

Monsieur." And in another second he had bounded down the far side of the parapet, and was flying as fast as his feet would carry him in the direction of the Redan, waving a white handkerchief, which he had hastily drawn from his pocket, as he did so.

For an instant Tom was taken aback, and then the truth flashed upon him that he had unwittingly been entertaining a Russian spy, and had shown him all round our advanced position. He never hesitated for a moment, but at once started in hot pursuit. Either he must bring back his treacherous guest a prisoner, or he would be well-nigh chaffed out of the army, when the story of his *soi-disant* Zouave got abroad. Tom could run a bit, and it soon became apparent it would be a very fine thing, in spite of the lead he had stolen, for the Russian to hold his own. It was impossible for either side to fire, the chances being about as much in favour of hitting one man as the other. The parapets on both sides were thronged with men who had jumped up from the trenches to see this impromptu match, and though Tom had gained very little upon him, yet the spy had this point against him. Between him and the great Redan ran the *abattis*, and though, from the straightness of his path, the spot where he could slip through was doubtless all prepared for him, yet a slight delay was inevitable, and it was a fine point whether he could pass that before Tom's hand was upon him. Nearer and nearer they came to the barrier, and it was soon evident to all the spectators that Byng was the better "stayer" of the two, and a ringing cheer from the British trenches recognized the fact. A hasty glance or two over his shoulder speedily convinced the fugitive of the same. He saw his pursuer rapidly closing on him, and suddenly pausing for a moment in his flight, he drew a revolver from his breast and deliberately fired at his foe. He only precipitated events, for blown by his run, and with a hand that had lost its accustomed steadiness in consequence of his exertions, he missed his man, and before he could repeat the shot a tremendous blow from Tom's fist stretched him well-nigh senseless close under the *abattis*.

A roar of exultation arose from the spectators on the one side, and a yell of disappointment from those on the other. The two men were still in such close propinquity that it would be perfectly impossible for the riflemen on either side to interfere, even had there not seemed to be a tacit understanding that the struggle between the two men should be regarded in the light of a duel, with which the onlookers had no right to meddle. For two or three minutes the men remained at the foot of the *abattis*, the Russian recumbent and Tom leaning over him, with the pistol, now transferred to his own hand, pointed at his enemy's head.

"I'm going to either take you straight back as soon as you've recovered your wind," said Tom, in the quiet steady tones of a man who is greatly in earnest about what he says, "or scatter your brains out here and have done with it."

"Bah," rejoined the other, with a fierce flash of defiance in his grey eyes, "I have played and lost. I know the penalty, as well here as at the back of your trench an hour hence; quick, Monsieur."

"On the faith of an English officer your life shall be spared if you render yourself a prisoner. Refuse,"—and here Byng once more pointed the pistol at his opponent's head.

"*Sapristi*," rejoined the Russian, as he rose to his feet, "I've not much choice, but while there is life there's another chance, and you guarantee me that?"

"I'll pledge my word for yours," returned Byng, still keeping a firm grip of his prisoner's collar.

"The game was worth it," rejoined the Russian, as he walked towards the English trenches, in the grip of his captor. "A majority against a file of musketeers and a short shift; now I suppose it means prison for an indefinite period. *L'fortune de la guerre*."

"It's not likely that we shall let you go to make use of the intelligence you have collected," replied Tom, as he handed his prisoner over the parapet into the hands of his own men, who, though regarding him with the contempt that employment as a spy

always brings upon the detected, still could not withhold a tribute of admiration to the splendid audacity with which the Russian had played his part.

Tom marched his prisoner to the Second Parallel, and there handed him over to the Colonel commanding in the trenches, and told his story, concluding with—

"I have pledged my life for his, and I must be allowed, sir, to make good my word—"

"You may rest quite easy on that point, Captain Byng," returned his superior. "I will relieve you of your charge, and shall send him direct to headquarters with that intimation."

The *soi-disant* Zouave had listened with the utmost nonchalance to the story of his misdeeds, but as Byng turned to leave, he exclaimed—

"Adieu, monsieur. May I ask the name of the officer to whom I am indebted for my life?"

"Captain Byng of —th," replied, Tom, shortly.

"Captain Byng—how do you spell him? B I—no, B Y N G. I shall recollect that name. Byng, you have saved my life, and some day, perhaps, who knows, it will be my turn. It's a queer world," and with a shrug of his shoulder Lieut. Ivanhoff raised his *képi* to Tom, and started with his escort on his tramp to headquarters.

For the next few days Tom Byng's adventure with the Russian spy was the talk of the camp; that the story as it was bandied from mouth to mouth should meet with much embellishment, was but natural. There were scoffers who declared that the whole thing was a friendly running match, got up to relieve the tediousness of the advanced trenches, that a deal of money had changed hands in the transaction, that the Russians had paid in paper roubles, which were unnegotiable in our lines, in short, the story was bruited about with whatever garnish crossed the imagination of the jesters of the army and in a week incidents in the Crimea were so narrated that the chief actors failed to recognize them. There was a well-known officer who, when wounded, was reported by the papers to have exhorted his fellow sufferers to bear their agony patiently, but camp gossip gave a very different version of the pithy speech which he made upon that occasion. As for Lieut. Ivanhoff, he remained interned on the banks of the Bosphorus until the close of the war, and years afterwards obtained high distinction when the intervention of Europe compelled Russia to stay her victorious career, and sign peace under the very walls of Constantinople.

