

to Normandy. The station-master stood on the platform waving his flag.

Suddenly a merry voice was heard singing loudly a well-known tune. It was Gaspard on his way to the front.

The clerk Burette, whom he had twitted at the station, became his pal, and Gaspard, who did everything thoroughly, was devoted to him. When Burette was mortally wounded, Gaspard himself also hit, carried him to the dressing station.

Burette's hands were already cold, and his breath like an icy mist.

The surgeon came, followed by two stretcher-bearers.

"Take this man up gently and carry him to the ambulance."

"Yes . . . oh . . . gently," said Burette. "Gaspard, put me on the stretcher will you?"

"You bet I will, pal."

He picked him up again, putting his arms tenderly about the poor mutilated body. A light appeared in Burette's eyes, and kissing his friend on the cheek, he said:

"You . . . are the best friend I ever had."

Before returning to the front, Gaspard was accorded three days' leave.

Like a good watch-dog, Gaspard was wont to grumble even when he was pleased.

"Three days . . . just three days. I wonder if it would have cost them too much ink to add one more to the three. He looked at his mother with tender eyes and said in a jovial tone:

"Well, old lady, I see you're still cock-eyed."

To Marie, the mother of his child, he suddenly felt such gratitude to the good creature who had taken such care of his son, that he said: "I've got an idea. Nothing like war to give you an idea.

. . . Listen, Bibiche" (this was his pet name for her), "don't you think it would be better . . . if we went out and got married?"

"Yes. . . oh, yes!"

Gaspard, with all the frankness of his simple soul went on: "When you think of it, you might as well do it. . . Later on we might forget about it."

So in earnest was he that he overstayed his leave and a lively scene ensued with his commanding officer. It was characteristic of Gaspard that he came near to breaking his marriage vows as soon as they were made, but Bibiche came into her own again, and he returned to her and the boy. He was happy to be with them again.

The book concludes with Gaspard once more in the bosom of his family, insisting that Bibiche should box the child's ears.

"Sure he's putting on airs because he's got two legs and I've only got one. We've gone and had ourselves cut to pieces, and these youngsters are the ones who will reap the benefits."

This chronicle of a *poilu* is very impressive, because it brings into prominence the complexities of a character both volatile and determined.

H. H.

#### COMING EVENTS.

January 19th.—Central Midwives Board: Penal Cases. Offices, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, Dartmouth Street, S.W. 11 a.m.

January 20th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses: The Winter General Meeting, Clinical Theatre, 3.0 p.m.; Social Gathering, Nurses' Sitting Room.

January 26th.—The Matrons' Council: Annual Meeting, 4.0 p.m.; Tea, 5.0; Discussion. 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

January 27th.—Meeting in Dublin to discuss the College of Nursing. Arguments for and against.

January 31st.—The Royal Sanitary Institute, Session 1917. Discussion: "The Physical Welfare of Children after Infancy from National, Social, and Public Health Standpoints," to be opened by W. Leslie Mackenzie, M.A., M.D. Chair, Sir George Newman, M.D., D.P.H., 90, Buckingham Palace Road. 4.30 p.m.

February 3rd.—National Union of Trained Nurses: Annual Meeting of London Branch, 46, Marsham Street, Westminster, 2.45; Address on Nurses' Registration Bills, 3.30 p.m.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

#### MATRONS AND NURSING ECONOMICS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In this hospital all sorts and conditions of nurses are working—trained and untrained—and within the last few weeks letters addressed from the Matrons of Guy's Hospital and the London Hospital to nurses trained in those hospitals have been discussed. The former urges every Guy's nurse to join the College of Nursing without delay; the latter issues pages and pages of arguments why "Londoners" should not do so! Why do these ladies assume the right to dictate to nurses trained at these respective hospitals, and to deal with the question of professional organization in so partisan a manner? Then we have the lay-edited nursing Press bombarding us weekly, impertinently directing us what we are to do under direst penalties. "A plague on both your Houses!" say we.

But on one matter apparently all are agreed—the status of the trained nurse must be sacrificed to the socially influential V.A.D. Writes Miss Haughton: "One of the objects of the College is to institute and conduct examinations in all branches of women's work connected with hospitals. (This may include examinations of the so-called V.A.D. worker, almoners, examinations in massage, cooking and any other special subject.)" Examinations mean certificates—how, then, about the promised "One Portal and Central Exam.?"

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