

BULL-FIGHTING IN SPAIN.

By ARCHIBALD T. STRONG, Professor of English Literature in the University of Adelaide.

In the matter of sport, Spain is hardly yet quite a first-class Power; yet she beat Belgium by four goals to one at hockey on the ice, and is expected to give a good account of herself at English Association football in her first test match of the season against Uruguay. Spain is at present "soccer" mad. In every newspaper one sees advertisements of forthcoming "futbol," and when I motored out from Madrid to the Escorial, I witnessed a lively match, one of the goals having been drawn in chalk against the side of the vast building vowed by Phillip II. to St. Lawrence during the battle of St. Quentin, and subsequently erected in the form of the gridiron on which this unfortunate martyr was roasted to death before a very slow fire.

Furthermore, boxing flourishes exceedingly in Spain, and at the open championships held in Madrid a few weeks ago, I am told that fine form was displayed. Every sporting Spaniard has seen the Dempsey-Firpo fight on the film, and although Firpo is only an Argentinian, still he is Spanish enough to be a national hero in Spain, and my contention that he was out-generalled by Dempsey was very coldly received, and was met by the forcible reply that in the first round the Spaniard knocked the world's champion through the ropes.

The National Sport.

Bull-fighting, however, is still the chief national sport of Spain. Judged by humanitarian standards, it is a sufficiently brutal pastime, and I am far from defending it. I will only relate what I witnessed in the bull-ring at Cordoba, and will leave readers to draw their own conclusions. While I was watching the fight, however, I could not help thinking that I might perhaps be rather hard put to it if I were to denounce it in the presence of a Spaniard who might think of comparing it with our own national sport of fox-hunting.

In one way bull-fighting might seem the more sporting pastime of the two, since the bull has a chance of destroying one or more of his tormentors, while the fox has no chance. On the other hand, the bull cannot possibly escape death, whereas the fox has some hope of making a get-away. On the whole a man need feel just as much, or just as little, shame in going to a bull-fight as he would feel in going to a meet.

The hero of the bull fight at Corduba was Canero, at present the most famous bull fighter in Spain, an ex-cavalry officer, who kills his bulls on horseback instead of on foot, after the ordinary fashion. Canero was easily the finest looking man I saw in Spain, and even when in mufti he wore the picturesque leggings of a rough-rider. Moreover, he eliminated from his exhibition the disgusting business of producing old and out-worn horses which the bull is allowed to gore to death.

Thousands of Spectators.

The fight took place in a huge arena, surrounded by tiers of stone galleries, on which were seated some thousands of spectators. Many women were present, and although the season was mid-winter, a number of these were hatless, and wore bright Spanish shawls. I even saw a fair sprinkling of children. There was great excitement as Canero and his assistant fighters

made their stately entry into the ring; and, almost immediately, the first bull was unloosed from a gate.

A man with a red cloak walked straight up to it; it charged him furiously, but he held the cloak well away from his body, and the bull hurled into the cloak.

I soon discovered that the only thing which makes bull-fighting possible and in any degree safe for its practitioners, is that the bull will always follow the cloak in preference to the man. After the bull had been made to show its form in this fashion, Canero rode straight up to it, just evading its tossing horns, and grazing its side with the flank of his splendid White Arab. He seemed in no hurry, and when the bull pursued him, he rode away, keeping his horse only a few inches out of reach of its horns.

After a few manoeuvres of this kind, in which the men on foot took part, he was handed a light lance by one of these, and riding straight up to the bull as it charged, he planted the lance on the back of its neck, just above the cruel lowered horns, which he again avoided by the swerve of a hair's-breadth.

Maddened by the pain, the bull began to bellow loudly and to charge in all directions, the charges being smothered in the red cloaks of the men on foot. Canero, with consummate skill, planted another lance in the nape of its neck, the shaft shivering into splinters, while the point remained in the bull. In pain and fury the bull renewed its charges, though it was evidently tiring, and they lacked their former fire.

Extraordinary Skill.

All the operations so far had been mere preliminaries, but Canero now prepared for the final stroke. He was handed a stouter lance of steel, and again faced the weary bull. As it lumbered up to him he sat fast in his saddle, and thrust the lance deep in behind the bull's left shoulderblade, leaving the weapon in the wound, and again swerving away, as if by a miracle, from the horns. I have never seen a more extraordinary exhibition of daring and skill. The bull renewed its bellows, but at first there seemed to be no result from the stroke, and Canero, to avoid its charges, had to be as swift and cunning as ever.

