

other abbesses; Queen Matilda took a special interest in this monastery and when the Abbess Eلفurга died, the Queen took over the government of it herself. There she supervised the nursing of the sick to a certain extent—the mentally afflicted were treated by psalms, prayers and passages from Holy Writ for purposes of exorcising the demons; those with physical ailments by indigenous herbs and simples of many kinds suitably prepared by the nuns. Many of their "drugs" were used for centuries and in outlying districts still "herb teas" of various kinds are prepared which owe the origin of their preparation to the sisters in Abbeys such as Barking and Romsey. These nuns were surgeons too, for few could excel them in setting a limb.

Many were the Charters which Henry and Matilda gave to religious houses, with their fine infirmaries, and to other foundations; one of these was granted to St. Albans, and our illustration shows Matilda seated on a throne and holding the Charter she gave to the Abbey of St. Albans. The throne is the more or less primitive stone bench of the Anglo-Saxon Royalty with scarlet cushion figured with gold leaves and long tassels of scarlet. She has a royal mantle of scarlet lined with white fur, a cordon of scarlet and gold, and a dark blue kirtle fastened with gold. A white veil is arranged on her head and below it on each side are gold oreilletes. Matilda is depicted as fair in complexion. Appended to the portrait by the old artist monk are the words: "Queen Matilda gave us Belwich and Lilleburn"—the King and Queen were particularly generous to St. Albans and once spent Christmas with the great Abbot Richard there.

We have indicated that Matilda was a great patroness of learning and the arts. But she also gave her patronage to architecture in a very practical way, and she was especially interested in the building of bridges and the planning of new roads; this must have had a very considerable influence in stimulating trade in the country at that time. She built additions to Windsor, giving it more of the character of a royal palace; it had been a kind of hunting lodge of William the Conqueror and later a fortress. It is interesting to note an analogy between the names of the respective palaces of Margaret and Matilda; the meaning of the original Gaelic, from which comes the

name of Dunfermline, is "the Tower by the crooked burn"; while the name of Matilda's palace at Windsor was originally Windlesore, named from the winding river. Matilda was a patroness of the architect Grundulf, to whom we are indebted for many magnificent and lasting buildings.

It was during the reign of Henry and Matilda that the first Zoological Gardens were established in England. The old Chronicler William of Malmesbury writes of King Henry—"He was extremely fond of the wonders of distant countries; begging with great delight as I have observed, from foreign kings, lions, leopards, lynxes or camels—animals which England does not produce. He also had a porcupine, and at a park called Woodstock he used to foster favourites of this kind."

Queen Matilda was apparently an adept in the art of the needle and her life in the convent probably accounts for this; in those days the ladies in the convents did beautiful embroideries which were sent as gifts to kings, and even to the Pope himself. The English were especially famed for their needlework in gold, which was known as Opera Anglica, and records have told us of how rich and beautiful it was.

Queen Matilda left two children, William who perished in the tragedy of the White Ship, and Matilda, who became the wife of the Emperor, Henry V, and their son Henry Fitz-Emperor became Henry II of England. We learn little of Queen Matilda in her later years. She "died willingly" an old chronicler tells us in 1118, and her funeral was one of great pomp and splendour in accordance with



A PICTURE OF QUEEN MATILDA FROM THE GOLDEN BOOK OF ST. ALBANS.

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the commands of Henry; whether he attended in person is a matter very much open to doubt, indeed he treated his queen with considerable neglect in the later years of her life, but we have to remember that he was constantly occupied with maintaining his grip on Normandy. But faint are the glimpses that one catches of Matilda in history or tradition; she passes so silently at last, like some shadow in the moonlight, and there is none to tell of what she died or why she passed so "willingly" from her kingdom. Only one silvery ray sends its gleam across the centuries, and that is the name given to her and her alone from the hearts of her people who loved her—Matilda the Good or,

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