

rest of the gibberish in this dialogue between Cornego and Baltazar is an instance of a kind of humour frequent enough in old plays. It seems to us to be devoid of anything except dulness, and from the nature of it there is little room for topical allusions. A mere string of cross-fires, consisting of tags of ballads, sections of proverbs, and very wretched plays upon words with a reference to a popular romance or two, is the usual characteristic of what we should term padding, but no doubt was often mere player's impromptu inserted in the stage copy and printed without authority. To any true antiquary, however, these scraps of bygone chaff are fascinating sources of conjecture. "Dyall of good days," in this passage, points to a meaning of "dial," quasi *diary*, or almanack, in the sense in which "Ephemerides" was used, that I have not elsewhere found.

P. 313:

"Bal. Woo't not trust an almanacke?"

"Cor. Nor a Coranta neither, though it were sealed with Butter."

"Sealed with Butter" is an ancient proverb. "As sure as if it was sealed with butter" is to be found in Heywood. It occurs in page 148 of Mr. Julian Sharman's admirable reprint of the edition of 1546. But it is seldom met with, and the only other instance I know of occurs in "Look about you" (Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vii. 405), a play printed in 1600. It occurs there in the form—"As sure as an obligation sealed with batter." "Batter" is no doubt erroneous for *butter*.

P. 313:

"Bal. Away Otterhound."

"Cor. Dancing Beare, Ime gone."

Ben Jonson mentions the otterhound in his "Discoveries"; and in "The Silent Woman," Captain Otter, "Tom Otter," appears to keep otterhounds at Ratcliffe on the Thames. He is also concerned with dancing bears at Paris Garden. Possibly we have here an allusion to "one of the best comedies we have extant," as Gerald Langbaine said of "The Silent Woman" in 1691. On the previous page, among the gibberish already spoken of, the words about "the Fox with a fur night cap" lying "sick of the mulligrubs," and the three sheepskins, reminded me of Volpone and his three dupes in Ben's "best production." The whole passage, however, bears a strained connexion with the current action of the play itself.

P. 313:

"Beauty was turned into a watching candle that went out stinking."

Compare "Juncus laevis, mariscus, . . . The smoothe rushe: the rushe whereof watching candles are made: the marish rush," *Nomenclator*, 1585. In "Albumazar," ii. 9, it is mentioned "Why should I twine my arms to cables, and sigh my soul to air: sit up all night like a watching candle," &c. In Shakspeare's "Richard III.," v. iii. 63, "watch" signifies a watching candle "marked out into sections, each of which was a certain portion of time burning" (Schmidt).

P. 317:

"Med. Why doe you barke and snap at my Narcissus as if I were de Frenshe doag?"

In the old play of "Narcissus" a fox was let loose in the court and pursued by dogs. This was shown by the chapel children on Twelfth Night in 1571 (*Collier's Annals of the Stage*, i. 196-7), and perhaps it was revived. I have not seen this play or mask, and can only guess that this obscure passage may be an allusion to it. In the line immediately above we have the old form of sarsaparilla, "Salsa-Perilla"—our word is the Spanish equivalent for the French "Salseparille" as given by Cotgrave. Bailey gives both "Salsaparilla, the rough bind-

weed of Peru," and "Sarsaparilla, a plant of Peru and Virginia, a Sudorifick of great Efficacy in the Gout and Venereal Distempers." The latter property is that to which Baltazar alludes in his abusive language. (See my note on vol. iv., p. 157, in this series *post*.)

P. 318:

"Toot," in a passage which will not bear quotation, is explained in a note, "to pry into." It is not a common word, but is used by Taylor, the water-poet. In Heywood—"On my maydes he is ever tooting" (Sharman's *Heywood*, p. 122). The meaning is rather, to stare at eagerly.

P. 327:

"Henbane and Poppey, and that magicale weed, Which Hags at midnight watch to catch the seed."

Undoubtedly the fern seed. I should not have thought this required a note, except that the editor has asserted it to be "hemlock," and adduced an irrelevant passage from Ben Jonson in support of this interpretation. Properly speaking fern seed should be gathered at midnight on St. John's Eve, and the folklore on the subject throughout Europe is copious. See Britten's *European Ferns*, Friend's *Flower and Folk-Lore*, &c. It is generally suggested that the fern seed may have derived its supposed power of conferring invisibility from the extreme minuteness of the spore-dust or seed. Another origin, somewhat on the plan of the "Doctrine of Signatures," has occurred to me. Fern ash was largely used at one period in the manufacture of glass, from the strong percentage of silica in its composition. Chaucer wrote:

"But natheless som seiden that it was  
Wonder thing to mak of fern aisschen glas."  
("Squere's Tale.")

And in Harrison's *England*, ii. 6, more about fern-ash glass will be found. If the fern ash has the wonderful power of making transparent glass, invisibility is not very far away. But no doubt some one will at once be able to prove that the superstition is far older than the manufacture.

P. 329:

"Of this day? Why, as of a new play, if it end's well all's well."

Here is a reference to Shakspeare's play, I should suppose, and apparently a reference to it as a "new play." I have not Mr. Ingleby's *Centuri of Prayse* by me, so possibly I have been anticipated.

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## HISTORY.

- CORDIN, R. Histoire de Pey Berland et du pays bordelais au XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Bordeaux: imp. Rittaud. 7 fr.  
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## CORRESPONDENCE.

LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE AND MR.  
S. LANE-POOLE.

London: Aug. 26, 1888.

Will you kindly spare me space for a few lines touching matters personal?

I am again the victim (*Athenaeum*, August 25) of that everlasting *réclame*. Mr. S. Lane-Poole (I allow him the hyphen!) has contracted to "do" a life of Lord Stratford, and, *ergo*, he condemns me, in magisterial tone and a style of uncalled-for impertinence, to act as his "adv't." In relating how, by order of the late General Beatson, then commanding Bash-buzuks (*Bashi-bazuk* is the advertiser's own property), I volunteered to relieve Kars, how I laid the project before the "Great Eltchee," how it was received with the roughest language, and how my first plan was thoroughly "frustrated," I have told a true tale and no more. "A strange perversion of facts," cries the sapient criticaster, with that normal amenity which has won for him such honour and troops of unfriends—when his name was proposed as secretary to the R.A.S. all prophesied the speediest dissolution of that infirm body.

I am aware that Constantinople is *not* geographically "out of Europe." But when Mr. S. Lane-Poole shall have travelled a trifle more he may learn that ethnologically it is. In fact, most of South-Eastern Europe holds itself more or less non-European; and when a Montenegrin marries a Frenchwoman or a German, his family will tell you that he has wedded "a European."

"No one knows better than Sir R. Burton by what queer methods reputation may be annexed." Heavens, what English! And what may the man mean? But perhaps he alludes in his own silly, saltless, sneering way to my *Thousand Nights and a Night*, which has shown what the "uncle and master's" work should have been. Some two generations of *poules mouillées* have reprinted and republished Lane's "Arabian Notes" without having the simple honesty to correct a single *bévue*, or to abate one blunder; while they looked upon the *Arabian Nights* as their own especial rotten borough. But more of this in my tractate, "The Reviewer Reviewed," about to be printed as an appendix to my Supplemental Volume, No. vi. RICHARD F. BURTON.

## BYZANTINE INFLUENCE IN IRELAND.

Oxford: Aug. 20, 1888.

Can I enlist the help of any of the Irish scholars who have made so many valuable contributions to your pages in unravelling a clue which seems to promise results of no little interest and importance?