

Gargantua and Pantagrue, Book V.

MASTER FRANCIS RABELAIS

**FIVE BOOKS OF THE LIVES,
HEROIC DEEDS AND SAYINGS OF**

**GARGANTUA AND HIS SON
PANTAGRUEL**

Book V.



“My so good wife is dead, who was the most *this*, the most *that*, that ever was in the world.’ With these words he did cry like a cow.”

THE WORKS OF
R A B E L A I S

FAITHFULLY TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

WITH

VARIORUM NOTES, AND



NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

GUSTAVE DORÉ.

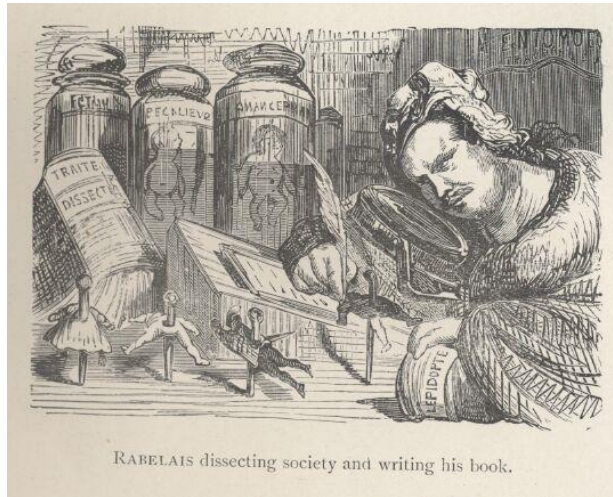
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**Translated into English by
Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty**

and Peter Antony Motteux

The text of the first Two Books of Rabelais has been reprinted from the first edition (1653) of Urquhart's translation. Footnotes initialled 'M.' are drawn from the Maitland Club edition (1838); other footnotes are by the translator. Urquhart's translation of Book III. appeared posthumously in 1693, with a new edition of Books I. and II., under Motteux's editorship. Motteux's rendering of Books IV. and V. followed in 1708. Occasionally (as the footnotes indicate) passages omitted by Motteux have been restored from the 1738 copy edited by Ozell.



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THE FIFTH BOOK

The Author's Prologue.

Indefatigable toppers, and you, thrice precious martyrs of the smock, give me leave to put a serious question to your worships while you are idly striking your codpieces, and I myself not much better employed. Pray, why is it that people say that men are not such sots nowadays as they were in the days of yore? Sot is an old word that signifies a dunce, dullard, jolthead, gull, wittol, or noddy, one without guts in his brains, whose cockloft is unfurnished, and, in short, a fool. Now would I know whether you would have us understand by this same saying, as indeed you logically may, that formerly men were fools and in this generation are grown wise? How many and what dispositions made them fools? How many and what dispositions were wanting to make 'em wise? Why were they fools? How should they be wise? Pray, how came you to know that men were formerly fools? How did you find that they are now wise? Who the devil made 'em fools? Who a God's name made 'em wise? Who d'ye think are most, those that loved mankind foolish, or those that love it wise? How long has it been wise? How long otherwise? Whence proceeded the foregoing folly? Whence the following wisdom? Why did the old folly end now, and no later? Why did the modern wisdom begin now, and no sooner? What were we the worse for the former folly? What the better for the succeeding wisdom? How should the ancient folly be come to nothing? How should this same new wisdom be started up and established?

Now answer me, an't please you. I dare not adjure you in stronger terms, reverend sirs, lest I make your pious fatherly worships in the least uneasy. Come, pluck up a good heart; speak the truth and shame the devil. Be cheery, my lads; and if you are for me, take me off three or five bumpers of the best, while I make a halt at the first part of the sermon; then answer my question. If you are not for me, avaunt! avoid, Satan! For I swear by my great-grandmother's placket (and that's a horrid oath), that if you don't

help me to solve that puzzling problem, I will, nay, I already do repent having proposed it; for still I must remain nettled and gravelled, and a devil a bit I know how to get off. Well, what say you? I'faith, I begin to smell you out. You are not yet disposed to give me an answer; nor I neither, by these whiskers. Yet to give some light into the business, I'll e'en tell you what had been anciently foretold in the matter by a venerable doctor, who, being moved by the spirit in a prophetic vein, wrote a book ycleped the Prelatical Bagpipe. What d'ye think the old fornicator saith? Hearken, you old noddies, hearken now or never.

