

SHAM FIGHT AT MIRFIELD.

On Saturday afternoon the annual garden party and gala in connection with the 2nd Volunteer Battalion (Duke of Wellington's) West Riding Regiment, Mirfield detachment) took place, by the kind permission of Lieutenant Crowther, on the grounds adjoining Eastthorpe Villa, Mirfield. The two galas held in previous years were very successful. Last year upwards of 5,000 visitors paid for admission, and a substantial sum was added to the funds of the corps. The arrangements, which were in the hands of a committee of officers and men, were this year quite up to the standard of the past, but unfortunately the weather was not so propitious, and there was a falling off in the attendance. This is much to be regretted, as it was proposed to hand over a considerable portion of the profits to the Thornhill Relief Fund. Those visitors who did attend were not disappointed in what they saw. The grounds were decorated in a manner which reflected great credit upon the amateurs, who had been busy at the work for some days past. Strings of coloured ribbons were hung in all sorts and conditions of places, and even at daylight the grounds presented a very pretty appearance. It was in the evening, however, that the visitor saw the most pleasing feature of the decorations. Innumerable small oil lamp lamps had been placed in many pleasing spots and places, and when lit the picture was an exceedingly pretty one. The Volunteers present were Captain Mowatt's Company (1st Volunteer Battalion, West Riding Regiment), Cleckheaton detachment, numbering 85; Captain Welsh's Company (2nd Volunteer Battalion, West Riding Regiment), Huddersfield, numbering 111; and Major Crowther's Company (Mirfield), numbering 92. It was an unfortunate circumstance that Major Crowther, who during the week had been foremost in helping to carry out the arrangements, should on Saturday have been unable, through indisposition, to participate in the pleasures of his labours. In his absence his brother, Lieutenant Crowther, proved a useful substitute. The other officers present were Lieutenants Morrison, Law, and Atkinson (Cleckheaton), Captains Welsh, Sykes, and Sedgill, and Lieutenants Kaye and Wrigley, and Sergeant Major Gay (Huddersfield and Mirfield). This was the first year the Cleckheaton detachment had been invited to take part in the manoeuvres. In the afternoon various attractions were provided in the form of games, and at night there was a sham fight, described officially as the night attack upon the castle. The "castle" was a large canvas screen erected near the main entrance to the grounds. It was an admirable representation of a Norman castle, and had a frontage of about thirty yards. The grounds being of small dimensions, the tents of the attacking force were nearer the castle than would be expedient for them to be in actual warfare. The attacking force comprised the Huddersfield and Cleckheaton detachments, and was under the command of Captain Welsh. Lieutenant Crowther, with the Mirfield detachment, defended the castle. At dusk the attacking force were formed at the farther end of the field, which forms a sort of parallel path. On the bugle sounding, the castle was lit up by a small electric search-light, which was just of sufficient illuminating power to light up the ground from which the attack would have to be made. The distance having been extended within reasonable distance of the castle, fire was opened. The first few shots were replied to with great spirit by the defenders. Through the different phases of the attack, dummies representing dead soldiers were in the most part of the fight occasionally thrown from the castle. As the attack proceeded the human fatalities became more frequent and the dummies more numerous. The holders of the castle eventually capitulated, and their forces were drawn up in front of the castle, the officer in charge being called upon to give up his sword. The men grounded their arms, and thus powerless they were marched off prisoner of war from the place they had so well defended. It was generally expected by those versed in military matters that the attacking force would win. The arms of precision of the present day must have penetrated even a stronger fortress than that supposed to have been defended by the Mirfield detachment. Throughout the proceedings were watched with intense interest by the spectators in the grounds. The defenders, who are a fine lot of men, had by far the worst position, but their defensive tactics were nevertheless such as reflected great credit not only on their commander but on the men themselves. It was approaching midnight when the proceedings terminated.