monstre ses chartres les queus il a des auncestres nostre seynr. le Roys de feffemēt e de confermēmēt en les queus chartres nous nous metuns pleynemēt a mol e a dur cum sa fraunche aumone p les queus p'ions estre meyntenus e ke il monstre p quel garaunt il nous tret en custumes torcenouses en contre les chartres anaundites. E sachtet trechere Dame ke del bref ky done nous fut de la grace nostre seynur ly Roys nous ount bote en pays p le p'curemēt le Abbe e le assent la justice le quel pays avaunt meyn en est p'cure en contre nous ausi bien le pays de hors cum la fraunchise de dens. Etons les frauns hōmes e les baylius sunt si louez ke il ne osent estre contre li Abbe. E sachtet trechere dame ke nous volyums estre mys en ses chartres ke frauns sumes cum burgeys estre deyuent e nosium p la Justice taunt fut fauorable en vers le Abbe. E de brusures de mesouns e chateus enportes e des autres tors encōtre la pes fet les queux le vaundit Abbe e le suns reconustrent deuaunt Justices ren nous estaloue. Pur la quel chose douce dame w^s p'ions ke nous pusims estre en vostre p'teccion ke p fausete de male gens de nre dreyt ne feyums aloynez ne en seruage atort jugez. Dunt deu defende.”

Evidently the burgesses believed that if the Abbot were compelled to show his charters in a court where influence or bribery would give him no advantage, he would be obliged to allow them to use their own mills, “as burgesses ought to be free,” and the judgment of the court as to the confiscation of the hand mills evidently, in their opinion, wrongfully adjudged them to

⁴ I am indebted to Mr. William Page for a transcript of this petition (Ancient Correspondence, x. 1. 90), which is now printed for the first time, and to Mr. Charles Johnson, of the Public Record Office, for collating it and furnishing me with the translation which appears at the end of the article.

be serfs. The petition shows that the Queen was well known to the people of St. Albans: "we thank you much for your help which you have often given us and in which all our hope lives for ever, as a lady, who is full of compassion and mercy to all those who have need of you." The petitioners did not see the Queen without difficulty, as the Abbot, evidently fearing a tumult, arranged for the Queen to reach the Abbey by a private way; but this did not prevent the excited women from gaining access to her. The townsmen, defeated in the local courts, ventured to appeal against the judgment, but in vain, and the two men responsible were heavily fined. An uneasy peace was made with the Abbot two years later, but discontent still smouldered.

The King in 1275, realising that the income arranged for Eleanor was no longer adequate, arranged for it to be increased to over £4,000, but nearly half the addition was a charge on the customs of Gascony. Among the towns, whose dues were granted to her, were those of Lincoln and Bedford. A few years later, Eleanor inherited the County of Ponthieu from her mother, Queen Joan of Castile and Leon. Edward certainly on one occasion, when in need of money for the Welsh wars, mortgaged the Queen's possessions in Ponthieu.

Queen Eleanor held the manor of King's Langley, and she and the King and the royal children often seem to have been there. The accounts for the household there, though in the absence of the royal family, for Lent and some weeks later, reveal that no meat at all was eaten in Lent, not even on Sundays. Herrings and eels seem to have been the staple diet, but were varied by smaller quantities of trout, gurnards, minnows, lampreys, oysters, whelks, congers, salted cod and salmon. This fish was bought from many different men:—Roger de Freincourt, Chig, Bukke, Berk, Towcester, Spileman, Mantell, Roger and Thomas. Perhaps the most interesting item is the constantly recurring entry of "two bushels of barley for the camel." Matthew of Paris relates the great excitement that the elephant sent by Louis IX. to Henry III. caused in London. Doubtless the camel at King's Langley provided much conversation in St. Albans.