The jubilee's year, when all like fools were shorn,
Is about thirty supernumerary.
O want of veneration! fools they seemed,
But, persevering, with long breves, at last
No more they shall be gaping greedy fools.
For they shall shell the shrub's delicious fruit,
Whose flower they in the spring so much had feared.

Now you have it, what do you make on't? The seer is ancient, the style laconic, the sentences dark like those of Scotus, though they treat of matters dark enough in themselves. The best commentators on that good father take the jubilee after the thirtieth to be the years that are included in this present age till 1550 (there being but one jubilee every fifty years). Men shall no longer be thought fools next green peas season.

The fools, whose number, as Solomon certifies, is infinite, shall go to pot like a parcel of mad bedlamites as they are; and all manner of folly shall have an end, that being also numberless, according to Avicenna, maniae infinitae sunt species. Having been driven back and hidden towards the centre during the rigour of the winter, 'tis now to be seen on the surface, and buds out like the trees. This is as plain as a nose in a man's face; you know it by experience; you see it. And it was formerly found out by that great good man Hippocrates, Aphorism Verae etenim maniae, &c. This world therefore wisifying itself, shall no longer dread the flower and blossoms of every coming spring, that is, as you may piously believe,

bumper in hand and tears in eyes, in the woeful time of Lent, which used to keep them company.

Whole cartloads of books that seemed florid, flourishing, and flowery, gay, and gaudy as so many butterflies, but in the main were tiresome, dull, soporiferous, irksome, mischievous, crabbed, knotty, puzzling, and dark as those of whining Heraclitus, as unintelligible as the numbers of Pythagoras, that king of the bean, according to Horace; those books, I say, have seen their best days and shall soon come to nothing, being delivered to the executing worms and merciless petty chandlers; such was their destiny, and to this they were predestinated.

In their stead beans in cod are started up; that is, these merry and fructifying Pantagruelian books, so much sought nowadays in expectation of the following jubilee's period; to the study of which writings all people have given their minds, and accordingly have gained the name of wise.

Now I think I have fairly solved and resolved your problem; then reform, and be the better for it. Hem once or twice like hearts of oak; stand to your pan-puddings, and take me off your bumpers, nine go-downs, and huzza! since we are like to have a good vintage, and misers hang themselves. Oh! they will cost me an estate in hempen collars if fair weather hold. For I hereby promise to furnish them with twice as much as will do their business on free cost, as often as they will take the pains to dance at a rope's end providently to save charges, to the no small disappointment of the finisher of the law.

Now, my friends, that you may put in for a share of this new wisdom, and shake off the antiquated folly this very moment, scratch me out of your scrolls and quite discard the symbol of the old philosopher with the golden thigh, by which he has forbidden you to eat beans; for you may take it for a truth granted among all professors in the science of good eating, that he enjoined you not to taste of them only with the same kind intent that a certain fresh-water physician had when he did forbid to Amer, late Lord of Camelotiere, kinsman to the lawyer of that name, the wing of the

partridge, the rump of the chicken, and the neck of the pigeon, saying, *Ala mala, rumpum dubium, collum bonum, pelle remota*. For the duncical dog-leech was so selfish as to reserve them for his own dainty chops, and allowed his poor patients little more than the bare bones to pick, lest they should overload their squeamish stomachs.

To the heathen philosopher succeeded a pack of Capuchins, monks who forbid us the use of beans, that is, Pantagruelian books. They seem to follow the example of Philoxenus and Gnatho, one of whom was a Sicilian of fulsome memory, the ancient master-builders of their monastic cram-gut voluptuousness, who, when some dainty bit was served up at a feast, filthily used to spit on it, that none but their nasty selves might have the stomach to eat of it, though their liquorish chops watered never so much after it.

So those hideous, snotty, phthisicky, eaves-dropping, musty, moving forms of mortification, both in public and private, curse those dainty books, and like toads spit their venom upon them.

