

**THE LIFE OF SAINT KATHERINE:
FROM THE ROYAL MS. 17 A.
XXVII., &C., WITH ITS LATIN
ORIGINAL FROM THE COTTON
MS. CALIGULA, A. VIII., &C.**

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EUGEN EINENKEL

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Life of Saint Catherine.

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The
Life of Saint Katherine.

FROM THE ROYAL MS. 17 A. xxvii., &c.,

With its Latin Original

FROM THE COTTON MS. CALIGULA, A. viii., &c.

EDITED,

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND GLOSSARY,

BY

DR. EUGEN EINENKEL, M.A.

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PREFACE.

If this edition should prove to be useful, it will chiefly be due to those who, by encouragement or otherwise, have assisted the editor in his work. He therefore thinks he cannot make a better use of his preface than in giving the names of, and conveying his thanks to, his helpers.

The Revd. James Morton and the Revd. Charles Hardwick, and those of their works, of which use has been made, are named in the Introduction below. As the former, I am sorry to say, is no more amongst the living, I think it proper to give a brief account of the life and works of this distinguished scholar.

The Revd. James Morton, B.D., Vicar of Holbeach, etc., was a native of Kelso. He was ordained Deacon in 1811 and Priest in 1812, by the Bishop of Durham. He was a ten-year man, of St. John's College, Cambridge, and took the degree of Bachelor of Divinity on July 1, 1824. He became Vicar of Holbeach in 1831, etc.¹ He died at the Vicarage of Holbeach, Lincolnshire, July 31, 1865, aged 82. As an author or editor, he published the *Memoir and Poetical Remains of Dr. John Leiden*, 1812; the *Monastic Annals of*

¹ See Crockford, *Clerical Dictionary*, 1860, and the *Memoir* in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Sept. 1865, pp. 390-1, from the *Edinburgh Courant*, etc.

Teviotdale, 1832; the Legend of St. Katherine, 1841, for the Abbotsford Club; and the Ancren Riwle, 1853, for the Camden Society.

The Revd. J. Morton's knowledge of Middle English was profound, and almost surprising, if we consider the then state of English Philology. As a proof of this may be cited his translations of the Ancren Riwle and St. Katherine, which, apart from some slight mistakes, deserve to be called exact, and are still useful.

The Revd. W. W. Skeat's share in this edition is nearly as important as those of the two scholars just mentioned. His experienced hand will be easily discernible in the notes on the vv. 387, 538, 1309, 1617, 1690, 1827, and 1940.

The editor likewise begs to give his thanks to Mr. F. J. Furnivall and Mr. Henry Hucks Gibbs, who, by their conscientious revisions, have greatly contributed to the accuracy of the texts.

The editor is well aware of, and does not try to make an excuse for, the many imperfections of his work, which came to his notice too late to be removed. He, however, begs his readers to consider that a work but seldom receives the form its editor intended to give it in starting.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE HISTORY OF ST. KATHERINE AND HER LEGEND.

Katherine of Alexandria is one of those saints, the originals of whom are so much shrouded in mystery, that, but for some unmistakeably historical evidence turning up in their behalf, it remains at the historian's discretion whether he will accept their existence or reject it.

Though with respect to our St. Katherine, from a comparatively early date till up to the time of the Reformation, doubts have been raised and inquiries made as to the bona fides of her hagiologists, the question of her existence has not been settled—so far as with the present material this could be done—until very recently, by a little treatise entitled 'An Historical Inquiry touching St. Catherine of Alexandria, to which is added a Semi-Saxon Legend, by Ch. Hardwick, Cambridge, 1849,' in which the learned author disposes of his subject with such research and impartiality, that in taking from him the few particulars we require regarding the history of our saint and her legend, we need not be afraid of being led wrong.

Though, if true, the incidents of the saint's life were so full of special interest, that they could not possibly pass or remain unnoticed by contemporaneous or later writers, we nevertheless look in vain for anything like a proof of her existence for many centuries after her supposed death. A passage in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* by Eusebius (who wrote shortly after her death), has, from its resemblance to some incidents in the legend of our saint, been thought an allusion to her. But as by some other strong evidence, Eusebius, who adds no name, is almost conclusively proved to allude, in the passage referred to, not to St. Katherine, but to St. Dorothea, likewise a native of Alexandria, the above assumption can safely be dismissed as unfounded.

The first undoubted allusion to, and at the same time narrative of, St. Katherine's life and passion, is contained in the so-called *Menologium Basilianum*, a collection of legends compiled for the use of the Emperor Basil the First, who died in 886. As it is interesting to see how considerably the legend has been changed and enlarged in the course of a few centuries, I reprint it from the oldest edition existing, published at Urbino in 1717,¹ adding a translation below it.

Ἡ Μάρτυρ Αἰκατερίνα ἐγένετο ἀπὸ Ἀλεξανδρείαν, θυγάτηρ βασιλικῶν τιῶν, πλουσίῳ καὶ ἐνδόξῳ· εὐμορφὸς πάνυ. Εὐφύης δὲ ὑπάρχουσα, ἔμαθεν ἑλληνικὰ γράμματα, καὶ ἐγένετο σοφὴ λαβοῦσα καὶ γλώσσας πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν. Ἐπετελείτο δὲ ἰορτὴ τοῖς εἰδώλοις παρὰ τῶν ἁλλήνων· καὶ θεωροῦσα τὰ ζῶα σφραζόμενα, ἐλυπήθη, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν βασιλεῖα Μαξιμίνον, καὶ ἐφίλονεῖσεν αὐτὸν, εἰποῦσα, ὅτι διὰ τί ἐγκατέλιπες Θεὸν ζῶντα καὶ προσκυνεῖν εἰδώλοις ἀψύχοις; ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἐκράτησεν αὐτήν, καὶ ἐτιμωρήσατο ἰσχυρῶς. Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἔφερεν ὁ βασιλεὺς πενήκοντα ῥήτορας, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι διαλέχθητε πρὸς τὴν Αἰκατερίναν, καὶ πείσατε αὐτήν. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ νικήσητε αὐτήν, πάντας ἡμᾶς κατακαύσω πυρὶ. Ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ἰῶντες, ὅτι ἐνίκηθησαν, ἐβαπτίσθησαν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκαύθησαν ἀπεκεφαλίσθη δὲ καὶ αὐτή.

The martyr Aikaterina was the daughter of a rich and noble chieftain of Alexandria. She was very beautiful, and being at the same time highly talented, she devoted herself to Grecian literature, and to the study of the languages of all nations, and so became wise and learned. And it happened that the Greeks held a festival in honour of their idols; and seeing the slaughter of the animals, she was so greatly moved that she went to the King Maximinus and expostulated with him in these words: "Why hast thou left the living God to worship lifeless idols?" But the emperor caused her to be thrown into prison, and to be punished severely. He then ordered fifty orators to be brought, and bade them to reason with Aikaterina, and confute her, threatening to burn them all if they should fail to overpower her. The orators, however, when they saw themselves vanquished, received baptism, and were burnt forthwith. She, on the contrary, was beheaded.

Upon this simple narrative are founded—whether directly or not is left open to doubt—the elaboration in Greek by Simeon Metaphrastes of about the beginning of the tenth century, and another and somewhat later version (likewise in Greek) by one Athanasios. The latter story, of which up to the present only two copies are known to exist,² is evidently the prototype of

¹ Vol. i. page 213.

² The first in the library at Vienna, the other in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Barocccian Collection, No. 180), the two, so far as we could ascertain, only differing in minor points, as transpositions or insertions of words.