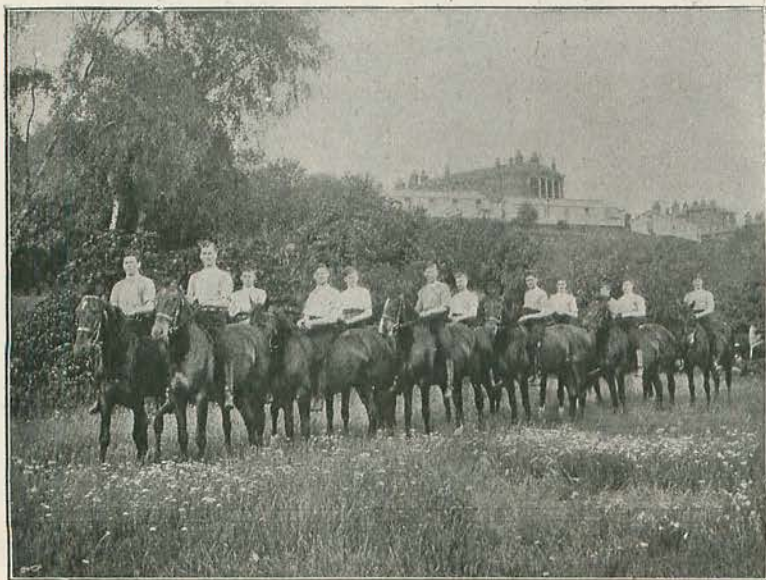


## Tug-of-War on Horseback.

BY META HENN.

*With Photographs taken by special arrangement at Aldershot.*



BEFORE THE CONTEST.

in the world, was approached on the subject of an article which would, by the aid of skilful photography, enable Britons in all parts of Her Majesty's dominions to gain an idea as to how this novel equestrian sport is conducted. Captain Dann, who, by the way, has at all times been a very good friend indeed to the Press, very willingly lent his ear to the proposal, and informed the writer that Lieut. and Riding-

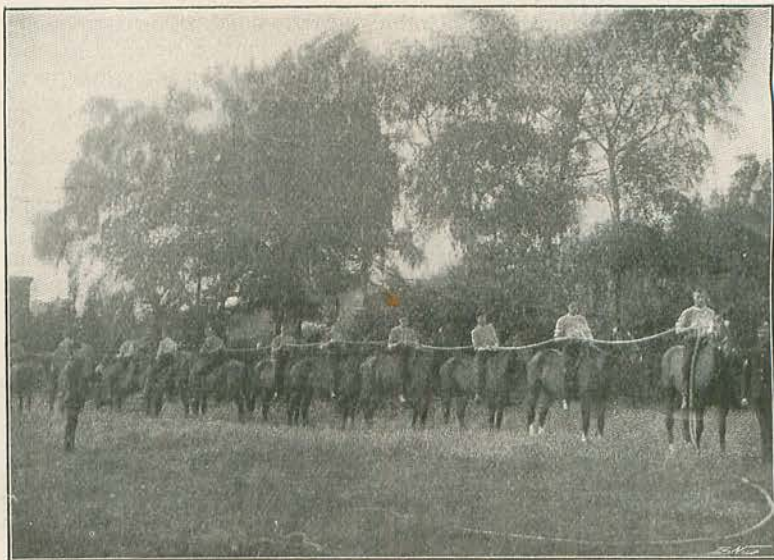


HE tug-of-war on horseback has been, as our readers well know, one of the most attractive features of the annual Royal Military Tournament, and it occurred to the writer that a great many readers who were unable to attend the beautiful military show in the Metropolis would find some satisfaction in seeing how this novel amusement among cavalymen is carried out and arduously practised long before the multitude of admiring crowds are allowed to witness results in the arena of the Agricultural Hall.

Captain Dann, who for many years has been the leading light in the organization of one of the greatest military and naval shows

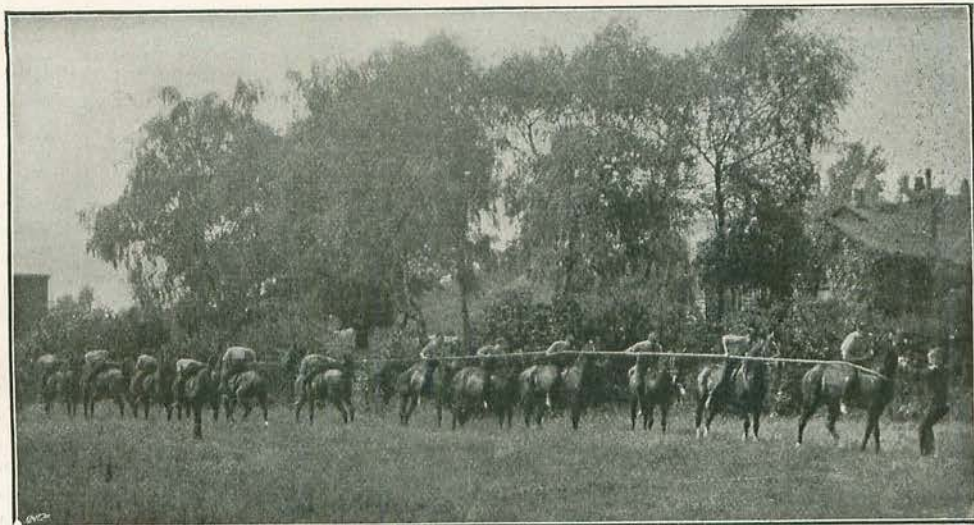
Master J. F. Parr, of Aldershot, would, as an authority on the subject, be no doubt prepared to help us in every way.