The accounts for the stay of the King and Queen with

their daughters at Rhuddlan Castle in the Welsh revolt of 1282 give further details. Fish was largely used, for a stewpond was made for the Queen's use, Peacock and his boy being paid twenty pence for laying six hundred turves about it. The Queen's fishermen received nearly five pounds for fishing in the sea for forty-two days, and an additional half-crown for the bait they provided. The usual payment to a Master Mariner for a day's work was sixpence, his men receiving threepence, and the boy twopence. A frail of figs and a frail of raisins cost nearly thirty shillings, and there are entries of the purchase of many spices:—cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, pepper, galingale, aniseed and sugar. Sixpence was paid to the Queen's William for his expenses in journeying to Chester to seek for prunes for the Queen's use. Venison came for the King by sea in charge of one of his servants and another servant was sent to catch rabbits for his use.

In August, 1282, the Lady Elizabeth, the Queen's ninth and youngest daughter, was born. The day of the Queen's Churching was evidently the occasion of great festivity in Rhuddlan, for she made a gift of ten pounds to be distributed among the minstrels attending there that day. She also sent gifts to the Dominican Friars, to the Brethren of the Hospital, and also to a certain poor woman and to a player. Four tankards, a coffer, a posnet and a bucket were bought for the Lady Elizabeth. The Queen probably carried hangings for the walls of her room amongst her baggage, for when twenty pence was paid for lime for the Queen's chamber, the painter, Stephen, received fourteen shillings for painting the King's chamber and providing the necessary colours. Two years later the Queen's youngest child, Edward, was born in Caernarvon Castle on April 25th. In August he became the heir to the throne on the death of Alfonso, his only surviving brother, a boy of twelve. A celebrated and lovely psalter, which was given by Edward and Eleanor to Alfonso, still exists.

It would appear as if in Eleanor's prolonged absence in North Wales, that her Steward oppressed some of her tenants in Kent, for in September, 1283, the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Peckham, wrote to tell her that passing by West Clive, not far from Dover, the inhabitants

had told him that they were being called upon to pay so much more than was due, that unless "pity took hold of the Queen," it would be better for them to leave their lands and tenements and go and beg their bread. He also tells her that a belief is current that when she is granted land or manor acquired by usury of Jews from Christians she retains the usury as well as the principal of the debt instead of returning it to the plundered Christian. He asks her to let him know by letter that this is not so that he may refute the accusation. The opening and close of the letter⁵ are full of interest:—
 "My lady, I thank you much for the consolatory letters which you kindly sent me by Sir Nicholas de Knovile and for your good venison from the New Forest" (Henry III. had added the New Forest to Eleanor's lands). The Archbishop ends:—"This letter was written at Tenham, where I have had made a very beautiful chapel to solace you when you pass this way, and truly more for the ease of your body than of mine." When the Queen was in Gascony in 1286, he wrote again on the subject of acquiring lands extorted by Jews from Christians by usury. Before her death the King had expelled all Jews both from Gascony and from England. Jews at this time had more freedom in Spain than in the rest of Europe.

The King in 1285 was persuaded by his mother, Queen Eleanor of Provence, to allow his daughter Mary, a child of six, to become a nun at Amesbury, a cell of the great Angevin convent of Fontevault. Queen Eleanor only gave her consent with the greatest reluctance. The Abbess of Fontevault had hoped that the Lady Mary would be under her direct care and wrote to the King expressing her disappointment, though she fully realised that it would be a great solace to his mother when she entered the convent herself, to have her grandchild there. She suggested to the King that in the future his daughter might be transferred from Amesbury to Fontevault. This hope was never realised as the Lady Mary lived in the convent at Amesbury until her death in 1334, having outlived all her brothers and sisters. All the royal family went to Amesbury when

⁵ *Rolls Series, Peckham, Registrum, Vol. II. p. 767.*



SEAL OF QUEEN ELEANOR OF CASTILE.
From a cast in the British Museum. In the field, the
heraldic charges of the arms of Castile and Leon; a
lion of England under the figure of the Queen.

the Lady Mary, with thirteen other children of high rank, took the veil. A cousin, Eleanor of Brittany, was already a nun there. The King provided an income of a hundred pounds yearly for his daughter's maintenance. She seems to have been permitted to visit her family from time to time. Her grandmother entered the convent in the summer of 1286 and lived there until her death in 1291. The King never failed to visit Amesbury when he was in that neighbourhood.

