

## GEORDIE.

“SIT up a bit Geordie!” The words were addressed to a much be-parcelled person of male persuasion who sat complacently in a tramcar, spread out over the space of three seats. He blinked drowsily and raised his eyes to the incomer. “Ma name’s no’ Geordie,” he mumbled, “an’ whit’s mair, ye don’t ken whit ma name is.”

“It’s a’ ane,” said the incomer (another male), sitting down beside the mumbling one, “Geordie’s a guid name, an’ I don’t see whit wey ye object to it; the King’s ca’d Geordie, an’ if it’s guid enough for him it’s guid enough for you.”

The mumbling one drew himself together haughtily, “Guid enough for me! I like that. Do ye ken wha I am?—well, I’m an engineer—d’ye hear that?—an engin—blanketty-eer. Noo, I wad like to ask ye a simple question—is the King an engineer? Naw! no’ him!—well, that’s what I am; an’ I can see by your claes you’re a plumber or something like that—a plumber—a plum-bu-er to be polite. If there’s wan thing mair than anither I canna staun’ it’s plummers; there’s aye a smell o’ gas aff them. Here guerd! pit this man aff! he’s a plumber, an’ plummers should be strictly prohibited on caurs.”

Fortunately the alleged plumber was one of those in whom alcohol but stirs up latent pools of cheerfulness. He beamed on his new-found friend. “An engineer, did ye say? I thocht ye were a hangman by the looks o’ ye when I came in. Whaur did ye get

the face? Did an engine run owre it when ye were young? Naw!—well, I'm no' a plumber if ye want to ken. Forbye that, there's nae plumbers noo-a-days; they're a' sanitary engineers. Ye're no' the only engineer in the warld, ye see, Geordie!"

"Less o' the *Geordie*! I telt ye ma name's no' Geordie—ma name's Rab, Rubbert to be polite. An' I'm a rale engineer. Ye think ye're awfu' smert ca'in' a plumber an engineer. But I'll ask ye this question—hoo can a man be an engineer withoot an engine? That's wan up yer wee ticht-fittin' jaiket for ye! Layin' drain pipes is no' engineerin'. Ye nicht as weel ca' a hen an engineer for layin' eggs. It's navvy-in', I tell ye, blanketty blank navvyin'."

"Less o' that!" The voice was the conductor's.

"Less o' whit?" retorted the injured Rab. Then turning with astonishment to the other passengers: "Did ye ever hear the like?—*less o' that!* Noo I'll ask ye a' this question—did I use a single word unbecomin' to the faither o' a faimily? Naw? I'm blanked if I did. There ye are young man!—pit that in yer pipe an' smoke it! An' ye better get used to smoke as sune as ye like for yer bonnie wee five-a-side'll get frizzled up in the place whaur you're gaun to, or I'm mistaken. It's nae haufway hoose for you, my lad. *Less o' that!* Sheer doonricht impiddence, I ca' it. They'll sune be checkin' ye for readin' the Bible, they will. The cheek! For twa shakes o' a lamb's tail I wad wipe the blanketty flair wi' him—d'ye hear that, young man?"

The cheery one put a restraining hand on the ruffled and uprising Rab: "Sit doon, Geordie, an' no' mak' a fule o' yersel'."

"Ma name's no' Geordie, I tell ye—keep yer hauns to yersel'—ay, ay, mebbe ye're richt—I shouldna be gaun on like this; ye see I've a weak he'rt—just come frae the doctor's." He drew a bottle slowly from an inside pocket. "This is ma medicine—a professor's prescription—a rale professor—three times a day afore meals—nae shandygaff this—hauf a croon every time—it's no' guid tae tak', but it fair warms the cockles o' yer he'rt."

"An' this is ma medicine," the cheery one replied, drawing a half-mutchkin bottle from his pocket: "Hauf a gless every hauf oor an oftener if ye can get it, an' it costs five an' a tanner. An' that reminds me, the hauf oor's up noo; so here's to ye, Geordie, an' may yer engine never want ile!"

"Parkhead Cross!" The voice was the conductor's.

Rab gathered his parcels together reluctantly, casting one envious look at the upturned bottle.

"Guid nicht, Geordie," said the cheery one.

"Hoo often have I telt ye ma name's no' Geordie," replied Rab wearily as he left the car. But his parting shot was at the conductor: "You, ya pup, you wad tell me to hae *less o' that*: for a brass curdie I wad ca' the blanketty feet frae ye—an unskilled labourer wi' a uniform on—MacKinnon's Fusilers!—*less o' that!* things is comin' to a bonnie pass. . . ."

The car moved off. "Guid nicht, Geordie," shouted the conductor.

"I'll Geordie ye—ya—ya—ya—pup!"