

The Life of Christina of Markyate



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The Life of Christiana of Markyate gives an exceptionally vivid account of the struggles of a young girl, vowed at an early age to celibacy, to escape the matrimonial snares set by her parents and her friends. She was born of well-to-do burgesses of Huntingdon in the opening years of the twelfth century, who succeeded in betrothing her to a local nobleman. But the marriage was not consummated, and eventually she escaped, became a recluse and a nun, and the prioress of a small community at Markyate in Hertfordshire, under the patronage of the abbot and monks of St Albans, who made the famous St Albans' Psalter for her. The Life, written by one of her chaplains largely from her own reminiscences, was discovered, or rediscovered, by C.H. Talbot in a Cotton Manuscript in the British Library. First published by the Clarendon Press in 1959, it is now reissued. It is one of the remarkable discoveries of our time, and a classic of historical literature.

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