

## TAILPIECE

### IDIOTISMIC ENGLISH

For 20c I bought a copy of Pedro Carolino's 'English as She is Spoke', said to be extracts from **The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English**. It is hard to believe what is said of this book and its author but as the book was published by a reputable British publisher I suppose readers must accept as true what the dust cover says. It says, among other things, that Senhor Carolino knew no English, yet he bravely set out to compile his guide with the aid of a Portuguese-French phrase-book and a French-English dictionary. 'The results are astonishing', says the blurb. They certainly are. The contents set and maintain a standard suggested by the title. The author's preface says (I quote):

A choice of familiar dialogues, clean of gallicism it was missing yet to studious portuguese and brazilian youth; and also to persons of other nations, that wish to know the portuguese language. We sought all we may do, to correct that want....

For that reason we did put, with a scrupulous exactness, a great a variety own expressions to english and portuguese idioms; without to attach us selves (as make some others) almost at a literal translation; translation what only will be for to accustom the portuguese pupils, or-foreign, to speak very bad any of the mentioned idioms.

Let us look at some of these idioms, which, in the relevant chapter are headed 'Idiotisms and proverbs', pausing only to quote the author's final sentence in his preface: 'We expect the who the little book (for the care what we wrote him, and for her

typographical correction) that may be worth the acceptation of the studious persons, and especially of the Youth, at which we dedicate him particularly.' Some of the idioms are recognisable'; others are not. Here they are:

With a tongue one go to Roma;  
there is not any ruler without an exception;  
a horse baared don't look him the tooth;  
he eat untill to can't more;  
it want to beat the iron during it is hot;  
he is not so devil as he is black;  
it is better to be single as a bad company;  
the stone as roll not heap up much foam;  
it is not better suace who the appetite;  
he is beggar as a church rat;  
to force to forge becomes smith;  
keep the chestnut of the fire with the cat foot;  
after the paunch comes the dance;  
to buy a cat in pocket;  
to fatter the foot and to come back at their mutttons;  
tell me whom thou frequent, I will tell you which you are.

To end, back to the blurb: 'The Guide immediately established itself as a masterpiece of unconscious humour throughout the English-speaking world. Indeed the phrase 'English as She is Spoke' has become part of the language'.

As the dwarfs say in 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs': 'Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, it's back to work we go!'

## ERRATUM

The name of the author of the amusing tailpiece on 'Idiotismic English' in our previous issue was unfortunately omitted. We wish to record our thanks for the article to the late Theo Cutten.