

## PATRIOTISM.

(By Patriot.)

Patriotism means a love and regard for one's country. Here in New Zealand the characteristics of our country are our lakes, mountains, forests, birds, etc; in fact, they are New Zealand, and no one who does not show due respect for these national characteristics can claim to be patriotic.

During the war our soldiers were in many lands and in conditions, varying from the mud and grime of France to the heated desert sands—those man-made deserts, the results of forest destruction by former civilisations, where it was at times necessary to travel animals for forty-eight hours and more without water, and where the oven-like heat was scarcely bearable. Naturally our thoughts at such and other times often turned to our fair land far away. On one occasion the writer witnessed a mortally wounded Australian soldier gazing intently at a sprig of wattle hanging on the hospital wall, impressed between a piece of plush and a sheet of glass. One can realise how this emblem, the last the dying soldier was to see of his sunny land, called up visions of earlier and happy days. Doubtless he could see his home and parents as he knew them in his beloved land of the waratah.

Yes, midst all the dangers and hardships it was but natural we should long to return to our own peaceful lands, and we almost saw the cool rushing stream midst the gently wafted tree ferns, we almost heard the tui perched on the high rata tree, we almost heard the whu-whu of the lazy pigeon as he flew from limb to limb, and we learned to love our homeland. But, alas, there are, in far-off lands, other forests—forests of little crosses—which mark the graves of those brave ones who really won the war. No little fantail flits there from tree to tree, but how pleasant it is to think that their brave spirits have long since returned and now dwell in those mossy mountain glades, where the last of the huias may still remain, where the chorus song of the bell-bird can still be heard, and where the little confiding robin finds a home almost free from the vandal white man and his imported enemy pests.

Again it is incumbent on all to raise the banner and fight for our native land, and as the sword, a fitting tool, is no longer permissible, it has perforce to be supplanted by the humble pen. Let us then once more stand shoulder to