THE HEROINE

OF BISSELMONT

—OR—

THE NEW LOVE AND THE OLD

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A SHARK.

A smart sailor like fellow, wearing an Oxford jacket and naval cap, and who seemed to be in authority, as he was overlooking the riggers, who were swaying up and fidding the top mast, now turned and gave him a glance of inquiry, as much as to say, "now who are you, and what do you want?"

"This is the Firefly, Lord Cadbury's yacht?"

"It is."

"You had an accident at sea—a collision; did anything else happen, were any lives lost?" asked Goring impetuously and nervously.

"May I ask who is inquiring?" said the other.

"Captain Goring of the Rifle Brigade."

"Oh, a friend of his Lordship's, I presume?"

"No, though I have met him. And you?"

"I am Tom Llanyard, at your service—his Lordship's skipper, but in Her Majesty's service like yourself once. Lives were lost—some of the Ostend lubbers, who failed to hang out a light."

"And of the yacht?"

"Only Daisy Prune, Miss Cheyne's maid. Poor little girl, I did my best to save her, but a wave took her out of my grasp."

Human grief is perhaps rather selfish; thus it was rather a relief to Goring when he heard that the poor human life lost was that of "only Daisy Prune."

"Miss Cheyne!"

"Is well, or was well when she left the yacht three weeks ago, but Sir Ranald was seriously injured by a swinging block. Step below, Captain Goring, and have a glass of wine. You looked fagged."

"Thanks," replied Goring who was giddy again with the mere revulsion of feeling, and felt an emotion of great thankfulness that he had so suddenly, so unexpectedly lighted upon the direct track of those he was in search of. Hitherto he had only looked forward to tidings—if any—of death not life, and it might be, of happiness.

He stepped into the handsome little saloon of the yacht, which had all the luxury and elegance of a sea-going boudoir.

"Pemmican" cried Llanyard to the steward; "glasses—some dry sherry and a biscuit; too early for grog, I suppose, sir, as the sun is not over the foreyard. That was Miss Cheyne's cabin," he added, indicating a little stateroom, the occupation of which by her gave it an interest in his eyes and still more in the eyes of the listener; "yes, sir, her cabin, and may be again, if she sails with us."

"Ah!" replied Goring, thinking it might be unwise to exhibit too much interest; "where is Lord Cadbury just now?"

"They are all at a hotel in Antwerp."

"*All?*"

"Yes—Lord Cadbury, Sir Ranald, and Miss Cheyne."

"What hotel?"

"Don't precisely know—I'm seldom on shore myself, and when I do, never go beyond the Hotel d' Angleterre on the quay, as I know neither French nor Flemish, and might get stranded. But Gaskins knows where they are, and he's on board just now."

"Gaskins—who is he?"

"His Lordship's groom and valet. Pemmican, pass the word forward for Gaskins—that is, if you want to know."

"I wish to know very much," said Goring, scarcely able to restrain his impatience.

Gaskins appeared, just as we saw him last, looking the perfection of an English groom, with a short dark grey surtout buttoned up to the throat, spotless white tie and cords, long boddied and short-legged, a straw in his mouth, a flower in his button-hole, and a sudden twinkle of intense cunning in his half-closed eyes, as he recognised Bevil Goring (whom he had often seen out with the hounds,) and at once took in the whole situation. He had not been so long in Lord Cadbury's service as not to know what brought him to Antwerp.

"This gentleman wishes to know Lord Cadbury's hotel," said Tom Llanyard.

"Gaskins touched his cockaded hat, and affected to think. He paused and scratched his chin."

"Can't you say?" said Goring impatiently.

"He has changed it, sir, lately; we are now at the—the Red Lion in the *Roo de Coo*, I think it is called."

"We, meaning also Sir Ranald and Miss Cheyne?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thanks. And now Mr. Llanyard, I shall bid you good morning," and, shaking the sailor's hand, Goring went on deck.

"Here are your railway rugs, sir," said Gaskins, following him thither up the companion-way.

Goring took the handle of the straps in his hand, nodded his thanks, and went on shore; but had he looked back he might have been puzzled to perceive the extraordinary grin that overspread the visage of Mr. Gaskins, and the manner in which that gentleman slapped his thigh and then his mouth, making thereby the loud sound of drawing a cork.

He then whispered something in the ear of a gendarme who was standing on the quay. The latter looked after the voiture, or cab, into which Goring was stepping, and after eyeing Gaskins keenly, made an entry in his note-book.

