

5. EDWARD I. 1272—1307

70. **Edward becomes king.**—The English people rejoiced to have Edward for their king. He had opposed their champion, but they felt that he really sympathized with them and had fought only to support his father. Whether he was dead or alive, they did not know, since he had gone to the far-away East on a crusade; but as soon as Henry III was buried, the chief men of the kingdom met in Westminster Abbey and took a solemn oath that they would be true to Edward. When the king returned two years later, they gave him a royal welcome.

Edward was a grown-up man when he became king. He was tall and commanding in appearance, a superb horseman, and accomplished in the use of weapons. But more than this, he was wise and prudent in his actions, seldom lost control of his temper, and was faithful to his friends and to his people. His wife, Eleanor, daughter of the king of Castile, was worthy of her husband. When she died in the north of England in 1290, her body was brought to Westminster for burial. At each halting place of the funeral procession Edward caused to be set up a richly ornamented cross, as a witness of his affection. Three of these crosses, one of which is Charing Cross in London, are still preserved.

71. **Gains from the crusades.**—Edward was the last king of England who took part in a crusade. Although the crusaders did not gain possession of the Holy Land, yet these expeditions were of great value. The crusaders themselves were brought in contact with a civilization which was different from their own, and from which there was much to learn in the way of culture and refinement. They learned to use new words and to think new thoughts. Men are often uncharitable just because they are ignorant, and the crusaders learned to look more kindly upon even the Saracens with whom they had fought, for they had seen that their heathen foes were often brave and truthful.

One great change that the crusades helped to bring