

These things have lost their charm..... for me,..... These things have
 These things have lost their charm..... for me,..... These things have
 life has lost its charm..... for me,..... life has

lost lost their charm for me, have lost their
 lost their charm for me, have lost their
 lost its charm for me, has lost its

charm for me,..... for me.
 charm for me,..... for me.
 charm for me,..... for me.

me.....
rallentando.

1st and 2nd verses. Last verse.

PED. | *

THE NEW ORDER OF ST. KATHERINE.



T the north-eastern side of the Regent's Park there stands a cluster of picturesque buildings. The centre of this group is a chapel with a chapter-house, and on each side are three dwelling-houses, with proper offices, buildings, and stabling. A lodge at each end completes

the ensemble, and the inquirer is informed that these houses with their quiet and cathedral-like surroundings belong to the Master, brethren, and sisters of St. Katherine's Hospital.

But, that information given, very few people can pursue the subject, and the natural questions, "What is the hospital for?" and "Who founded it?" generally remain unanswered. It is now our business briefly to give the information, which will perhaps be all the

more acceptable as the Queen has instituted a new order to be worn by hospital nurses, lately bestowed upon ten women deserving of special honour, and designated the "Order of St. Katherine."

Let us go back a few hundred years, and travel eastward across the City of London to a certain spot where the busiest portion of the great commercial world is to be found, and where thousands of ships and millions of tons of merchandise annually are loaded and unloaded—viz., to St. Katherine's Docks.

What the busy docks can possibly have to do with the peaceful Regent's Park Hospital or almshouse does not at first sight appear, but the connection is direct, as we shall see.

In the reign of Stephen and subsequently, close to the Tower of London and outside the City walls, there stood, as ancient chroniclers suppose, a meat market. Close to this market were the necessary "shambles,"

and this now unsavoury locality was granted to Matilda of Boulogne, the wife of Stephen, King of England, as a site upon which to erect a hospital and a church, by the erection and endowment of which she hoped to secure the repose of the souls of her children, Baldwin and Matilda. With this sacred purpose she purchased the site, with a mill, from the priory of the Holy Trinity, Aldgate, for the apparently modest sum of six sterling pounds per annum, charged upon the manor of Braughing, Herts, and called the buildings after St. Katherine of Alexandria, the patron saint of learning.

The foundation consisted of a Master, brethren, sisters, and almspeople, and was fixed in the year 1148. But as early as 1190 the market aforesaid, as well as the mill and garden belonging to the hospital, were destroyed, so that the fortifications of the Tower of London might be increased, and so far the brethren and sisters suffered, but got no compensation until the following century, when the then existing occupants reaped the benefit, and were allowed each five marks—six shillings and ninepence—for the same.

Edward I. also in his extension of the Tower buildings, and in the enlargement of the ditch, purchased from the hospital the piece of ground now known as Little Tower Hill, and the space between the east bank of the ditch and the houses southward to the Thames, as a place whereon to throw the sand, gravel, and marl which he dug up in his efforts to extend the fortifications.

The hospital once established grew apace. William d'Ypres had granted a piece of land called Edredeshede Queenhithe, which he "charged with a payment of £20 to the Hospital of St. Katherine;" and the institution flourished until in 1255 Eleanor, Consort of Henry III., dissolved it by (unjustly) instituting a suit against the Prior and brethren of the Holy Trinity, and succeeded in 1261 in getting a verbal surrender.

But after her husband's death Queen Eleanor re-founded the hospital, which, but for this temporary interruption in its career, would now have been the most ancient institution of the kind on record.

In her charter of 1273 the queen provided for a Master, three brethren, priests, three sisters, ten bedeswomen, and six poor scholars, with endowments; reserving, however, to herself and successive Queens of England the exclusive right of nomination of Masters, brethren, and sisters when vacancies occurred. The bedeswomen were nominated and provided for by the hospital, and were to lodge in it. The boys to be maintained and taught, and to assist in celebrating service.

Successive sovereigns benefited the hospital, and Philippa, Consort of Edward III., granted a new

charter. The brethren were now obliged to wear a "strait coat" or clothing, and over that a mantle of black marked with the sign of the Holy Katherine. No staring colours were permitted. Besides this, these brethren were all obliged to be shaven in the crown, and "in a becoming manner." Neither they nor the sisters were permitted to be absent after the hour of curfew, nor was any communication permitted between the brethren and sisters.

Yet the hospital was not by any means a monastery. The sisters took no vows, nor did they adopt the veil, and they were all permitted full liberty until curfew bell, if leave had been previously obtained from the Master. The brethren had £40 a year, the sisters £20, and the bedeswomen £8 each.

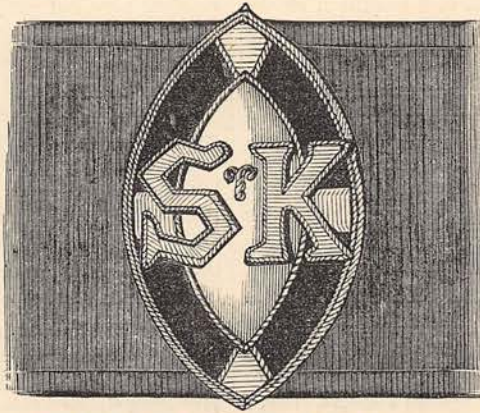
Over this ancient institution the Queen Consort had absolute jurisdiction, and to this day the Queen exercises this privilege. If no Queen Consort were alive a Queen Regnant could rule, but a Queen Dowager would always be preferred in authority over a Queen Regnant. If no Queen were in authority the King would rule, but only under those circumstances; and this view has always been upheld by the law. For this reason the hospital was called "The Royal Peculiar of St. Katherine."

