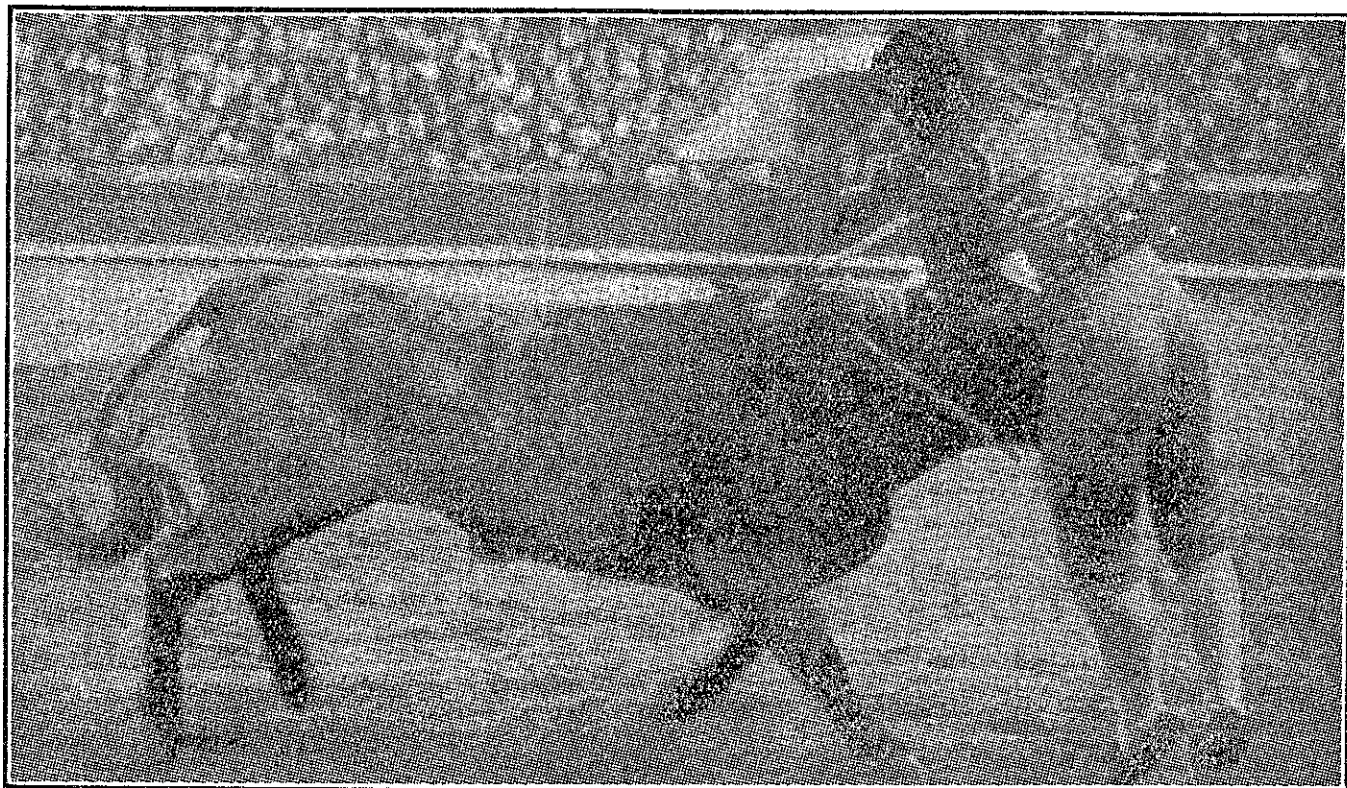


"Death of the Horn"



I DID not know before last week that the bull-fighter of Spain has a passionate admiration and affection for the frank and fearless bull which he dispatches to his death—or which brings to himself the dreaded "death of the horn."

When he was producing a Spanish concert in England last year to raise money towards the Children in Spain, Philip Cross, film producer, "Western" actor and ex-soldier of Spain, who has Fund for the Relief of Distressed Women and now returned to New Zealand after 10 years abroad, found himself short of an artist.

To fill in the gap, he made himself up as an Andalusian, and, taking the Spanish fighting cape, he made all the traditional passes of the bull-fighter, at the same time keeping his movements to the time of the tango.

He was able to do this because, among his many adventures abroad, he had served his apprenticeship to the bull-ring in Spain. And during his stay in New Zealand he will present radio programmes of a Spanish nature from both National and Commercial stations.

THE concert party for the Spanish relief, judging from Press reports, was a great success. He had brought over from Spain a film actress of striking looks, Maria Victoria Alvarez. The concert party's season opened at Portsmouth, at what amounted to a command performance from the Queen of Spain and the Infanta Beatrice, and was engaged on long contract for the Mayfair Hotel.

But before the season opened at the Mayfair Hotel Philip Cross himself was away on film business in South America. The hotel, fearing that the dance of the bull-fighter would not be included in the programme, spoke of cancelling the contract. To overcome the difficulty his

place had to be filled by an apprentice from Spain who had been injured in the Spanish war.

THE father of this lad, said Mr. Cross, was an old bull-fighter, a relic of the spacious days of the bull-ring. He had fought with Joselito and Belmonte, and had been an approved matador for 28 years.

He lived for his bull-fighting and his bulls. But at the outbreak of the Spanish war the Communists had gone to his ganaderia and shot all his herd sires and the bulls, young and old, that that were ready for fighting, so that the only thing left to the old bull-fighter now was his son, weakened by a war wound, who could use his fighting cape only in the dance, without being able to give it the dignity of the approach of the bull. It was a bitter thought to the old man.

ONCE they used to play at bull-fighting in every city or village plaza of Spain. One boy with horns attached to his head would act the bull, while others with sticks and coloured rags were the picadores and bandilleros.

And though we English races call bull-fighting degrading, the hunting of and the slaughter of pheasants are not particularly ennobling.

By WILL GRAVE.

The bull-fighter of Spain is a proud man. I learned something of his psychology from Mr. Cross that took away part of the

cruelty of the sport. The bull-fighter loves and respects a frank and fearless bull.

JUST before the Spanish Civil War began, Mr. Cross told me, bull-fighting reached a pitch previously unrivalled in Spain. This was due to the fact that the matadors, Joselito and El Gallio, had developed a style of working so close to the bull, a style so emotional and so extremely dangerous, that the bull-ring had taken a toll of life as great as that of a minor revolution.

All thought of safety was abandoned, and the matador was concerned only with (Continued on page 40.)