as possible with the notoriously avaricious Count of Provence. In the discussions arising, these venerable and learned gentlemen found that they had met their match, so much so that at last Henry was constrained to instruct them to return speedily with his bride, dowered or otherwise. And thus the dowerless but renowned Eleanor la Belle set out at the age of scarcely fourteen from the fair land of Provence with its roses, its troubadours and its universal conviction that the chief end of woman was to be gay, to be happy, and to be admired. She rode with a splendid retinue of three hundred knights and ladies, troubadours and trumpeters, all on horses richly caparisoned, into the kingdom of Thibault of Navarre; this poet king, no doubt partly owing to the high regard in which he held King Louis, entertained the future Queen of England with unexampled splendour. From Navarre she continued her royal progress to Paris, where Blanche of Castille and her son King Louis the Ninth had arranged an even more magnificent reception. On her arrival in England, Eleanor was met by the King and his retinue, and they were married at Canterbury by the Archbishop. "Whatever the world could produce of glory and delight was there conspicuous," and their entry into London was only equalled by the magnificence of the preparations made by their subjects in the capital. The emulation existing everywhere, in connection with the event of the arrival of the King and Queen, is indicated by the fierce argument, between the nobles of the Cinque Ports and the Marchers of Wales, as to who should carry the canopy over the head of this girl of fourteen summers. That "she glittered very gloriously" is not surprising, seeing that her jewels alone had cost the King £30,000 as reckoned by our present-day standards of currency.

From the first the beautiful and arrogant Queen exercised complete domination over the weak King, and great powers lay in her hands at different periods, for she acted as Regent during his absence. At times she had the custody of the Great Seal; she could summon Parliament and dissolve it; and, on more than one occasion, she sat on the King's Bench. Her unparalleled extravagances, unmitigated by the acts of mercy and benevolence that had endeared to the people her illustrious predecessors, Matilda the Good and Matilda of Boulogne, caused her to be exceedingly unpopular in her capital, and indeed the one thing that redeems the memory of Eleanor la Belle for the English people is the never-failing reverence and affection in which she was held by her illustrious son, Edward the First. That he tempered this affection and regard with justice is evident from the fact that he disallowed certain of her demands after Henry's death, but that does not alter the fact that few sons have shown greater filial love, or greater insistence upon the high estate and dignity of the Queen-Mother, than this noble crusading King. He never forgave the citizens of London for the indignities she suffered when, at the height of her unpopularity they jeered at the Queen and pelted her barge with stones and mud, so that she was constrained to return to the Tower and later to seek shelter in St. Paul's, instead of taking the sail to Windsor which she had contemplated.

After the death of the King, Eleanor retired to the monastery of Ambresbury, a very wealthy, religious foundation, celebrated in many legends; the faithless but repentant Guenore, wife of King Arthur, was said to have passed her last days there in prayer and penitence. That the "spirited Elionore," as an old document describes her, did not at once surrender herself entirely to things spiritual, but had still a leaning to things temporal, is evident from the dispute that arose soon after Henry's death respecting the "Queen's gold" that she still held to be hers by right, and likewise by her unsuccessful action against the Bishop of Winchester for payment of £2,229, which she claimed was due to her from his predecessor. Apparently, indeed, it was less than four years before her death that the aged Queen at last took the veil, "despising all worldly pomps."

Such is a brief sketch of Eleanor of Provence, and probably the most honourable of her achievements, during a long reign, was that which places her in the category of Nursing Queens—her re-foundation of the Royal Hospital of St. Katherine's by the Tower with duties of hospitality to the sick and the poor. Queen Matilda had entrusted its administration to the Prior and Convent of the Holy Trinity within Aldgate, and they in time began to regard the Hospital not so much as a Trust, but as a gift of property. Thus there supervened a contest between the Queen and the Prior which lasted from 1255 to 1273, and there is ample evidence that politicians and historians are by no means united as to the propriety of the course pursued by the "Spirited Elionore" in annexing to herself the rights over St. Katherine's. In the perspective of history her action is justified, for, had the victory been to the Prior, the ancient foundation of St. Katherine's would have been absorbed into the Church of the Holy Trinity and would have disappeared at the Reformation; alas! that there was no Queen to protect it against nineteenth-century materialism 700 years on. In the long drawn-out dispute Eleanor was supported by the Bishop of London, while the Pope set all the authority he possessed, in the matter under dispute, against the "shameful" claims of the Queen. By Eleanor's Charter of 1273, the Royal Collegiate Church and Hospital of St. Katherine's consisted of a Master and three Brothers (all priests), three Sisters and ten Beadswomen, and the Master, Brothers and Sisters formed the Corporation and had a common seal in that style. The foundation was established, or rather re-established, in "pure and perpetual alms" for the soul of Henry III, for the soul of Eleanor herself, and for the souls of Kings and Queens preceding and succeeding her. The patronage of the foundation she reserved to herself and the Queens of England —"Reginis Angliae nobis succedentibus"—for ever, with complete powers over the administration. Still at that stage of its history the Hospital did not, in its provisions, go far beyond the dispensing of alms to the sick and the poor. That the sick are not specifically differentiated, in connection with its activities, is largely due to the fact that nursing had not yet progressed beyond the stage when its activities were guided solely by the dictates of kindness; the lamp of knowledge burned low, the lamp of science was not yet lit. Such a thing as a classification or any understanding of the various types of disease and the organs involved was yet undreamt of. Therefore the poor and the sick were alike the objects of the benevolence of St. Katherine's, and its care for the latter was still a mere foreshadowing, a tiny seed, of later developments that culminated or were merged at last in the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for District Nurses in the year of Queen Victoria, 1887.

THE DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD.

The National Council for the Disposition of the Dead, which has been in course of formation since 1933, was formally constituted at a meeting recently held at 23, Nottingham Place, Marylebone, at which Lord Horder presided. Its objects are: (1) Revision and codification of laws governing the disposal of the dead; (2) preservation of land in the interests of the living; (3) improvement of the status of those concerned with the disposal of the dead; (4) safeguarding of public interests in all matters affecting disposal of the dead.

The following officers were elected: *Vice-Presidents*, Lord Horder, Lord Salvesen, Sir John Rose Bradford, and Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell; *Chairman of the Standing Committee*, Mr. Murray N. Phelps; *Hon. Secretary*, Mr. Herbert T. Herring.

We hope the Council will look into the question of public mortuaries.

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