Things went on quietly in the hospital until, in 1442, some remarkable privileges were accorded to the institution. In that year the Master reported the revenues insufficient, and, in reply to the petition,

Henry VI. granted a charter constituting a certain district in the neighbourhood a precinct—all in its jurisdiction, and its inhabitants, to be exempt from all secular and ecclesiastical interference, except that of the Lord Chancellor and the Master of the hospital.

Besides the immunity granted by this charter, King Henry also ordained that a fair should be held every year for twenty-one days after St. James's Day, and amongst other privileges he granted the residents of the precinct exemption from tithes, and from subsidies voted by the Commons, while none but City officers could exercise any jurisdiction within the charmed circle.

This charter, naturally, mightily increased the importance of the community. The property of the hospital and its revenues became greater; fines, leases, and ground rents swelled the exchequer of St. Katherine. Even the devastating hands of Henry VIII. were stayed by his queen, Anne Boleyn, who induced him to spare the hospital which she ruled, whose revenues were then £315 18s. 2d. sterling. Henry VIII. also founded the Guild of St. Barbara here, in 1518, which comprised many of the nobility of both sexes, and included Cardinal Wolsey.



RIBBON AND CROSS OF THE ORDER OF ST. KATHERINE.

St. Katherine's Hospital and Church continued to flourish. The business of the institution was conducted well by the chapter; no abuses apparently existed. The brethren and sisters voted equally, and it was enacted that one sister *must* vote; and no business was lawful without four votes recorded. This rule still holds good. The effect of the last charter, above-mentioned, was to create two courts—one spiritual, one temporal—which have equal privileges with other courts.

Officers were appointed—a Principal, a Registrar, Steward, Surveyor, Receiver, &c.; and even a prison was added to the hospital at last.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth, the first appointed Master proved very unfaithful to his trust. He sold the privilege of the fair, granted by Henry VI., for a sum of £466 13s. 4d.; and it appears that other abuses crept in, for we find in a small volume published in 1673 that a protest was made against the manner in which the revenues, then estimated at £20,000, were dealt with. The neglected and evil condition of the poor and the buildings of the hospital are set forth, and the queen's interference is urgently demanded.

This pamphlet is called "The State of the Case," and on the title-page it bears the verses 42 and 43 from the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. This appeal appears to have had some success, for the Lord Chancellor Somers took up the question in 1698, and drew up rules and regulations for the better government of the hospital, and all abuses were at any rate checked for the time being.

The precinct of St. Katherine, or Portsoken, was described in 1708 as comprising Thames Street, from the Iron Gate eastward to the King's Brew-house in East Smithfield (which was also called the Bere House), St. Katherine's Court, Queen's Court, Three Sisters Close, St. Katherine's Lane, Dolphin's Alley, Bain's Alley, and Cat's Hole. From the Brew-house it extended northwards up Butcher's Row, Unicorn Yard, Whitney Bridge, Helmet Steps, and the Island, Tower Hill, and abutted on Aldgate Parish.

So the Church and Hospital of St. Katherine existed in the quiet square near the Tower, far from the busy hum of men, until in 1824 the Government sanctioned the construction of an immense new dock in that neighbourhood, and the area included the settlement of St. Katherine. Protest was vain. The

City promoters gained their way, and the time-honoured church and the ancient foundation were removed to a site granted by the "Woods and Forests" in the Regent's Park.

The site was fixed, and proved a very bad one. The buildings were erected, and foundations gave way. A beautiful fountain was built, but the water was found unfit for use. The ancient and invaluable monuments and relics were removed from east to west at the expense of the Dock Company, and the Master now has a stipend of £1,200 a year and a mansion in the Park. The "three poor brethren" draw £300 a year each, and live elsewhere in other lucrative appointments, though one of them resides in rotation at the hospital. The "three poor sisters" have £200 per annum each, and are non-resident, occasionally letting their rooms to other would-be residents "for a consideration." The original ten bedeswomen have increased to twenty, and twenty bedesmen have been appointed to bear them company. They are non-resident now, but get £10 a year for life each.

The ancient charity is principally represented by the school, which numbers about forty-eight boys and girls, who dine free at the hospital on Sunday.

But with the pending rearrangement of expenditure we need not trouble ourselves. The Queen has lately created the Order of St. Katherine, and nominated ten recipients, who will receive £50 a year each for three years, in addition to any other professional salary as nurse, and be also entitled to wear the badge of the order. This is an oval of white, surrounded by a bright green border, with the letters St. K. in the centre in raised gold work.

Should a vacancy occur amongst the ten recipients of the badge, the Queen will appoint a successor. Her Majesty also reserves the right to command the services of the nurses so appointed "for a poor or other person" at any time during the three years they hold office; but it is understood that, although the salary attached to the appointment will lapse after the term of three years, the members of the order will still retain their distinctive badges as St. Katherine Nurses.

Such is the last incident connected with the Hospital of St. Katherine, honoured by Queen Victoria in 1879, as it was originally founded by Queen Matilda or Maud in 1148.

HENRY FRITH.