The next three years Queen Eleanor spent in Gascony. Before she went, she and her elder daughters made one of their many visits to the shrine of St. Alban. The King's success in Wales had given him much prestige in Europe, and many tangled questions of policy were submitted to him requiring his presence in Gascony. The year they left England, the King's New Year's gift⁶ to his wife was a cup of gold worth nearly twenty-four pounds. He also gave her a pitcher of gold, enamelled and set with precious stones, which he had bought from William Farrington, goldsmith of London, from whom Farrington Ward, of which he was Alderman, is said to have taken its name. The jewellery offered or given this year by the King and Queen cost seven hundred and seventy pounds, for they travelled to Gascony by way of the Queen's County of Ponthieu, and spent two months in Paris, which necessitated many gifts. The Queen visited and made offerings at seven different shrines in the year, those of St. Richard of Chichester, St. Denis of Paris, and St. Martin of Tours being amongst them. At Paris, presents of jewellery were bought and sent to England for their many daughters, and both King and Queen gave offerings for their children at the shrines they visited. Edward received many costly gifts in France. He sent a coronet of gold set with sapphires, emeralds, rubies and pearls, given him by his cousin, the King of France, to his daughter Eleanor, in England, but two cloths of gold he gave to the Queen, as he did a chessboard and men in jasper and crystal, given him by the Visitor of the Temple.

When the King and Queen returned to England in 1289, their daughters met them in cloth of gold dresses

⁶ On an earlier occasion he had given her an illuminated psalter and pocket breviary.

trimmed with green velvet and made expressly for the occasion. King Edward himself preferred to dress plainly like an ordinary citizen save on occasions of state. New dresses were soon needed again, for the Ladies Joan and Margaret were married a few months after their parents' return. That of the Lady Eleanor appears to have been adorned with fifty-three dozen silver buttons. The Lady Joan of Acre, now nineteen, was married to Gilbert Clare, the Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, just when Westminster must have been at its loveliest, as the pear trees planted by Henry III. in the herbarry between the Palace and the Abbey would be in full blossom. In July, her younger sister, the Lady Margaret, not yet sixteen, was married to John, the heir of the Duke of Brabant, having been betrothed to him since her third year. All the Chivalry of England was bidden to the marriage, three Court suits a day being required of each guest. The Duke of Brabant brought eighty knights and sixty ladies in his train, and was emulated by all the magnates of England. The wedding guests with a thousand citizens went in a great procession through the streets of London, and at night the palace was illuminated. The King's harper distributed a hundred pounds, the gift of the bridegroom, among the four hundred and twenty-six minstrels who had flocked to London, many from overseas, among them the Fool of the Count of Artois. Parliament had met at Westminster in May and a further meeting was arranged at Clipstone in Sherwood Forest in the autumn. The King and probably the Queen were at St. Albans on July 22nd and 23rd, and then a week at King's Langley, passing on by Dunstable to Northampton and Geddington. On September 11th the King was at Harby in Nottinghamshire, five miles west of Lincoln. As medicines bought for the Queen in Lincoln were paid for on October 18th, she may already have been ailing and remained there rather than be at Clipstone during the meeting of Parliament. She died of a lingering disease, slow fever, in the house of Richard de Weston at Harby on November 28th, 1290. The King was with her for the last eight days of her life. She was able to receive the sacraments with all devotion, and begged the King that if anything had been taken wrongfully by

her or her servants from anyone that it should be restored.

