

## THE PATRIOTS.

THEY lurched on to an eastbound tramcar somewhere in the region of Duke Street. Man and wife they were, and it was clear that in one thing at least they were not divided. Not that they carried what some people would consider "too much," just sufficient, rather, to wash out those temperamental discrepancies which one could see might manifest themselves under less happy conditions.

Their dialogue was carried on without reference to the other passengers. They spoke *at* each other, as it were, rather than *to* each other. It cannot be said of them that they spoke coherently, or that the interchange of views had much connection; still, they spoke, and they spoke with candour and emphasis. I am under the necessity of transcribing the conversation in the form in which it came to me, with, of course, the elision of certain words of doubtful etymology. Here it is:—

HE: "The Boor War, he was sayin' to me—the Boor War!—what did he ken about the Boor War? A cake-walk!—that's whit I ca' it—a cake-walk! An' I should ken, for I was there—ay, an' I've been in Egypt an' India an' Palestine an' France an' . . ."

SHE: "An' I was sayin' to her; 'whit's a' this talk about the Royal Princess—eh?"

HE: "Ay, George West's the boy!"

SHE: "Ye wad think ye were drunk, Bob; it's the Royal baby I'm talkin' about—no' the Princess pantomime."

HE: "Ay, French, Plumer, Byng, Kitchener, Roberts —I've served under them a'—in all parts o' the world mind ye that—all parts, day an' nicht, an' a' nicht."

SHE: "Sic a fash about a baby, an' me's had six o' them—six—an' naebody ever said 'thank ye'—naw, no' even 'thank you!' Ye wid think . . ."

HE: "All parts o' the world I'm tellin' ye, an' its aye been the same—the ither side never fechts fair! There was the Boors, hidin' behin' kopjes! Mind ye—hidin' behin' kopjes! Whit wey wid they no' come oot an' let us hae a bash at them? Ha! Ha! An' us a' there waitin' for them, an' we never saw them yet as ye might say—Naw! I ken whit I ken, an' I'm tellin' ye thae Boors took a fair rise oot o' us. D'ye mind Spion Kop—naw! But I dae—Buller! Wait till Buller strikes!—the bulldog breed; we were mair like rabbits than bulldugs—rabbits I'm sayin'—an' tame yins at that—nithin' but a lot o' baw-heids—that's whit we were!"

SHE: "An that yin MacDonald—fleein' about the country like a juck—as if he couldna walk like the rest o' us! Whit's his legs for? That's whit I said to yon Harper yin—singin' the Rid Flag, an' her man on the buroo!"

HE: "It was the same auld story at Jutland—the same auld story. Whit wey did the Germans rin awa? Can ye tell me that? We never rin awa'—naw! We just staun' an' let them shoot us doon, like—an' I don't think! We didna rin awa' at the Marne? Naw! If we hadna rin awa' I widna been here the day. The cowardly Germans! Don't you believe it! I ken. I've been there—French, Foch, Joffre—the

hale jing bang o' them—all parts o' the world, day an' nicht, an' a' nicht. Oor side's aye richt ye see, an' the ither side's wrang; it's all in my eye—a fine cod for the papers."

**SHE:** "That yin Thomas! I wad thraw his neck if I could get my haun's on him—a fraud; that's whit he is. Him an' his big ceegaurs, an' his biled shirt, an' la-de-da!"

**HE:** "Ay! come on!—come oot frae behin' the kopjes an' we'll bate ye! Here's a bonnie wee maxim gun waitin' for ye! Wid they come? No' them! Ye couldna open yer mooth without gettin' it filled wi' leed. Cowardly fellows, thae Boors—an' I don't think. All parts o' the world I've been in. They had us bate in France tae—I ken; they jist didna hae the trick o' following up, like. Ten men to yin agin us at the beginnin', but it was a hunner to yin at the hinner end, only it was the ither wey about. Ye canna cod me. It was there I got the blighty that knockit me oot—waukened up in a shell hole an' here wis a pal sittin' aside me. 'Hullo, Jake,' I says. I thocht he was deaf, so I gied him a shake, like—deid's a stane!—'This's nae place for me,' says I, an' hops it."

**SHE:** "Them an' their gerden perties—bonnie lookin' guys in their lum hats an' frock coats! A day in the washin' hoose wid fit them better."

**HE:** "Gorilla warfare! That's whit they ca'd it in the Boor War. 'Wha's supposed to be the gorillas?' I says. But they couldna answer that yin. Naw! But I could hae telt them wha the galoots were. Galoots! That's whit we were—blanketty galoots!"

It's me they should hae among the brass hats at the War Office. All parts o' the world! Ay, it's a funny place I hivna been in—France, India, Africa, Belgium, Germany. . . .”

Here the conversation was interrupted. The tramcar had just reached the precincts of a certain Government institution when another passenger interjected this nasty one:—“Here, mister,” he said, “have ye ever been in there?”

“Whaur?” queried the bibulous one.

“In Barlinnie,” replied the interrupter.

“Yes,” retorted the man of war, with the politeness of a superior to one of lower rank—“I've been in Barlinnie too, an' if you don't shut your ugly mug, I'll be there again—d'ye hear that?”

The interrupter heard, and took his departure. So did I. As I passed out I was relieved to hear the lady taking up the thread of the conversation:—“Them an' their Royal babies; ma weans are as guid as their's ony day . . . the washin' hoose; that's whit they're needin' . . . it wid tak' some o' the sterch oot o' them. . . .”