The Japan Times Archives Dec. 23, 2020 at 07:32 p.m

HOW SPANIARD VIEWS CANADA

By F. H. FISHER

LONDON—Spain is being given some curious ideas on Canada by an editorial writer in El Liberal, one of the leading newspapers of Madrid, who has evidently been greatly influenced by a Toronto publication, The Square Deal.

According to the article, Canada is a country where "voyageurs" in the forest allow wild animals to go unharmed in order to save their ammunition, but shoot down their fellow men in order to save their jobs. This it gives as an example of the Canadian working man's fear that somebody else—especially immigrants—might take his job and leave him starving.

"In that horrible Canada," says the writer, "already greatly denuded of its forests by the axes of its army of workmen, and periodically devastated by glacial winds from the pole, a tract of territory as large as ten Spains, great alarm was experienced at the proposals of the British Government on the subject of emigration.

"The fear grew that one day a current of immigration would begin to flow into these desert lands, the very thought of which struck horror into the hearts of the bravest. 'Wolves and bears,' they said in effect. 'But men and hungry men—no!'

"The 'voyageur,' meeting in the twilight of the forests, one of its wild denizens, steps aside and allows it to pass unharmed in order to save his ammunition, but meeting with a fellow man among the trees he greets him with a rifle shot. It is only too clear that these men of the woods are no more than savages.

"I have before me the February number of 'The Square Deal,' published in Toronto, which, under the heading, 'The Immigration Question,' deals most pessimistically with the matter.

"The Canadian 'Trade and Labor Unions' have protested to the government against the free immigration of Britons, stating that such an arrangement would merely aggravate the fight for existence, which is even now being experienced by Canadians.

"These unions would be quite willing to accept certain immigrants, but only those who would dedicate themselves to the development of the virgin lands. But workers already on the land complain that immigration causes an increase in local rents and in the cost of living, as well as an eventual reduction in income per head of population."

Here the writer ends his dirge over Canada, adding only the remark that the British Government, disappointed in the possibilities of emigration to Canada, has turned towards Australia. And Australia, he says, is a country that is committing suicide.

THE CASALS OF THE GUITAR

'After hearing in Geneva four concerts by our guitar virtuoso Andrès Segovia,' says a musical critic in the Madrid El Sol, 'I thought it proper to put the question to myself, What will this happy appearance do for Spanish music? An artist of the first order appeared playing the guitar as his chosen instrument—the national musical instrument of Spain. We all know what Casals did on the 'cello: by virtue of his technique he made the hearer forget about all technique. Segovia has done as much on the guitar and more: he has enlarged the field of expression of his instrument, compared with anything that has been produced on it before, so that in his hands it expresses every shade of feeling conceived by modern music. But Segovia has had to struggle against difficulties that never stood in the path of the great Catalan 'cellist, and the greatest of these was the current prejudice against the guitar, as an instrument suitable merely for light music. This prejudice, of course, was founded solely on the fact that the guitar is the popular instrument of the Spanish people, and therefore scarcely anything but light music has been performed on it. In short, here was just as fortuitous an association of ideas as that which connects wax with religion because wax is used for church candles. Segovia himself tells of the following incident. During a concert tour he practised in his hotel room one morning about eight o'clock, when the chambermaid entered and exclaimed in amazement: "Oh, my, senorito! Making merry at such an early hour!"

'As to the musical critics, their level of judgment did not greatly exceed that of the populace. I shall not easily forget the superior air of an eminent French musical expert who, upon being asked whether he knew much guitar music, answered: "Oh, yes. But nothing important." A favorable contrast is presented by Wyndham Tryon, the excellent Flemish guitarist, who wrote in the Fanfare: "When Flemish melodies are played upon the guitar, it has a kind of primitive sound, somewhat hard and nasal; but when Bach or Chopin are played upon it, it sounds pleasant, sentimental, and extremely sweet."

'Also, Andrès Segovia has had to overcome the obstacle offered by that throng of music-lovers who, at the sight of a guitar, are overcome with sentiment and lift their eyes to the ceiling in anticipation of cheap and pleasant stuff.

'Spanish composers of modern times have already contributed to the special literature for the guitar, and the famous Falla at their head has written a beautiful elegy which seems an example of the highest in Spanish music.'

JUST SO

The project of a school for the Southern mountain children recalls the story of the teacher who was drilling her Kentucky class in grammar:

"Pete, what's the singular of quadrupeds?"

"Aint none. Kaint have a hoss 'th one foot."

"Tommy," said Mr. Figg, sternly, "I hung a motto in your room to the effect that little boys should be seen and not heard." "Yes, sir." 'What did you do with it?" "I—I took it to the deaf and dumb orphan asylum."