



Princess Katherine.

KING HENRY V. ACT 3, SC. 5.

THE PRINCESS KATHARINE.

THE play of *King Henry V.* which concludes with the marriage of the daughter of Charles VI. to the English monarch, Henry, commemorates the latter's extensive conquests in France, and though chiefly occupied with martial exploits, is not altogether devoid of the comic element. This is especially noticeable in Henry's broken-French wooing of the Princess Katharine, who is actually ignorant of English.

The princess, herself, is the familiar model of the *bon-tout* French demoiselle—shy, excessively circumspect, and very chary of words. She is quite overwhelmed by the tempestuous suit of the bluff "king of good fellows;" but is plainly flattered by the prospect of being queen of England.

Besides this scene with King Henry, she appears only once; and then, with admirable prescience of her coming good fortune, she takes a lesson in English from her lady-in-waiting. As for character, she is a model of gentle breeding, to be even suspected of having any "familiar notes," that "is not he," in the words of the angry monarch, "*de la façon pour les ladies of France*," any more than the possession of a liver—a maxim of national etiquette, by the way, which Henry Hot expounds with practical clearness.



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The princess, herself, is the familiar model of the *bien élevé* French demoiselle—shy, excessively circumspect, and very chary of words. She is quite overwhelmed by the tempestuous suit of the bluff "king of good fellows;" but is plainly flattered by the prospect of being queen of England.

Besides this scene with King Henry, she appears only once; and then, with admirable prescience of her coming good fortune, she takes a lesson in English from her lady-in-waiting. As for *character* in a demoiselle of gentle breeding, to be even suspected of having one "*devant ses nocces*," that "is not be," in the words of the naive interpreter, "*de fashion pour les ladies of France*," any more than the granting of a kiss to a lover—a maxim of national etiquette, by the by, which King Hal expounds with practical cleverness:

K. Hen. Fair Katharine, and most fair!
Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms,
Such as will enter at a lady's ear,
And plead his love-suit to her gentle heart?

Kath. Your majesty shall mock at me; I cannot speak your England.

K. Hen. O fair Katharine, if you will love me soundly with your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?

Kath. *Pardonnez moy*, I cannot tell vat is—like me.

K. Hen. An angel is like you, Kate; and you are like an angel.

Kath. *Que dit-il? que je suis semblable à les anges?*

Alice. *Ouy, vrayment, (sauf vostre grace,) ainsi dit-il.*

K. Hen. I said so, dear Katharine; and I must not blush to affirm it.

Kath. *O bon Dieu! les langues des hommes sont pleines des tromperies.*

K. Hen. What says she, fair one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits?

Alice. *Ouy*; dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits: dat is de princess.

K. Hen. Marry, if you would put me to verses, or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me; for I speak to thee plain soldier: If thou canst love me for this, take me; if not, to say to thee that I shall die, is true; but, for thy love—by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too. And while thou livest, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy; for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places; for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favors,—they do always reason themselves out again. If thou would have such a one, take me; and take me, take a soldier; take a soldier, take a king: And what sayest thou then to my love? speak, my fair, and fairly, I pray thee.

Kath. Is it possible dat I should love de enemy of France?

K. Hen. No; it is not possible you should love the

enemy of France, Kate; but, in loving me, you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well, that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine; and, Kate, when France is mine, and I am yours, then yours is France, and you are mine.

Kath. I cannot tell vat is dat.

K. Hen. Now fye upon my false French! By mine honor, in true English, I love thee, Kate; by which honor I dare not swear thou lovest me; yet my blood begins to flatter me that thou dost, notwithstanding the poor and untempering effect of my visage. And therefore tell me, most fair Katharine—will you have me? Put off your maiden blushes; avouch the thoughts of your heart with the looks of an empress; take me by the hand, and say—Harry of England, I am thine: which word thou shalt no sooner bless mine ear withal, but I will tell thee, aloud, England is thine, Ireland is thine, France is thine, and Henry Plantagenet is thine—who, though I speak it before his face, if he be not fellow with the best king, thou shalt find the best king of good fellows. Come, your answer in broken music—for thy voice is music, and thy English broken; therefore queen of all, Katharine, break thy mind to me in broken English: Wilt thou have me?

Kath. Dat is as it shall please de *roy mon pere*.

K. Hen. Nay, it will please him well, Kate; it shall please him, Kate.

Kath. Den it shall also content me.

K. Hen. Upon that I will kiss your hand, and I call you—my queen.

Kath. *Laissez, mon seigneur, laissez, laissez! ma foy, je ne veux point que vous abaissez vostre grandeur, en baisant la main d'une vostre indigne serviteure! excusez moy, je vous supplie, mon tres puissant seigneur.*

K. Hen. Then I will kiss your lips, Kate.

Kath. *Les dames, et damoiselles, pour estre baisées devant leur nopces, il n'est pas le coûtume de France.*

K. Hen. Madam my interpreter, what says she?

Alice. Dat it is not be de fashion pour les ladies of France,—I cannot tell what is, *baiser*, en English.

K. Hen. To kiss.

Alice. Your majesty *entendre better que moy.*

K. Hen. It is not the fashion for the maids in France to kiss before they are married, would she say?

Alice. *Ouy, vrayment.*

K. Hen. O Kate, nice customs curt'sy to great kings. Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion: we are the makers of manners, Kate; and the liberty that follows our places, stops the mouths of all find-faults—as I will do yours, for upholding the nice fashion of your country, in denying me a kiss; therefore, patiently and yielding. [*Kissing her.*] You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate; there is more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the tongues of the French council; and they should sooner persuade Harry of England than a general petition of monarchs.