

The Rockwood Review.

THE STAMFORD BULL-RUNNING.

In the eastern part of England, on the border where Lincolnshire meets Northamptonshire, stands the quaint old town of Stamford. It stands on some rising ground, overlooking low flat meadows, and boasts two or three steeples which are admired by church architects. It is, indeed, an old town, for it was in existence in the reign of King John, who came to the English throne in the year 1199, and who much against his will gave to the English nation the famous document known as Magna Charta. Of his own free will King John signed and gave to the citizens of Stamford, another charter of an entirely different nature, which, without a doubt, the world has heard little about.

King John was staying at Stamford, and one day, being presumably much bored by the want of excitement in that quiet town, he was looking out of the window to see what was to be seen. Luckily, he caught sight of something, for, in the language of the old chroniclers, "He was myghtlie dyverted bye watchynge ye antics offe certayne menne and boyes chasyng a bulle inne ye lowe meadows bye ye rivere." The chase lasted so long, and was attended by such moving incidents by flood and field, that it gave the English monarch the liveliest satisfaction, and he decided that nothing was so calculated to make people happy as a good bull-chase. Wishing therefore, to confer this happiness on his loyal subjects of the town of Stamford, he had a charter drawn up and signed, by which the mayor and aldermen or town-councilmen of the town of Stamford were bound to furnish annually a bull, which should be chased all up and down the streets of Stamford, on a certain day in the year, by all those who were anxious to engage in the sport. It is unnecessary to say that the diversion became very popular, being calculated to satisfy the aspirations of all the street cor-

ner men and noisy boys, whilst, being under royal patronage, the more respectable people of the town could join in it without any loss of dignity. The occasion furnished an annual holiday to everybody, and those who were active enough to chase the bull, could look on from some safe coign of vantage. The shops, of course, were closed, and the streets cleared of children and females, as an infuriated bull was not a safe animal to meet in a somewhat narrow street. People who had any errands to call them out, would listen to hear in what part of the town the uproar was, and then run from one house to the other through such streets as were safe. Sometimes, however, the bull would come charging unexpectedly round a corner, and many were the narrow escapes by running into houses and up narrow entries. Sometimes there were bold rescues and as may be supposed, there were sometimes opportunities for brave champions to protect or save those of the fair sex who ventured to make sorties, and got cornered. On one occasion, a lady was being carried along a street in a Sedan-chair, when the bull made his appearance. The bearers promptly set down the Sedan-chair and saved themselves as the French say. The bull coming up to the Sedan chair knocked it over and tumbled it about with his horns, but as the lady inside very wisely staid in, and did not attempt to get out, she escaped with a shaking up and a fright. She was something like the kernel inside of a nut, and the bull could not crack the shell to get at her. On another occasion a man was chased by the bull, and ran straight in front of him. The bull was close behind, and almost touching him, but could not quite catch him, their pace being so even. The man could feel the bull's horns just behind him, and the street was a blind one closed at the end by a pair of large wooden doors. As they neared the doors, the bull