



The Adventures of Gerard

Arthur Conan Doyle

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The Adventures of Gerard is a compilation of short stories that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote regarding a French Brigadier named Etienne Gerard who thinks very highly of himself as can be reflected in how he told his stories. The book is divided into chapters containing different segments of his life as a soldier under the leadership of Napoleon together with his personal exploits and the romance that swept his way in between. Typical of war stories, some depicts bloody encounters with his enemies and how he was able to escape those encounters. However, there were soft moments particularly his encounter with women along the way even if she is from their enemy.

The Adventures of Gerard Details

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From Reader Review The Adventures of Gerard for online ebook

Jim says

There are 8 stories in this collection, but I only listened to the first one & then quit.

The narrator isn't great & he's slow, even at 1.5x speed. I could probably put up with that, but there is a background haze whenever he speaks & complete silence when he doesn't. I'm guessing that Tantor tried to up the quality on this from something with a much lower bit rate. That also means the different voices & accents are sometime blurred to incoherence. The two are irritating beyond belief.

I was expecting something funny. It is, vaguely, at times. Overall, it's pretty boring.

David says

"And I, oh, my friends, I was magnificent!" Brigadier Gerard

Brigadier Gerard is one of the most humorously vain characters in Western literature. Following the backlash he faced for killing Sherlock Holmes in 1893, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle began writing about the exploits of Gerard. Although the first story of Gerard was written in 1894, the perils and triumphs in **The Adventures of Brigadier Gerard** collection were written from 1900-1910.

"And I, oh, my friends, I was magnificent! What words can I use to do justice to my own bearing at that supreme instant of my life? So coldly aware, so deadly cool, so clear in brain and ready in hand."

"She was an exquisite beauty. And when I, Etienne Gerard, use such a word as exquisite, my friends, it has meaning. I have judgment. I have memories. I have the means of comparison. Of all the women who have loved me, there are not twenty of whom I could apply such a term as that. But I say again that Lucia was exquisite!"

It's hard to imagine another character- literary or real- who manages unceasingly to self-congratulate himself on his bravery, prowess with women, swordsmanship skills, and overall valor. But he displays his conceit so matter-of-factly and so devoid of arrogance that he manages only to endear himself to the reader and add humor to his exploits.

What Doyle created is a satirical character who exhibits the stereotypical behavior of a Frenchman in the mind of the English. Etienne's supposed dashing appearance and bravura are highly exaggerated to great comic effect.

"In victory one does not understand the horror of war. It is only in the cold chill of defeat that it is brought home to you."

Doyle also studied the campaigns of Napoleon- in whose army Gerard fights with unreserved loyalty- in preparation for these stories. His description of the aftermath of the Battle of Waterloo is a surreal moment in otherwise humorous stories. Doyle's vivid account- told through Gerard- of the battlefield at the end of the fighting, in all its horror, most certainly is drawn from eye witness sources.

So, is **The Adventures of Brigadier Gerard** satire? short stories? historical fiction? Yes.

I purchased this audio CD on a whim and- while not something I'd want a steady diet of- did enjoy these stories immensely. It's hard to imagine that Rupert Degas, who read this audio book, could be outdone in narration. He simply brings the vanities of Gerard to life. My four star rating really is the result of Doyle's success: he created a character, at times, too conceited to bear.

I would recommend the stories of Brigadier Gerard, first of all, to anyone who's a fan of Arthur Conan Doyle. Although Gerard obviously hasn't risen in popularity to the same level as Sherlock Holmes, he's eminently entertaining and hilarious at the very least.

Then, I'd recommend the Brigadier to anyone who needs a respite from the heavy lifting of difficult literature. These stories can be read in a short time and the audio version makes for great listening while driving, exercising, etc.

And while I told myself I wouldn't purchase the collection of earlier stories, **The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard** are now sitting on my shelf waiting to be enjoyed. It's likely to be a while before I listen to them. But, I will, sooner or later, engage these early exploits of Gerard to learn how he grew to prominence in Napoleon's army.

Julia says

First published in 1902, The Adventures of Gerard are the autobiographical reminiscences of an old fictional brigadier soldier who served under Napoleon. He never hesitates to embellish his own bravado, importance, and attractiveness to the ladies, to such an extent that it can't help but be humorous. Quite a change from Sherlock Holmes.

Lavender says

More stories with Colonel Gerard and his exploits in the military under Napoleon.

Julian Cribb says

One probably has to be English to get the most out of Etienne Gerard, who is one of Conan Doyle's most beautifully-drawn characters (as good as Sir Nigel or even Sherlock) and a wonderfully bitchy British satire on the French. Etienne is an old Napoleonic grognard who attributes much of the Emperor's success to himself, gallant beyond belief, with a gallic overestimation of his abilities, charms and achievements to rival Cyrano. If you understand the centuries-old Franco-British rivalry, you will revel in his adventures. The episode of the fox, especially, brought tears to my eyes. Gerard fumbles and brags his way through the Napoleonic wars, managing to make a complete cock of just about everything yet somehow escaping with the credit. If you enjoyed RFDelderfield's 'Seven men of Gascony' or the brilliant Ridley Scott movie 'The Duellists', you'll get a buzz out of this over-wrought Hussar.

Phil Clymer says

I just finished The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard and The Adventures of Gerard. Gerard is a fictional underling of Napoleon. He's a mixture between Superman and The Shell Answer Man, he modestly admits he's the best swordsman in the Empire, he is a real Boy Scout/knight in shining armor. In a series of escapades he is as likely to best his adversaries by wit as by sword. The stories are well written and fast paced. These books have been overshadowed by Sherlock! READ THEM!

