

COMPAGNIE FÉRMÈRE
DES ÉTABLISSEMENTS THERMAUX DE LUCHON



Luchon, le 28 July/82

My dear Mother,

I have now been several days at this place, & propose leaving tomorrow. At Toulouse I took a circular ticket on the Ch. de Fer de Midi, & am consequently now fixed to make the following round, though the stopping places are of course optional — Toulouse, Luchon, Bigorre, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Pau, Montauban Toulouse. I had intended leaving yesterday, but stayed to make an excursion to the Lac d'Oo, & the delay is not to be regretted, for

The Scenery here & on the way is very
 fine. I engaged a seat in a sort of
 public Carriage which goes every day,
 & found myself with two young
 frenchmen so that the conversation,
 so far as I was concerned, was not
 very animated. The last two miles or
 so have to be got over on horseback or
 on foot, & as the day was warm
 the former seemed preferable. The
 people here are dreadful beggars. We
 must have had at least twenty at
 different times assailing the Carriage
 for Coppers. Then you bargain for your
 horse. When you get to the little cinn
 at the lake, the man in charge of the
 horses, who calls himself a guide,
 requires something to drink at your
 expense, after his arduous exertions.
 Then you find that you have to pay
 30 Centimes all round, including horses
 & guide, for the privilege of looking at
 the lake. This goes to keep the roads in repair

& so need not be grudging. Then
 when you are ready to go there is
 something to pay for oats to the
 horses, & a stable-boy to be remembered.
 Then a gratuity to the "guide" when
 you leave the horses, & partly a
pour boire to the Coachman.

This is one of the greatest summer
 health resorts of this part of France,
 & there are yearly ^(every summer) about 10,000 visitors
 to Lez-les-Bains alone. The nucleus of the
 affair is of course the existence of
 various hot & ~~hot~~ mineral springs,
 known since the time of the Romans.
 There are a great many fine hotels,
 & innumerable furnished apartments.
~~There~~ Most of the visitors are of course
 French, but there are a few Spaniards
 & Italians & a very few English &
 Americans. People generally come
 here to spend some time, & the hotels
 are consequently more like boarding-houses.

than is usual on this side of the
 Atlantic. One has a regular seat at
 the table & if you wish to do so you
 can make the acquaintance of the
 others in the same hotel without much
 difficulty. The Valley is small & closed
 in with pretty high mountains, & there
 are innumerable pretty walks &
 excursions to be made. The establishment
 of baths is a large building erected
 by the town (a place of about 4000 inhabitants)
 & surrounded by a well kept garden
 which is free to everyone. There is
 besides a really magnificent Casino
 where you may either become a
 subscriber or pay a franc a day
 Entrance. This is also surrounded
 by a garden, which is in a sense
 private. The Casino includes all
 the attractions of a good Club, reading
 & writing rooms, restaurant, besides
 others such as a post & telegraph office,
 theatre, ball room, gaming tables, &

a Small Museum of Pyrenean
 objects, models of Mountains &c
 There is music in the evening in
 the garden of the Establishment. In
 the afternoon & evening in the garden
 of the Curios, & afterwards in the
 ball room for those who choose to
 dance, besides fire-works &
 fire-balloons, puppet-shows &
 magic lanterns in the open air
 for the children. I have gone into
 the thing at some length, as I suppose
 this will find you at Metz, &
 you may be interested in knowing
 something about a French watering
 place.

When I saw Ella Kempf in London
 I suggested again to her the idea
 of passing part of a winter in
 Canada, & I think it possible
 that she might consent to do so if

invited. You know she is quite delicate & almost invariably has some trouble during the Scotch winter.

I merely mention this for your information. Please don't think that I have committed myself in any way in the matter, or that it is anything particular to me, one way or other. Unless it would be of some personal gratification to you nothing more need be said about it.

Your affectionate Son
George

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