Then quite suddenly the bull crumpled up, all its four legs bunched simultaneously, and it sank, still bellowing, with its body upright. Canero's stroke had gone home to the heart. In this position it remained for a minute or two, and then swerved slowly over on to its side, while Canero galloped his horse over and over it in triumph, amid the deafening applause of the crowd. At the end the bull was dispatched by an underling.

Canero killed two more bulls in this fashion. The second bull created a diversion by leaping the barrier and causing the terrified spectators to scuttle up on to the seats above them for safety, till a door was opened for him, and he emerged once more into the ring. The fourth bull was killed on foot after the orthodox fashion. First the banderilleros, one after another, walked up to it and planted each a couple of light lances in its neck as it charged. They had no red cloaks to help them, and as the bull hurtled down on them it looked as if they must be gored. Then the matador took his stand opposite the bull and drove his sword home to the heart.

Bull fighting is a cruel sport; but the skill of its practitioners is miraculous, and at every moment they run the imminent risk of death.



MISS CHARLOTTE GRIVELL—The South Australian contralto, who won the Elder Scholarship, and is now pursuing her studies in London.

CHARLOTTE GRIVELL

Studies in London

SUCCESSFUL FIRST TERM

Word has been received by Mr. Sabl Grivell regarding his sister, Miss Charlotte Grivell, who left Adelaide last year to continue her musical studies in London. With Miss Ariel Shearer, also an Adelaide musician, Miss Grivell has a flat in Bullingham Mansions, Pitt-street, Kensington, London, and the two friends have spent a pleasant six months, concluding 1924 with an enjoyable Christmas. The presents received by them from Australia were so numerous that they had to be delivered in a medium sized letter bag, and hours of excitement were spent in opening them.

Miss Grivell said "the kindness of my Australian friends is too great for words. I simply cannot express my feelings. I am overwhelmed, and long to see you all again soon."

The report on her first term at the Royal College of Music promises well for the future. It reads as follows:—Singing, excellent (Mr. Johnston Douglas, teacher); French, good (Madame M. Themois); paper work, satisfactory (Dr. C. H. Kitson, M.A.); sight singing and aural training, very good (Mrs. Stanley G. P. Stubbs); Italian, good pronunciation (Signorina Maria Rosa Bizzoni).

Mr. Hugh P. Allan, M.A., Mus. Doc., Oxon. (director of the College), remarked: "I hope she has enjoyed her first term. She has established a good record."

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PERSONAL.

His Excellency the Governor entertained the following guests at dinner at Government House last evening:—Mrs. H. H. Dutton, Mrs. John Corbin, Mrs. Marcus, Countess Fillipini, Dr. H. Davies, Mr. C. Schilsky, Mr. Clive Carey, Mr. J. Medley, Mr. and Mrs. Legh Winsler. His Excellency expressed a wish to hear the programme of Cesar Franck's music to be performed at the Elder Hall on Monday night. After dinner a programme, consisting of piano quintet, string quartet, and two songs was rendered by the following artists:—Piano, Miss Maud Puddy; violins, Mr. Charles Schilsky and Miss Kathleen Meegan; viola, Miss Sylvia Whittington; cello, Mr. Harold Parsons; vocalist, Mr. Clive Carey.

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Mr. W. H. Foote (Director of Music) was presented with a silver inkstand last night by the members of the late Tramways Symphonic Band. Mr. W. E. Temple (secretary) assured Mr. Foote that he was held in high esteem by the bandmen, and they desired to thank him heartily for the interest he had shown in their welfare and work. He had been always willing to praise good work and forgive their errors. Mr. Foote, in returning thanks, said he had tried to do his best for the Trust, the band and the public, and it was satisfactory to know that his efforts had been appreciated. He hoped that all the bandmen would keep in touch with a view of having another meeting. Mr. Foote presented each member with a souvenir programme of the final concert given by the band at Henley Beach.

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ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.
To-night the first concert of the season will be held in the Elder Hall. The programme will consist entirely of chamber music and vocal works by Cesar Franck, who was one of the most striking musical geniuses of the nineteenth century. The Conservatorium string quartet, under Mr. Charles Schilsky, will play the celebrated Quartet in D major, which is one of the most remarkable works of art ever conceived; and with Miss Maude Puddy, Mrs. Bac., the great quartet which was heard last year. Mr. Clive Carey, Mus. Bac., will sing a bracket of Cesar Franck's songs. The plan is at Marshall's, Gawler-st.

(Advised) based