James says

The stories are fast moving and - given they were designed to be 'historical' at the time of writing, they haven't really dated. But the cloth-brained and pompously preening lead character (and yes, I realise that's the point of the stories) can only really be taken in small doses before he becomes insufferable!

Manuel Moro says

Puro estilo Doyle. Más aventuras de este particular militar francés. Emotivos capítulos finales reflejo del final de una época histórica.

Roxanne says

Doyle created the unstoppable Etienne Gerard, a colonel who serves under Napoleon. Doyle really captured the audience with his courageous (and kind of arrogant but still fun) Etienne Gerard. I really felt like I was transported back in time. There were a couple of other stories but they were not included in this set or version that I have. They are:

"The Marriage of the Brigadier"

"Uncle Bernac"

Karen says

I think these stories are fun. I saw there is an annotated version, which I think would be helpful since I would enjoy checking out the facts from French (or British) history. I think it is hysterical and fascinating that Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a series from a "French" perspective and does such a great job with this comedic character. Brigadier Gerard reminds me a bit of Inspector Clousseau, Maxwell Smart (of Get Smart) and Monty Python, but Gerard has an unbelievably inflated ego. He is sincerely and blindly full of himself, but not in the usual demanding, selfish, obnoxious manner of true narcissists. Each story puts Gerard in an impossible situation, but he manages to escape anyway (although many others around him are not so fortunate). These satirical stories were originally published serially, then later compiled into books.

Paula says

Gerard was an interesting fellow, but he thought quite a lot of himself.

Amusing and entertaining.

Terry says

At Waterloo, although, in a sense, I was present, I was unable to fight, and the enemy was victorious. It is not for me to say that there is a connection between these two things. You know me too well, my friends, to imagine that I would make such a claim. But it gives matter for thought, and some have drawn flattering conclusions from it.

Thus does our old friend Etienne Gerard begin his penultimate tale of adventure, reminiscing convivially about that horrible day at Waterloo. His characteristic reserve and modesty are obviously on full display, for is not humility one of the greatest traits of this very great man? Not on your life...and we wouldn't have it any other way. I was once again struck by the ways in which Gerard is so similar in character to Harry Paget Flashman, and yet also so diametrically opposed to him. Where Flashy blunders treacherously from misadventure to misadventure in a cowardly attempt to escape danger while still managing to cover himself in glory and praise, Gerard nobly blunders from misadventure to misadventure in a valiant attempt to singlehandedly win every battle in the Napoleonic wars and manages to escape with his life despite his foolhardiness and obtuseness. Some glory adheres to him, but it's unclear how much is truly universal in its acclaim and how much is only in his own mind. Of course, there's usually a woman involved as well. And she is always smitten to the core by our brave and dashing hussar. Who wouldn't be?

Conan Doyle certainly seems to have had a knack for creating memorable, even great, characters. Sherlock Holmes is of course an icon, a literary giant that has stood the test of time. I hope that Gerard does as well, for while he is certainly less well-known than his consulting detective confrere, he is no less intriguing a character. As with Holmes it is due mostly to his faults that Gerard ought to win a place in your hearts and

minds. A bigger braggart and narcissist could little be imagined (Harry Paget Flashman notwithstanding), and yet he is a lovable egoist for all of that. Gerard's heart is always in the right place and if he happens to believe that everyone (even his enemies) truly love him, is he really, perhaps, all that wrong? He is, certainly, an eminently likable old fellow.

This is sadly the last volume of Gerard's adventures and it runs the gamut of chivalrous exploits undertaken in the name of a lady, to affairs of honour (in the name of a lady), and let's not forget the martial exploits in the name of the Emperor which of course override all other concerns (though sometimes a lady *is* involved). It's a pleasure to listen as the Brigadier recalls his days of glory and for all of their inherent humour (usually indiscernable to Gerard) there is also some pathos evoked by them, for it is apparent that this jovial old grognard living on half-pay and memories alone has nothing else save the planting of cabbages with which to while away his final days, for he remained loyal to his beloved emperor and his own prospects and standing faded away as the star of Napoleon itself dimmed and disappeared. This last was certainly not without some attempts by Gerard to undo the wrong done to his master, but that's a tale you will have to hear for yourself. I urge you to do so, the Brigadier is always a genial companion. Ah, by the bye you don't mind springing for a bottle of burgundy, do you? There's a good fellow.

Also posted at Shelf Inflicted

Joseph says

Listening to an old soldier recount his proud adventures. They're gripping and full of action.

Matthew Hurley says

Really enjoyable. Doyle's fictitious soldier of the Napoleonic Wars is based on actual written accounts from cavalry officers in that army, during those campaigns. Etienne Gerard, a hussar of the French Army, is dashing, flamboyant, and unbelievably full of himself. In every life-and-death scenario, his actions are determined by how much glory his death in the present circumstances would bring, and hardly a daring episode goes by in which his heart is not swelled with the thought of his own nobility, courage, or glory. These short stories are historically interesting, the action is cleverly done and exciting, and the hero and his comic comportment are very entertaining.

Raro de Concurso says

Libro muy divertido. Tanto por el humor y la ironía a costa de ese oficial francés de los Húsares de Napoleón, como por las rocambolescas situaciones en las que le mete.

Formato de folletín tipo Alejandro Dumas (héroe en apuros muy serios que siempre sale airoso gracias al ingenio, la fortuna y el valor), pero con una vuelta de tuerca humorística.

Conan Doyle se lo debió pasar mejor escribiendo este personaje, que nosotros leyéndolo :)

