

THE GOLDEN BOOK MAGAZINE*

for January, 1931

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How a Roast Goose Vendor Was Paid

By FRANÇOIS RABELAIS (1483-1553)

AT PARIS, in the Roast-meat Cookery of the Petit Chastelet, before the cook-shop of one of the roast-meat sellers of that lane, a certain hungry Porter was eating his bread, after he had by parcels kept it awhile above the reek and steam of a fat goose on the spit, turning at a great fire, and found it so besmoked with the vapor, to be savory; which the Cook observing, took no notice, till after having ravined his Penny Loaf, whereof no morsel has been unsmokified, he was about discamping and going away: but by your leave, as the fellow thought to have departed thence shot-free, the Master-Cook laid hold upon him by the gorget, demanded payment for the smoke of his roast-meat. The Porter answered, that he had sustained no loss at all: that by what he had done there was no diminution made of the flesh, that he had taken nothing of his, and that therefore he was not indebted to him in anything: As for the smoke in question, that, although he had not been there, it would howsoever have been evaporated: Besides that, before that time it had never been seen nor heard, that roast-meat smoke was sold upon the streets of Paris. The Cook hereto replied that he was not obliged nor any way bound to feed and nourish for nought a Porter whom he had never seen before with the smoke of his roast-meat; and thereupon swore, that if he would not forthwith content and satisfy him with present payment for the repast which he had thereby got, that he would take his crooked staves from off his back: which instead of having loads thereafter laid upon them, should serve for fuel to his kitchen fires. While he was going about so to do, the Porter got out of his gripes, drew forth the knotty cudgel, and stood to his own defence. The altercation waxed hot in words, which moved the gaping hoydens of the sottish Parisians to run from all parts thereabouts to see what the issue would be of that babbling strife and contention.

In the interim of this dispute, to very good purpose, Seiny Jhon the Fool and Citizen of Paris, happened to be there, whom the Cook perceiving, said to the Porter, "Wilt thou refer and submit unto the noble Seiny Jhon, the decision of the difference and controversy which is betwixt us?"

"Yes, by the blood of a goose," answered the Porter, "I am content."

Seiny Jhon the fool, finding that the Cook and Porter had compromised the determination of their variance and debate to the discretion of his award and arbitrament; after that the reasons on either side

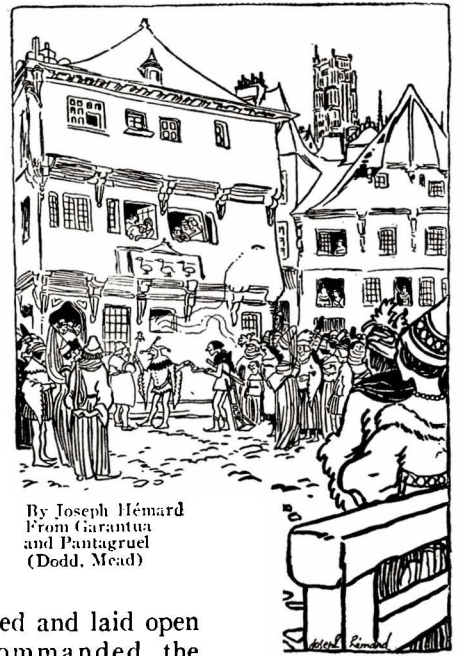
whereupon was grounded the mutual fierceness of their brawling jar had been to

the full displayed and laid open before him, commanded the

Porter to draw out of the fab of his belt a piece of money, if he had it. Whereupon the Porter immediately without delay, in reverence to the authority of such a judicious umpire, put the tenth part of a silver Phillip into his hand. This little Phillip Seiny Jhon took, then set it on his left shoulder, to try by feeling if it was of a sufficient weight: after that, laying it on the palm of his hand he made it ring and tingle, to understand by the ear if it was of a good alloy in the metal whereof it was composed: Thereafter he put it to the ball or apple of his left eye, to explore by the sight if it was well stamped and marked: all which being done, in a profound silence of the whole doltish people, who were there spectators of this pageantry, to the great hope of the Cook's and despair of the Porter's Prevalency in the suit that was in agitation, he finally caused the Porter to make it sound several times upon the stall of the Cook's shop.

Then with a presidential majesty holding his bauble (scepter-like) in his hand, muffling his head with a hood of marten skins, each side whereof had the resemblance of an ape's face, spruced up with ears of pasted paper, and having about his neck a buckled ruff, raised, furrowed, and ridged, with pointing sticks of the shape and fashion of small organ-pipes; he first, with all the force of his lungs, coughed two or three times, and then with an audible voice pronounced this following sentence, "The Court declareth, That the Porter, who ate his Bread at the Smoke of the Roast, hath civilly paid the Cook with the Sound of his Money: And the said Court Ordaineth, That every one return to his own Home, and attend his Business, without Cost and Charges, and for a Cause."

This verdict, award and arbitrament of the Parisian Fool, did appear so equitable, yea, so admirable to the aforesaid doctors, that they very much doubted, if the matter had been brought before the Sessions for Justice of the said Place, or that the Judges of the Rota at Rome had been umpires therein; or yet that the Areopagites themselves had been the deciders thereof, if by any one part, or all of them together, it had been so judicially sententiated and awarded.



By Joseph Hémond
From *Gargantua
and Pantagruel*
(Dodd, Mead)