





THE NEW ORDER OF ST. KATHERINE.



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 east-ward 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,"