The ladies then jumped into a tramway 'bus, which he knew passed the hotel patronized by Lord Cadbury, to whom he betook himself in all haste to report matters, and that Captain Goring was in Antwerp.

Was it fate, good fortune, or "Cupid, king of gods and men," that had led him so kindly, so fortunately, to blunder at Harwich, and get on board the wrong boat, which eventually proved the right one for him?

With his sense of exultation there was mingled a prayerful emotion of great thankfulness that Alison had escaped amid the horror of the catastrophe, and that she was, as Llanyard asserted, well.

To see her, to have speech with her, to carry her off, now that he could lay wealth at her feet, were the next thing to achieve and to that end it would never do to put up at the same hotel—that mentioned by Gaskins, the groom, and, truth to tell, he would have had some difficulty in doing that. So he selected another—the Hotel du Parc—the name of which he gave to the driver of the voiture in which he was conveyed. Oh, how lightly and happily beat his heart as he went!—past buildings and streets, all demolished now or being so for the construction of those vast new docks, which will be the boast of Antwerp, and by the Rue Reynders, to the open and spacious Place Vert, where the graceful statue of Rubens in cavalier costume stands, and the north side of which is almost entirely formed by the towering masses of the glorious Cathedral.

She was living—thank heaven!—living and well! was his incessant thought. He had no longer her loss—her death—to sorrow for; but he had her deliverance to achieve. To wait a year—no! there was no need for that now; and he felt as if she were his already.

But they had all been some time in Antwerp; what if Cadbury's influence and her father's authority had prevailed, and—but—no! He thrust that idea aside, and entered the dining room of the Hotel du Parc, while the waiter seized with the driver and took charge of his luggage.

"What accommodation did monsieur want?"

"Only a bedroom."

"For to-night only?"

"No—for some days, weeks perhaps."

"Monsieur had come to see the churches, the galleries, the Musee Plantin, and all that."

"Precisely!" exclaimed Goring, with impatience.

"Luncheon, monsieur?" suggested the garrulous waiter, and to be partly rid of him and left to himself, Goring ordered it.

Many hotels overlooked the Place Vert; was she in one of them? Perhaps her eyes were at the same moment looking on what he saw there; the tall houses with smokeless chimneys, the result of the general use of stoves in houses, some old enough and quaint enough to have been seen by Charles V; the little carts drawn by dogs; the little yellow police vans proceeding to and from the Palais de Justice, escorted by soldier-looking gendarmes in blue tunics, with white braid and aiglettes, bear-skin caps, and carbines; women without caps, or with queer poke bonnets and long dark cloaks; the funeral of a "Liberal" going past—the hearse without cross, candles, or priests, and preceded by a great brass band playing polkas and mazurkas; the Calvarys and Madonnas at the street corners, or in the porte-cochere of houses, all with lamps before them; municipal guards, with plumed hats; artisans in blouses and *sabots*; shabby ill set up soldiers of all sorts and sizes, in baggy trousers, queer forage caps, and enormous red worsted shoulder knots—soldiers between whose appearance and that of "our fellows," Goring drew comparisons not very favourable to the former; priests in shovel hats and long flowing cloaks or soutanes, one perhaps preceded by a cross-bearer and acolyte with a bell, bearing the Blessed Sacrament to the dying.

High overhead the sweet carillons or musical bells, so common to all the churches in Belgium, were playing merrily in the cathedral spire, from whence, ever and anon, announcing the hours and half-hours, came the sonorous booms of that vast bell at the baptism of which Charles V. stood as "godfather," and which requires the united strength of sixteen men to pull it.

For the first time during a past period Bevil Goring had an appetite, and was well disposed to do justice to the *cuisine* of the Hotel du Parc—and, truth to tell, the Belgian cookery is second to none in the world; and after having *pate de foie gras*, and dainty outlets of veal, richly pastry from Meurice in the Marche aux Œufs, without which no meal seems perfect in Antwerp, and a glass or two of Chablis, he thought he might as well ask a question or two of the garrulous waiter, who was hovering about, with a white towel over his left arm, his thick short hair oiled, and his mustache waxed and pointed *a la Empereur*.

"What is your name?"

"Jacquot, monsieur," he replied, adopting the first position in dancing, smiling suavely, and pressing his hands together, or working them, as Dickens says, "with invisible soap in imperceptible water."

"In what part of Antwerp is the Rue d'Ecosse—is it near the Place Verte?"

"Rue d'Ecosse, monsieur—there is no such street in Antwerp."

"Think again, Jacquot, please. I want the Hotel Lion Rouge, Rue d'Ecosse."