Now, though we have in our mother-tongue several excellent works in verse and prose, and, heaven be praised! but little left of the trash and trumpery stuff of those duncical mumblers of ave-maries and the barbarous foregoing Gothic age, I have made bold to choose to chirrup and warble my plain ditty, or, as they say, to whistle like a goose among the swans, rather than be thought deaf among so many pretty poets and eloquent orators. And thus I am prouder of acting the clown, or any other under-part, among the many ingenious actors in that noble play, than of herding among those mutes, who, like so many shadows and ciphers, only serve to fill up the house and make up a number, gaping and yawning at the flies, and pricking up their lugs, like so many Arcadian asses, at the striking up of the music; thus silently giving to understand that their fopships are tickled in the right place.

Having taken this resolution, I thought it would not be amiss to move my Diogenical tub, that you might not accuse me of living without example. I

see a swarm of our modern poets and orators, your Colinets, Marots, Drouets, Saint Gelais, Salels, Masuels, and many more, who, having commenced masters in Apollo's academy on Mount Parnassus, and drunk brimmers at the Caballin fountain among the nine merry Muses, have raised our vulgar tongue, and made it a noble and everlasting structure. Their works are all Parian marble, alabaster, porphyry, and royal cement; they treat of nothing but heroic deeds, mighty things, grave and difficult matters, and this in a crimson, alamode, rhetorical style. Their writings are all divine nectar, rich, racy, sparkling, delicate, and luscious wine. Nor does our sex wholly engross this honour; ladies have had their share of the glory; one of them, of the royal blood of France, whom it were a profanation but to name here, surprises the age at once by the transcendent and inventive genius in her writings and the admirable graces of her style. Imitate those great examples if you can; for my part I cannot. Everyone, you know, cannot go to Corinth. When Solomon built the temple, all could not give gold by handfuls.

Since then 'tis not in my power to improve our architecture as much as they, I am e'en resolved to do like Renault of Montauban: I'll wait on the masons, set on the pot for the masons, cook for the stone-cutters; and since it was not my good luck to be cut out for one of them, I will live and die the admirer of their divine writings.

As for you, little envious prigs, snarling bastards, puny critics, you'll soon have railed your last; go hang yourselves, and choose you out some well-spread oak, under whose shade you may swing in state, to the admiration of the gaping mob; you shall never want rope enough. While I here solemnly protest before my Helicon, in the presence of my nine mistresses the Muses, that if I live yet the age of a dog, eked out with that of three crows, sound wind and limbs, like the old Hebrew captain Moses, Xenophilus the musician, and Demonax the philosopher, by arguments no ways impertinent, and reasons not to be disputed, I will prove, in the teeth of a parcel of brokers and retailers of ancient rhapsodies and such mouldy trash, that our vulgar tongue is not so mean, silly, inept, poor, barren, and

contemptible as they pretend. Nor ought I to be afraid of I know not what botchers of old threadbare stuff, a hundred and a hundred times clouted up and pieced together; wretched bunglers that can do nothing but new-vamp old rusty saws; beggarly scavengers that rake even the muddiest canals of antiquity for scraps and bits of Latin as insignificant as they are often uncertain. Beseeching our grandees of Witland that, as when formerly Apollo had distributed all the treasures of his poetical exchequer to his favourites, little hulchbacked Aesop got for himself the office of apologue-monger; in the same manner, since I do not aspire higher, they would not deny me that of puny rhyarographer, or riffraff follower of the sect of Pyreicus.

I dare swear they will grant me this; for they are all so kind, so good-natured, and so generous, that they'll ne'er boggle at so small a request. Therefore, both dry and hungry souls, pot and trenchermen, fully enjoying those books, perusing, quoting them in their merry conventicles, and observing the great mysteries of which they treat, shall gain a singular profit and fame; as in the like case was done by Alexander the Great with the books of prime philosophy composed by Aristotle.

O rare! belly on belly! what swillers, what twisters will there be!

Then be sure all you that take care not to die of the pip, be sure, I say, you take my advice, and stock yourselves with good store of such books as soon as you meet with them at the booksellers; and do not only shell those beans, but e'en swallow them down like an opiate cordial, and let them be in you; I say, let them be within you; then you shall find, my beloved, what good they do to all clever shellers of beans.

Here is a good handsome basketful of them, which I here lay before your worships; they were gathered in the very individual garden whence the former came. So I beseech you, reverend sirs, with as much respect as was ever paid by dedicating author, to accept of the gift, in hopes of somewhat better against next visit the swallows give us.

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