The Queen's body was embalmed and the King and his Ministers journeyed with the bier to London, resting each night where the bier might be placed before the altar, in most cases in a church where the Queen had worshipped. Details of the ceremonial observed are only known of the stay in Dunstable and St. Albans. At Dunstable the Queen's body rested one night in the Priory Church, and two precious palls were offered, as well as more than eighty pounds of wax. The bier rested on its way to St. Albans, in the market place, until the King's Chancellor and other magnates had marked a fitting place where afterwards a cross "of wonderful size" could be erected at the King's expense, and the Prior had sprinkled the spot with holy water. On Tuesday, December 12th, the procession was met at St. Michael's, the entrance of the town, by the monks of the Abbey, clad in their copes, with their Abbot, John of Berkhamstead, only elected the Saturday before.⁷ The Queen's body was placed in the Abbey before the high altar, and the monks celebrated "divine offices and holy vigils" through the night. Passing on to Waltham Abbey on Wednesday, December 13th, no doubt the same ceremonial took place in the market place of St. Albans as in Dunstable. The King, however, went direct to London from St. Albans on the Wednesday, probably that he might lead the solemn procession of Prelates, Nobles and Citizens which met the Queen's bier on Thursday. The bier rested a night in three different churches in London before the Queen's body was laid to rest on Sunday, December 17th, at the feet of Henry III. in Westminster Abbey. Her heart, in accordance with her wish, was buried in the Church of the Dominicans, which she and the King had helped to found. Until the end of January the King retired to the monastery of the Bons Hommes at Ashridge. Here he showed his devotion to his wife by the gifts he planned and later carried out, so that prayers should never fail to be offered for her soul at Harby, Lincoln and Westminster, with special memorials on the Eve of

⁷ Abbot Roger had died on November 3rd, 1290.

St. Andrew. The Abbot and monks of Peterborough also were granted lands at Sulham for the same purpose. Fabyan, writing about 1500, tells how for two hundred years lights had never ceased burning on her tomb at Westminster. The dissolution of the monasteries and the abolition of chantries in the sixteenth century diverted Edward's gifts to other uses: but the Abbey, which his father had made so glorious, Waltham, Northampton, and Geddington, have been fortunate enough to be able to preserve the memorials entrusted to them.

Troubles in Scotland, France and Wales absorbed much of Edward's energies after his wife's death, but his master workmen steadily carried out the lovely memorials he had planned. The Crosses at Charing, Chepe and Waltham were each entrusted to a different Master Mason, though Master Alexander of Abingdon cut all the statues for these. His work can still be seen at Waltham. John de Bello, or de la Bataille⁸ (Battle, Sussex) built the Crosses at Northampton, St. Albans, Dunstable, Woburn and Stony Stratford. He had an assistant, Simon de Pabeham. William de Hibernia made all the statues for these Crosses as well as for that of Lincoln, which was being built by Richard de Stowe. He received five marks (£3 6s. 8d.) for each, exclusive of the material. It is not certain how much each of John of Battle's Crosses cost as the Executors paid him lump sums for the work on several at a time. It seems probable that he received about £134 for the Cross at Northampton, a causeway being made to it from the town. The Cross at St. Albans cost about £113, the others being less costly. Ninety-five pounds was paid for the Waltham Cross and over £500 for Charing Cross, which was the largest of all. The Executors' accounts make no mention of the Crosses at Geddington, Stamford and Grantham; thus it seems likely that they were built after 1294. Caen stone, Sussex and Purbeck marble were used to build the Crosses, the statues being of Caen stone. The King spent at least two days at St. Albans every year but two from 1293 to 1303, and

⁸ A John de Bataille died in London in 1300, bequeathing his tenements and rents in the town of St. Albans to his sister Isabella. He directed his tenements in the city of London and its suburbs to be sold. (Sharpe's Wills.)

thus would see the Cross there, both when building and when completed. As he was at Northampton, Geddington, Stamford and Lincoln in 1300, evidently he visited all.

Queen Eleanor's tomb in Westminster Abbey, one of the beautiful possessions of Europe, was finished in 1292. Master Richard Crundale, the builder of Charing Cross, constructed the tomb of Purbeck marble. It is ornamented, as all the three remaining Crosses are, by shields of the Queen's coats of arms of Castile and Leon, Ponthieu and England. The exquisite gilt bronze effigy was cast by William Torel, a goldsmith of London. This effigy in many respects recalls the figure of the Queen on her seal, as do the statues of the Crosses, and Torel, Alexander of Abingdon and William de Hibernia may all have referred to it.

