

**THE TEACHER'S  
RABELAIS, PP. 5-79**

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The Teacher's Rabelais, pp. 5-79 by Geraldine Hodgson

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**GERALDINE HODGSON**

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The  
Teacher's Rabelais, French

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## PREFACE

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The History of Education is coming to its own as people perceive more and more clearly how strong a stimulus the story of former efforts, the dream of earlier aspirants, can afford. Probably, as the subject is more thoroughly studied, one fact will emerge,—not peculiar to it indeed, but belonging to every field of human endeavour,—the fact that there is nothing new under the sun.

As the student passes the ages in review, as he listens to the drastic dictum of Heraclitus, "Much learning does not teach sense", as he notes Plato's recommendation that the beginning is the chief matter especially in a young and tender thing, as the words of Montaigne fall on his ear, as he peruses Mulcaster's stinging sentences, as he imbibes the maxims of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, he may be struck by the truth that the "right way" has always been known to the wise; while equally the wrong way has been pursued with strange persistence by the rank and file.

Burke once remarked that there are no discoveries to be made in morals. Probably, in his sense, there are none to be made in the sphere of education. But something in the direction of appreciation, if not of creation and discovery, may be achieved if the ancient ways be explored, if the forgotten past be recovered.

## RABELAIS

if the recurrent wisdom be extracted, diffused; if the minds of ordinary men and women become penetrated with the convictions of the few. One way of securing this aim is the issue of cheap "texts". Most people, capable of developing into teachers, can do their own criticism for themselves, if only the great author be brought within their reach. No edition of the pedagogic portions of Rabelais seems to exist in English. The present volume is an attempt to fill the blank, which will probably be felt increasingly as "the training of secondary teachers" becomes a wider and more powerful movement.

I desire to acknowledge here a general debt to the *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature française*, published under the direction of M. le Professeur L. Petit de Julleville; and a particular debt to my friend Mademoiselle Louise Walker, Officier d'Académie, who helped me in one or two points.

GERALDINE HODGSON.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,  
BRISTOL, July, 1904.

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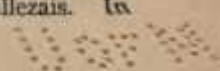
## INTRODUCTION

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### OUTLINE OF RABELAIS' LIFE

The date of Rabelais' birth is disputed: it has been assigned by various writers to the years 1483, 1490, 1495: the first being that commonly accepted.

The facts concerning his birth and early youth are not known with any certainty: it is believed that some of his school-days were passed at the Abbaye de Seuillé, and some at another monastery near Angers, where the brothers Du Bellay, and Geoffroy d'Estissac, afterwards Bishop of Maillezais, were among his companions. The first indisputable mention of his name occurs in a deed of purchase of half an inn, which was effected by the monks of the Franciscan Monastery at Fontenay-le-Comte. The name of François Rabelais is among the signatures. The date is 1519, and he appears as a priest.

The year 1524 is of importance, as that in which the Pope, Clement VII, gave him leave to change his Order, and, as a natural consequence, his dwelling-place. He became a Benedictine, and moved to the more learned monastery of Maillezais. 

his former Franciscan house he and a chosen friend had given offence by their devotion to Greek; they were suspected, as *Hellenists*. The notion that heresy might lurk in the classics, that impiety might issue from great learning, was the anxiety which in the days of the Renaissance haunted the minds of the less instructed, less cultivated part of the religious world, and which excited the bitter animosity of the irreligious professing religion. It was this fear of the "new learning" which caused the removal by his nervous father of Thomas More from Oxford, whither Cardinal Morton had sent him.

It is this which Erasmus ridicules in his *Colloquy*, "The Priest and the Learned Lady". The priest objects to her room as inappropriate to "a lady and a mother of a family", and it appears that it is the books which render it so. "But", she exclaims, "you have lived long, you are a priest and a courtier, have you never seen books in great ladies' rooms?" And then the lurking dread leaps into daylight: "I have seen them, but written in French: in your room I find Greek and Latin". And it is this same feeling which raised the ire of Rabelais' Franciscan associates.

When we remember the superior learning of the Benedictine Order, so carefully fostered in its beginning by the rule of St. Benedict, including in the six matters with which the rule dealt (viz. obedience, silence, humility, worship, study, and manual work) at least two which are directly educational, while it would be difficult to exclude