

"Catharistes" very obligingly writes :-  
 "Your writer in 'Notes and Queries' of the  
 22nd November asks if I can tell him when  
 the spelling 'Aikaterina' first occurs in  
 Greek literature. It is impossible without  
 going through a considerable amount of  
 labour to determine this particular point.  
 The main question, however, being whether  
 the name 'Catherine' is derived from the  
 Greek word 'Katharos,' it may interest  
 some of your readers to become acquainted  
 with what information I have been able to  
 obtain from a learned friend of mine - an  
 authority in ecclesiastical history and

2/12/98  
 H.P.

literature. I cannot do better than repro-  
 duce here a version of his letter to me,  
 dated from London :- 'The derivation of  
 this name from the Greek word  
 Katharos is, in my opinion, arbitrary  
 and untenable; and it has very properly  
 been pointed out that from Katharos  
 we could only have Catharia, in the same  
 way as we have Icaria, Makaria, &c.  
 Whence came the name Catherine or  
 Catharine it is hard indeed to say. None  
 of the Greek authors make any allusion to  
 this. I enclose, however, two extracts -  
 one from Mosheim's Ecclesiastical  
 History and one from Bouillet's  
 Historical and Geographical Dictionary.  
 It is noteworthy that in the latter it is  
 mentioned, that according to St. Jerome,  
 the martyr in question was really called  
 Dorothea, and that her name was subse-  
 quently changed into Catharine from  
 the Syriac Cethar. Unfortunately, I have  
 not St. Jerome in my library to verify  
 this; and my poor health and old age do  
 not permit my going down to the British  
 Museum to inquire. St. Jerome flourished  
 immediately after Catharine's death; she  
 died in 317, whereas he was born in 350,  
 and, after long stays in Constantinople,  
 Syria, and Palestine, settled into monastic  
 life in Bethlehem, where he died in 420.  
 His opinion, therefore, on Catharine is  
 bound to be of value. In which particular  
 period the celebration of St. Aikaterina's  
 feast was introduced into the Greek Church  
 I cannot accurately say. I can only con-  
 jecture that the Crusaders brought it to  
 the West, and that from Rome it found  
 its way into the Greek Church; but as I  
 said, this is merely a conjecture on my  
 part; and, being too ill to look further into  
 the matter, I prefer my name not to appear  
 in your discussion."

"Catharistes" continues :- "The fol-  
 lowing are the extracts to which my vener-  
 able friend refers :- 'On croit  
 qu'elle s'appelait Dorothee, et que le nom  
 de Catherine lui fut donne, (du mot  
 Syriaque Cethar, couronne), parcequ'elle  
 remporta, dit St. Jerome, la triple  
 couronne du martyre, de la virginite,  
 et de la science.' - M. N. Bouillet's  
 'Historical and Geographical Dictionary'  
 in word 'Catherine' (Sainte). The  
 Roman Catholics acknowledge that in  
 the time of the Crusades many saints, be-  
 fore unknown to the Latins, were brought  
 from Greece and the East into Europe,  
 where they were worshipped most religi-  
 ously. And among these new spiritual  
 guardians there were some of whose lives  
 and history there is the greatest reason to  
 doubt. For example, St. Catharine was  
 introduced into Europe from Syria, as is  
 admitted by Caes. Baronius, 'Ad Mar-  
 tyrol Rom.,' p. 728; by Geo. Cassander,  
 'Scholia ad Hymnos Ecclesiae,' &c.; yet  
 it is very doubtful whether this Catharine,  
 the patroness of learned men, ever  
 existed.' - Mosheim's 'Ecclesiastical  
 History,' vol. 2, p. 11, of the English  
 translation. I consider that enough is said  
 in the above remarks and extracts to make  
 one very sceptical indeed as to the Greek  
 origin of the name Catherine."

The writer of the note says :- "Let me  
 thank 'Catharistes' for the trouble he has  
 so kindly taken. He may be interested  
 to know that Dr. Murray has adopted his  
 derivation. But, in spite of this great  
 authority, I must urge my original point,  
 that 'Aikaterina' is a late corruption, pos-  
 sibly attributable to Italian influence. As  
 to the name itself we can come to no  
 definite conclusion until the form of its  
 earliest appearance in literature is known.  
 M. Tabaraud, in the 'Biographie Univer-  
 selle,' under the head 'Catherine Ste.,'  
 says the Egyptians called the martyr  
 'Aicatharina,' signifying without blemish  
 or incorruptible, but unfortunately he gives  
 no authority. Eusebius relates the suicide  
 of a married lady at Alexandria to escape  
 the lust of Maximian, and Rufinus says her  
 name was Dorothea. Two Vatican  
 librarians, Baronius (1538) and Assemani  
 (1687), endeavoured to identify her with  
 St. Catharine. Tabaraud says that the  
 cultus of St. Catharine was brought by the  
 Latins from the East in the eleventh cen-  
 tury. These points, however, are apart  
 from the issue. The problem to be settled  
 is how the name is spelled when it first  
 appears - is it 'Katharine,' or 'Aicatha-  
 rina,' or 'Aikaterina'? If the name  
 occurs as early as St. Jerome, it ought to  
 have found its way into Liddell and Scott  
 or the great Paris Thesaurus, but it is in  
 neither. Can some clergyman with a  
 library of ecclesiastical Greek throw further  
 light on the subject?"

NEWS NOTES AND  
 QUERIES.

"Catharistes" writes :- "Will the  
 writer of the paragraph respecting the name  
 'Catherine' in to-day's Notes and  
 Queries, tell us how he came to trace that  
 name to the Greek word 'Katharos'? To  
 begin with, if the name was taken from the  
 Greek, it would be 'Catharia'; but there is  
 no Greek name that I know derived from  
 the word Katharos. Such a name would  
 infer that the girl who owns it is especially  
 clean, a very unkind imputation on the  
 other girls! There can be no doubt, in my  
 mind, that Catherine is identical with the  
 Greek name 'Aikaterina,' a name which  
 found its way into several languages in one  
 form or another."

The writer of the note says :-  
 Nothing is harder than to determine the  
 derivation of many common names. English  
 lexicographers, however, so far as I am  
 aware, have never doubted the derivation  
 of Catharine from "Katharos." The word  
 "Aikaterina" is the modern Greek form  
 of Catharine. Without further research I  
 cannot tell when this form first made its  
 appearance, but I will hazard the guess  
 that it was many centuries after the forma-  
 tion and use of the name Catharine.  
 Towards the end of the eighth century the  
 Egyptian Christians discovered the body  
 of a woman which they supposed to be that  
 of the virgin martyr St. Catharine of the  
 fourth century, and they buried it, giving  
 it in their jargon the name "Aikatharina,"  
 signifying "without blemish," or "uncor-  
 rupted." Will "Catharistes" let us know  
 when the spelling "Aikaterina" first  
 occurs in Greek literature?

When Mr. Gladstone paid his visit to  
 the ... he inquired that

B.M.  
 Catharistes (C) ...  
 Eφταδιωτης