

KATISH.

Katish, a *nom de rive* I had adopted for her, owing to a role in a French play, had straightened her hat for at least the eleventh time. The numerous smoothings, too, conferred upon her gloves during the last few moments had perceptibly decreased their wearing capacity. Alack! What woe! A button suddenly lost courage, in fact, every spark of its heretofore combative nature dropped off and hid itself, without even the attempt at an apology.

"Oh, dear, what impudence!" groaned Katish, while her aunt looked at her as much as to say not "I told you so," but its "co-ed," "you should have known better."

The guard threw open the doors calling out "*Orte, Orte.*" Certainly he must have said *Orviato*. I waved both hands and umbrella vigorously at him.

"*Orviato, Signor,*" I gasped.

"*Orte, Signorita.*"

Apparently he had an honest face, but if we would be in peace, we must pin him down to the solemn truth. I cannot explain this phenomena of unbelief, I only know, with the exception of the very scientific traveller, one's questions must be affirmed or denied in quadruple or octagonal measure, if one has not an affection for pins and needles.

"*Orviato, Orviato, Signor?*" shrieked Aunt Caroline.

"*Orviato?*" implored Katish.

"*Non e Orviato,*" said the guard.

Now that these heated moments of anxiety are past I have often thought that the direct descent from Job of this particular information-giver would be an interesting study.

Katish buried herself in Baedeker.

"Greebish," she exclaimed, "I believe that this is *Orte.*"

The train with a low, melancholy note puffed out of *Orte* (?) The strain had been so great that we each subsided to private meditations, thankful for this momentary breath of quiet.

"*Orviato, Orviato,*" and the compartment doors were thrown wide open. The guard began handing us out in such an authoritative manner that we offered no resistance, but quietly descended, summoning all our muscle past and present for the conflict to come. Gamins, big and small, screeched, howled and fought about us.

"No, no, no," I shrieked back at them pushing my way through the crowd. Past experience made us determined to await, unflinchingly, the porter of the *Hotel Aquila Bianca*. Just at this moment there came rushing toward us a man with a beaming smile and a glorious mustache, twisted in the manner of half moons. With many a bow and a smile for us, and deep bows for our pursuers, he escorted us to the steep incline railway. All this time a youngster, with brown eyes, curls to match and teeth that glistened, was squeezing my hand, not with plain ardor, but absolute passion.

"*Signorita, Signorita,*" and his eyes grew larger. "*Poverino, poverino, macaroni, Signorina,*" and he squeezed my hand again. "*Signorina,*" and he looked at me beseechingly. "You like say 'get away,' *Non 'get away,' Signorina, non e vero?*"

I had been bred with organized charity doctrines. Then, too, before going into Italy I had read of the degradation of the peasantry and how much travellers did to increase it, their coppers merely serving as pollution to every thought of an honest livelihood. Indeed, I would never yield to such weakness.

"*Macaroni, Signorina,*" implored the gamin. The sous burned in my purse. I put mine in his hand and blushed guiltily. Katish and I both had a few principles, but there was this difference, she lived up to hers, and I, only on occasions, but she was regarding the almost

perpendicular position of the funiculars we were getting into.

My adorer lifted his red cap and hurled the most luxurious of kisses, until there was no question of his conquest.

"*Grazie, grazie, Signorina,*" and as we crept up the steep hill he continued to wave me his picturesque *addio*.

The porter put us safely into the hotel vehicle, where Katish and I hopped from seat to seat for a glimpse of the cathedral.

Suddenly I caught my breath and felt nervously at the bumps of my handbag to see if I could distinguish the corners of an Italian dictionary. They were not to be found.

"Katish," I grumbled, "how is it your education was so terribly neglected? Why didn't you study Italian? If you had you'd have known something about it. Now I've had some verbs, and a few trimmings of nouns and pronouns, but you will have to sleep on the steps of the cathedral if you depend on my Italian for a room. Think of it! It will be damp and you will get Roman fever and die."

Katish yawned and looked out of the window.

"Your indifference is shameful; shameful, I tell you."

"Auntie," said Katish, "Greebish is very disagreeable this morning, but you must forgive her. Partings like that at the station are heart-rending to say the least."

"It's pure jealousy on your part," I retorted. "The only ripple between you and happiness is that you didn't give that poor infant some pennies."

Katish, however, maintained a contemptuous silence. Excited by the discussion I had utterly forgotten the just discovered placard of the *Hotel Aquila Bianca* and underneath in glaring letters:

*English spoken
Man Spricht Deutsch
Ici on Parle Francais
Se Habla Espagnol*

"Katish, do look at that sign," I gasped.

She looked and even paled beneath her coat of color—a gift of the Italian sun.

Two little old ladies with bobbing, frisking curls pushed out to welcome us.

"Aunt Caroline, you begin," said Katish.

"Very well," she replied looking firmly at the words, "English Spoken," and then with great precision made known our wants.

The result: A blank stare, a deep wrinkling of foreheads, a burst of Italian, and a sweet smile.

"Your turn, Katish," whispered Aunt Caroline.

Katish glanced severely at the "*Man Spricht Deutsch,*" cleared her throat, and with a sweetly significant gesture began in German.

The result: A startled stare, a profuse bobbing of curls and curtsies, gasps of *Signorina, Signorina,* and a fascinating smile.

Katish waved her hand at me. I nodded at the words "*Ici on Parle Francais*" and commenced.

"*Mesdames—*"

The result: The contortion of features, slightly less, (in some dim way they recognized the kinship of tongues) the imploring look more imploring, and something that sounded like requests for *Italiano*.

"Katish," I murmured, "remember your education, or rather the lack of it, and blush for it."

I stumbled and tottered on far beyond my depth in the Italian tongue.

We found ourselves suddenly located in a long room with the greenest of Venetian blinds, a dusky brick floor and the most entrancing copper pitchers with bumps of age, and a polish that

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