Lieutenant Parr, who, let it be said, is well known in military circles as having raised Y Battery and as having trained a great number of men for the Royal Military Tournament in record time, proved to be a very willing



THE TEAMS IN READINESS.





"PULL."

helper in the interesting preparations which followed under his direction and that of his able right-hand man, Sergeant F. Carter, of Y Battery, R.H.A. The writer wishes to thank them for the kindly spirit in which their services were given, as well as the men who obligingly gave up a half-holiday for the benefit of STRAND MAGAZINE readers.

Sergeant Carter is a smart, well-set-up fellow, and the way he handles his men is a pleasure to behold. There is never any roughness in his manner, yet his subordinates seem to understand a movement of the hand or of the glance that shoots like an arrow.

If my readers will turn to the first picture in this article they will see the men, twelve in all, ranged up in double file before the actual contest takes place. In the ordinary course of things the teams consist of six each side, and they hold on to a rope of enormous weight, the size of which may be gauged by comparison with the men's arms. It took four Tommies to pull that

rope along and place it in position in readiness for the teams.

The competing teams are placed, of course, back to back; the men wear jack-boots, riding-breeches, and flannel shirts, the sleeves of which are rolled up to the elbow. They ride practically bareback, a horse-rug and surcingle only being allowed. It will be understood by those having experience of matters equine that a great deal of equestrian skill is required to "stick on" at any price during the contest.

The rope, which can be plainly seen in



"PULLING."





"GO IT, BOYS!"

the second picture, should be wound once round the neck of the leading horse at each end, which arrangement gives more purchase than could otherwise be obtained.

The teams being in readiness, the rope brought under the right armpit of each man, the word "Pull" is given. The horses seem to know the word as well as the men, and they start pulling much quicker than the men; hence a general jumble follows: the reins are dropped, but the rope is stuck to like grim death; it seems that nothing short of absolute annihilation will make those Tommies let go; they grip it with a bulldog persistency that is truly wonderful; one hangs over the neck of his horse, another clings to the tail of his patient steed, who fully understands the gravity of the situation. Hence the extravagant attitudes which meet the eye on all sides.

Unfortunately it is impossible to be with the camera at a dozen places at once, hence, as the final break-up occurs, it is over before plates can be

changed, however skilled the operator may be.

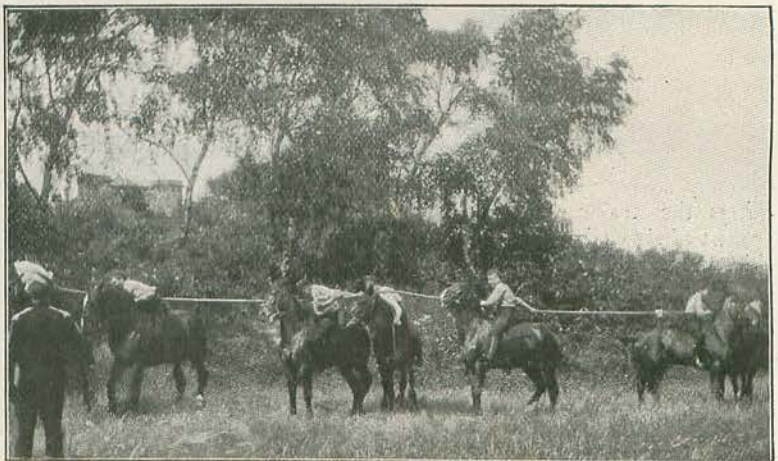
However, in the illustration entitled "Go it, Boys!" a favourite encouragement that comes from all parts of the field from Tommies who are not in the contest, we can gain a fair idea of the

curious attitudes assumed by some of the contestants.

In "Confusion"—the last picture—we find the men and horses practically at sea; the rope is twisted anyhow. One man is leaning forward, another's right arm is nearly pulled out of joint backward, the third man's horse looks

on in dismay, whilst the fourth man is all mixed up with the fifth.

Though the pictures which illustrate this subject, and which are the first that have ever been taken of a tug-of-war on horseback, may not appear as full of movement as might at first have been expected, it is a curious fact that it is practically impossible to show in snap-shot photography the slow and steady pull—give and take—which such a contest offers to the spectator, who, however, seems to feel more than he can actually see the enormous amount of strain and pulling that actually takes place in such a contest as this.



"CONFUSION."