

NOTES FROM BOOKS.RABELAIS W. F. Smith. 1895

(Letter Script).

From: W. F. SMITH.2 rue Jeanne D'Albret,
La Rochelle.

July 26, 1919.

Dear Osler,

I was very pleased to get your letter, but very sorry to learn that you are suffering from bronchitis; I know only too well the discomfort arising, from affections of the "wind instruments" of the body; but I trust you will recover your usual good health. La Rochelle ought to be an attractive place, but it is like so many towns in France (Lyons, Poitiers, and others) utterly steeped in commercialism. There seems very little literary life outside Paris; though my small experience goes for little; but what spoils France for us Northerners is that the French are gründlich dirty. Only the Touring Club has made many places in France really acceptable, and its success is only partial.

I am enclosing a post card with a picture of the three towers of "Lychmopolis" (see bk. v. c. 33). R. seems to have visited nearly all the places within reach from Poitiers but records very little save their name so that it would be little use going the round of them. I had already seen Chinon and the environs in 1891; in fact I finished the last bit of my translation of the Sa'machia there. Sinais, La Devinière, Seuillé(?) the Abbey Close La Roche Clernaud, L'Isle Bouchard I had already visited. I wanted to fix the Bois de Vede and the Saulsage, where Gargantua was born, but the heat was overpowering. The new map in the big French edition is, however, very good.

Madame and I most heartily wish you many happy returns of your birthday. How delighted I should have been to have done so in praesentia! (I don't think that is quite good Latin, but I am very rusty now). What a charming present those two volumes, and all that they meant!

Your address has not reached me yet but will probably be here in a day or so. We are leaving here on Wednesday for Bordeaux, but only to look round; we think of trying Arcaehon(?) if it is not too hot or too dear. Algeria has been suggested to us for the winter. One does not want coal there, and we are told that the prices are not excessive. What do you think of the French exchange at 31f.? But the rise in prices more than neutralizes it.

P.T.O.

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My former attempt at publishing Rabelais cost me £200, so I am rather shy. 750 copies were printed and only 500 sold, scarcely one outside the Universities. My present work would be in 5 vols. like the 1711 one of Le Duchet, and I should wish it to give all the writings in chronological order, but it would cost me at least £500, and might involve me in a prosecution, as a former one did Chatto and Windux.

A few cruces remain unsolved; I think one or two are the result of mistakes on the part of F. R; but there is now very little unexplained. If only the English climate were not so detestable, I might even now finish my work.

With our kindest regards and wishes for your speedy and complete recovery,

Sincerely yours,

W. F. Smith.