

The Rockwood Review.

showed no sign of turning, but seemed to be going to pin him on the doors with those terrible horns. The man put his hands back and got one hand on each horn of the bull, and at the moment when they came up against the doors, he threw his weight on the bull's horns, threw up his own feet and scrambled up the doors, and partly sprung, partly was flung, over the doors and safe into the yard beyond the doors.

Such narrow escapes were much relished by the pursuing crowd of onlookers, and furnished much material for talk when the day was over, and for a week or two afterwards. I am sorry I cannot remember more of what I was told about these things, but it is now a long time since I saw Stamford. When I was a young man I lived for some time near Stamford, and was well enough acquainted with the town and its vicinity. But I was only a youth, and life then stretched out before me, very misty and uncertain. In fact, it was so misty that I could see my path but a very little way in front, and did not know whether it reached far ahead or terminated a very short distance away. Since then it has led me to embark on ships that sailed over rolling seas, and across the equator and I have lived in sun-burned lands, and among peoples who spake strange languages, and when I look back the path stretches far away behind me. But the mists have begun to gather behind me too, and when I look back on Stamford it is wrapped in those mists. The reader must, therefore, forgive me, if I cannot tell more of the old Stamford bull-running stories. The river Welland flows by Stamford, and there is a bridge over it, which I cannot describe very well, as I do not remember it clearly. But there was an understanding or provision of some kind that if the bull proved to be so to be so tame that the crowd could lay hold of him and heave him bodily over the bridge parapet into the

river, before 12 o'clock at noon, then the town council was bound to furnish another bull to finish the day with. On one occasion when a bull was thrown over from the bridge into the river, an expert who had been running behind the bull, holding on by the tail, was so excited that he forgot to let go, and so he went over into the river with the bull. The man, not being able to swim, then held on to the tail tighter than ever, and the bull swam bravely ashore and towed the man after him to dry land. No doubt, the crowd on the bridge took more fun out of the man than they did out of the bull; their appreciation of the incident may be imagined, but not described.

It is strange to think how the bull ran his yearly race through the streets of Stamford, all through the centuries, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth. During the wars of the Roses, mail-clad men stood to gaze at him, and perhaps, occasionally he tried his horns upon their armour. And when Drake and the other jolly sea-dogs of good Queen Bess were sailing round the world or singeing the Spanish King's beard, the Stamford bull was still continuing his mad career. Cromwell, with his buff-coated and steel-capped Puritans, probably put a stop to the Stamford bull-running, along with other uproarious and ungodly games, for the time. But when the Restoration came, no doubt the bull came in again with a rush, and clattered over the stones of Stamford streets faster than ever. Later on, in the time of Queen Anne and the early Georgian era, the bull, bursting into the old time-worn streets, saw gentlemen in fine laced coats, and silk stockings, with three cornered hats, and rapiers dangling by their sides, and did his best to toss them. Sometimes, as I have mentioned, he got a chance to have a bang at a Sedan-chair, and so rushed on till sometime about the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria, when his career