"I assure you monsieur, that there is no such street and no such hotel," replied Jacquot, emphatically.

"I am not mistaken," thought Goring. "Can that rascally groom, in the interests of his master, have been deceiving me?"

As he had no reason for doubting that the waiter was correct in his statistics, he felt doubt and anger rise in his heart at the anticipation of trouble and difficulty; for if this fellow Gaskins had recognised and deceived him he would at once sound an alarm.

"Have you heard of an English milord in Antwerp, called milord Cadbury?"

"No, monsieur. There are many hotels; he may be in one."

"Have you a visitors' list in Antwerp?"

"No, monsieur; but here is the Brussels English newspaper, which may contain what monsieur wants."

It was and is a weekly periodical, which gives the names of all visitors to the Belgain capital and its adjacent cities and towns, and after a brief search Goring found the names of "Lord Cadbury, Sir Ranald Cheyne, and Miss Cheyne," as being located at the hotel St. Antoine.

"Where is that hotel?"

"Close by, monsieur—at the corner of Place, adjoining the Marche aux Soulers."

"Thanks, Jacquot," replied Goring, who began to breathe more freely. "Now to consider what my plans must be," he thought. "I must not be rash, but I must act on the instant, as it is quite on the cards that Cadbury may shift their tents to Brussels or elsewhere."

"He twisted his moustache and almost ground his teeth at the idea."

"*If* he does," thought he, "and I can ever lay hands on him, I will parade him at daybreak—by heavens, I will—with an officer from the nearest barrack as my second. There is no explicit law against duelling here as at home, so, my Lord Cadbury, I may make your little game a dear one for you in the end! Now, however, to write to Laura Dalton, or shall I telegraph?"

Jacquot, who had left the room for a minute, now came in with some perturbation in his face and manner.

"An officer of gensdarmes wishes to see you, monsieur, immediately, and has given an order to seize your luggage."

"To see me—to seize my luggage! What the devil does the fellow mean?" exclaimed Goring, who was prompt enough to see, as he started up from the table on seeing an officer of gensdarmes, with his sword at his side, without salute or moving his cap, bluntly enter the room, while giving an order to some others who were outside.

* * * * * * *

We have said that Bevil Goring had promised to write to Laura Dalton reporting what discoveries he made of the fate of Alison.

But day followed day at Chilcote Grange after his departure, and neither letter nor telegram came from him; and to Laura, who was really full of anxiety and concern for both, amid her own personal causes for serious thought, began to think that he too had disappeared!

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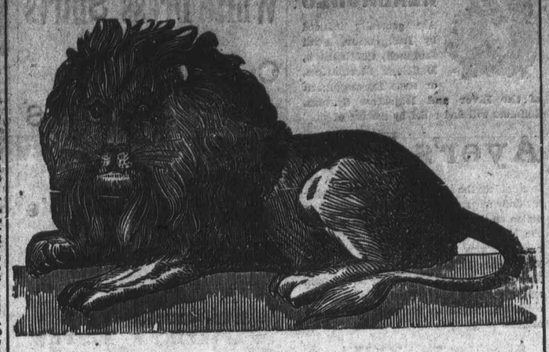

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Frame, 5 rooms, hard and soft water, garden		675
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Stone, 5 rooms		700
Stone, 12 rooms, kitchen, stone stable, water, 2 acres, garden and orchard		7,500
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Frame, 7 rooms, kitchen, water		1,200
Brick, 4 rooms, kitchen, water		600
Brick, 6 rooms, water		900
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Frame, 6 rooms, water, large garden		700
Frame, 5 rooms, woodshed, water		800
Frame, 5 rooms, water, garden, fruit		800
Frame, 4 rooms		800
Frame, 6 rooms, woodshed, water		1,000
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Single Ticket, admitting Lady	3 00
Single Ticket, admitting Boys and Girls, 13 to 17 years of age	2 00
Single Ticket, admitting Children under 13 years	1 00
Single Ticket, admitting Spectator for the season	00
Admission to non-ticket holders for skating	15
Admission to Spectators	10

A reduction of 33 per cent off the above rates will be allowed to a family numbering three or more.

The Guelph Bowling Club's Alley adjoins the Skating Rink. For terms of membership enquire of the Secretary of the Rink.

no12d A. BURROWS, Secretary.

R. W. CARTER,

VETERINARY SURGEON.

OFFICE ON CORK STREET, OPPOSITE Bernardin Hotel, where he can be found at all times by those who wish his services. a12dw