Master Walter of Durham⁹ painted the tester for the tomb, and probably the painting on its base, now almost vanished, was by him also. Mr. Lethaby, in his "Westminster and the King's Craftsmen," has made a reconstruction of the painting from existing drawings, which shows a striking figure of a knight in chain armour kneeling in supplication before the Virgin and Child. The beautiful iron grate was the work of Thomas de Leighton, who in 1294 received twelve pounds for it and twenty shillings extra for its carriage and for his own and his assistant's time while in London to fix it. Tombs were also placed in the Church of the Black Friars and Lincoln Cathedral.

The Queen's Executors, the year after her death, paid a considerable sum to the Friars Predicant (the Black Friars or Dominicans) in London, and benefactions are recorded to the same Order of Friars in some thirty other places. Scarborough, Lincoln, Stamford, Leicester, Dunstable, Oxford and Warwick are among these. On the first anniversary of her death benefactions were given to all the orders of Friars in London, and to all the hospitals there, St. Bartholomew's being one of these. The poor scholars of Cambridge and Oxford were not forgotten. Many similar gifts can be traced in the

⁹ It is possible that he had a house at St. Albans. See *Archaeologia*, Vol. LVIII., *St. Albans School of Painting*, by W. Page, F.S.A.

Queen's lifetime. Thus she granted a spring of flowing water to the Dominican Friars in Northampton in 1279. It was conveyed to their buildings from Kingsthorpe by an underground conduit. She gave an acre of ground to the Canons of St. Mary of Chatham that they might enlarge their garden, and bought lands in Chichester for the Dominicans to build upon.

Edward, the year after her death, wherever he was, in addition to the six hundred and sixty-six meals¹⁰ he provided for the needy, weekly, as King of England, added many more as well as gifts in money in her memory. For the first anniversary of her death he sent gifts to many places, King's Langley among them, that fitting memorial services should be held. In 1299, in granting a boon to the Abbey of St. Albans, he records that it is out of special devotion to St. Alban for his own soul and for that of Eleanor, his late Queen. The next year, when he was in the neighbourhood of York at the end of November, there is an entry in the Wardrobe accounts of a payment to the Sacristan of York Cathedral for the ringing of a knell for the Lady Eleanor, formerly Queen of England, the King's Consort. He must sorely have missed her, "in whom strife ever found a peace maker, the oppressed protection, and the distressed sympathy."

¹⁰ *Poor Relief in the Royal Household of 13th Century England*, H. Johnstone.

TRANSLATION OF THE PETITION OF THE BURGESSES OF ST. ALBANS TO QUEEN ELEANOR IN 1274.

To their very dear lady by the grace of God, Queen of England, her burgesses of St. Albans greeting. Dear lady, we thank you much for your help, which you have often given us and in which all our hope lies for ever, as a lady who is full of compassion and mercy to all who have need of you. Very dear lady, we beseech you, if it be your pleasure, that you will pray and require our lord the King, whom God preserve for us, that if it please him, he may cause the Abbot of St. Albans to be ordered to show his charters of feoffment and confirmation, which he has from the ancestors of our lord the King, on which charters we put ourselves entirely for good or ill as his free aims, by which (charters) we pray to be upheld. And that he (the Abbot) show by what warrant he draws us with wrongful customs against the aforesaid charters. And know, very dear lady, that on the



FROM QUEEN ELEANOR'S TOMB IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
The right hand probably held a sceptre as in her seal.
(Copyright photograph by Newton and Co., Ltd., Museum Street, W.C.1.)

writ, which was given us by the grace of our lord the King, they have put us on the country by the Abbot's procurement, and the assent of the Justice, which country is suborned against us, as well the country without, as the franchise within. And all the freemen and the bailiffs are so bribed that they dare not be against the Abbot. And know, very dear lady, that we wished to be put on his charters, that we are free as burgesses ought to be, and dare not on account of the Justice, so favourable was he to the Abbot. And for breaking of houses and chattels carried off, and other wrongs done against the peace which the aforesaid Abbot and his men admitted before the Justices, nothing has been allowed us. Wherefore sweet lady, we pray you that we may be in your protection so that we may not by falsehood of evil men be deprived of our right, nor wrongfully adjudged to be serfs. Which God forbid!