CHAPTER XII.—THE FOURTH DIVISION RACES.

There is a very fairly sized crowd gathered on the plateau before Sebastopol; half the officers not on duty have drawn together to see the fourth Divisional races decided. But for a few flags one would have hardly recognized that a day's fun of this sort was proposed, and that the race card (there are cards, gentlemen), shows no less than five events, not including the "moke race," to be decided. No Crimean race meeting could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion without this latter institution, and there is a Light Dragoon who is the very *bête noir* of all owners of likely mules, and who well nigh sweeps the board (I had well nigh said of cups) of purses for this interesting race.

There is an absence of stands, tents, and a good many other adjuncts of an ordinary race-course, notably the total absence of ladies, which gives a business air to the whole thing, which is utterly fictitious. In reality there is no end of gossip and laughter over the whole affair, and although the races are all correctly printed on the card there is little attempt at keeping Newmarket time here. We start comfortably when everyone is ready, nor are there any very close restrictions about colours. Breeches and boots most of the jockeys have managed, but a racing jacket is not strictly *de rigueur* although from the number of them that crop up it seems that a good many men must have been impressed with the idea that it was a useful thing to slip into the bottom of a bullock trunk. There is much quiet lunching going on—not such as you see at Epsom, or at the back of the stand at Ascot, but "just a snack, and a glass of fizz, you know,"

yet partaken of amidst as much mirth and good-fellowship as ever it was at the above-mentioned meetings at home.

The great event of the day is the Divisional Open Cup, for which there are only four competitors, but those four are supposed to be the best representatives that the Army can boast, though they might not, perhaps, prove of much account amongst a lot of Selling Platers at Newmarket. These things, you see, are comparative; we all know the proverb of the one-eyed man, and the present quartet represent the Kings of the Crimean turf. About the merits of the four there is much difference of opinion—that the Bantam and Thunder are the pick of the basket is generally conceded; which is the best is a matter of contention. In turf parlance they can both race and stay, but whether they are safe jumpers is a little open to question. The second Divisional Open Cup is a steeplechase—that is, the best imitation that three miles over artificial fence can compass.

Handy Andy's party, who are very sweet upon their horse, begin picking up all the long odds they can obtain, they swear that their horse doesn't know how to fall, and that what he may lack in speed will be more than compensated for by his superb jumping powers. As for the owner of the fourth, he fairly admits he's afraid the company is too good for him, but says that he likes a ride, that his horse is very well and a safe jumper, that he shall trust to the chapter of accidents, and that he shall at all events have a good view of the race. That the —th should be deeply interested in the Cup is not surprising. Is not the Bantam the property of one of their own officers? And is not Hugh Fleming going to ride it himself? There is a certain *esprit de corps* in these things, and from the Colonel's tanner to the drummer's shilling, the regiment are on to a man. There is much discussion about the stone wall, about which the owner of Handy Andy and his friends are especially jubilant.

"Tear an ages," cries the former, a Major of the Connaught Rangers, "av't it was only a foot higher I'd come in alone. There's not one of the lot such a lepper as my horse. Why I'd lay a level fifty I'd ride him in and out of the pound at Ballinasloe."

A little way off Hugh Fleming is in earnest conversation with Byng. He is carefully listening to his mentor's final instructions before weighing out.

"You see," says Tom, "nicely as the Bantam jumps, still he's young at the business, and it's quite on the cards he may make a mistake if he's flurried. We know he can jump the stone wall and that's the ugliest fence on the course, because we've been schooling him over just one like it for the last three weeks. Take a good pull at him when it comes, and let him have it easy. The only horse you can't afford to let get away from you in the race is Thunder, and I fancy he'll no more want to hurry at the stone wall than you will. As for the other two you've so much the heels of them you can catch them at any time. Whether we can beat Thunder we don't quite know, but anyhow I don't think you'll find you've much in hand."

Needless to say there is no ring, and such wagering as there is is done amongst the spectators themselves. More than one holder of Her Majesty's commission tries his 'prentice hand at book-making and gets bitten with a madness destined to cost him dear in days to come. A little buzz of criticism runs through the crowd as the competitors for the Cup take their preliminary canter. "Thunder looks very fit." "Who will lay me three to one to a tanner about the Bantam?" "What the deuce does Tom Joskins mean by running that old crock of his?" "He's a good horse, I'll take fifty to five about his chance." Good horse if you like, but he's got into rather too good company this time. "You can put it down," and a babel of similar remarks are bandied about as—the preliminary over—the four competitors make their way to the starting post. Being the race of the day, and numbering so few runners, their jockeys have contrived to appear in correct costume. The flag falls without delay, and at once the rider of Handy Andy takes the horse to the front, and in the