

"Good night. And, Kate, remember, don't fall in love with Carton, especially now that there is a chance of your being an heiress."

CHAPTER IV.

I have hinted that Carton kept a yacht. The Sybil was a stout little craft of about forty tons, with which he used to stretch out to sea of the long summer evenings, unaccompanied, save by Jack Sterling, who tended the main sheet, while Carton himself took the helm. There was one passenger, a huge Newfoundland dog, called Dred, who was never absent from Carton's side.

Many a joke was passed by the loungers on shore about lawyer Carton's immunity from drowning, especially when they watched the Sybil ducking and staggering under the heavy seas, for her owner was no mill-pond sailor, and enjoyed the excitement of a bold tussle with the elements. So it came about that while the great cause of Delmar v. Prideaux was pending, Captain Delmar and his daughter frequently joined Carton in his evening voyages. Miss Delmar was an excellent sailor, and, I believe, thoroughly enjoyed these excursions.

They would weigh anchor from the town about five o'clock, and slip off in the first flutter of the land breeze, creeping quietly into the wide waters, and seeing the beauty of the sun-set, and the night, coming in with the tide, and the plan- gent ripple of the waves as they broke off the bows of the Sybil. It was Miss Delmar's habit to bring a book, which she never read. The captain had his cigar-case, and Carton had his place by the rudder.

"What book is that you have brought with you this evening, Miss Kate?"

Miss Kate opening the leaves carefully—

"Oh, the Newcomes?"

"The Newcomes! Do you like Ethel? Jack, look out there for a gibe."

"Well, yes, no, I—I really should be in her place to judge her."

"Don't you think, if she loved Clive, that she ought to have let him see it sooner?"

"I didn't believe gentlemen of your profession, Mr. Carton, put any faith in romance."

"I do," replied Carton gravely, "but not in that sort—the Miss Newcome sort of romance."

"Is not that a guilement, or a strange kind of gull, Mr. Carton?" Kate would ask, as some curious seafowl would hover above the boat; and in this way would she put Carton off those dangerous points which he was now rather given to bringing the conversation upon.

Of course the reader understands the state he was in. She was so fond of Dred, his dog! Dred would yawl lazily at her feet, and put out his head to be stroked, closing his eyes with very pleasure while Miss Delmar's little hand slid over his woolly pate. Those water parties wound up with a tea at the captain's, where there was a quiet chat over the chances of Delmar v. Prideaux, then some music in the drawing-room, and then Carton went home. It was becoming a deucedly stupid home. Home, indeed! You see our hero was getting worse. He was feeling solitary. The catastrophe must come soon.

The captain was gone to sleep in the bow, and Jack Sterling is leaning over the bulwarks, whistling softly for the wind that won't come for an hour yet. There is one star, the very pilot of the gloaming purpling in the west. How thin the voices sound from the shore, and what an echoing dreary song seems poured into the air at the rise and fall of the waves! The sea is dark blue, save for a broad path of darkening crimson. Kate Delmar is silent; the book has dropped into her lap, and she keeps unconsciously stroking Dred's fortunate noddle, while that intelligent brute thumps his tail in ecstatic acknowledgment against the deck.

"Kate!"

He came nearer—so near, she had to turn or move away ever so slightly, ever so gently, though still stroking the dog's head.

"Darling, one word; I—"

"Please, yer honour, 'bout the 'clm!" suddenly roars the inopportune Mr. Sterling, as a gust of night wind switches over the bay, and fills out

the breast of the sail. And now pouting her bosom like a proud damsel, the Sybil lies to it, and cleaves her way to the dim shore line, and the helmsman is not in the best of humour, for that remains unsaid which he had longed to say. As he hesitates whether it would be well to try again, he feels a hand touch—placed in his. He takes it to his lips to kiss, and—

When the lights are brought into the room, when the tea things are laid, how queer these two feel! The gallant captain mixes his usual sherry and water. Kate is not able to sing that night, her heart is too full to trust her voice with the love words of a song. They linger over the "good-night;" Carton has a flower or something, I know not what, to bring away with him, but it makes his bachelor home less lonely.

CHAPTER V.

Delmar v. Prideaux went on with varying-success through the dilatory stages of equity law: and the summer passed, and the winter came, and it was closing spring before counsel on either side could see land in this important case. When the day for the final struggle was approaching, Carton was in a perfect fever of excitement, and was a source of constant joking and fun to Kate, who took a certain pleasure in teasing him, pretending an utter indifference to the proceedings, and making him talk about Dred, about her bonnet, about the Sybil and Jack Sterling: about anything, in fact, rather than the subject with which she knew his mind was fully occupied. But then, if she saw him getting really vexed, the rogue would put on the most contrite expression, twist her lips into such a pretty *moue*, half comical, half serious, steal her arm through his, and address a long speech of commiseration to Dred, the terms of which were so singularly applicable to Dred's master, as to make him acknowledge the speech in a manner which not unfrequently interrupted the peroration.

In reality, however, Miss Kate ardently wished the suit won.

"I would like to have a heap of money for Rick, and for papa," she thought.

The eventful day at length arrived. Carton recommended both the captain and Kate to remain at Waterton while he went up to London, promising to send them a telegram of the result. And so they remained in the telegraph-office from one o'clock, watching for the news. Five o'clock came, and they were about to leave, when whirr-r, ting-ting-ting.

"Oh, this is it now, papa, surely!" cries Kate.

And then was heard a curious droning sound, as the green paper revolved from a little brazen drum, and a keen eyed clerk read off the cabalistic strokes impressed on the paper:—

"Richard Carton to Captain V. Delmar, Case won—I shall be down to-morrow."

"And the Prideaux property is yours, Kate," cried the captain.

"And Richard will be home to-morrow," said Miss Delmar.

"Kate," spoke the captain, with a gravity which well became his fierce and respectable features; "Kate, remember, dear, that Mr. Carton should not any longer be so intimate with you as that you should dispense with the formal adjunct of his name."

Carton came back in high feather. He had begun to discover the captain, and was almost determined that the old warrior should not balk his happiness and that of his Kate, for he knew he was all in all to Kate. The captain often took a private sowl at the pair as they walked on the beach under his very moustache; he could not with any decency, however, give open expression to his sentiments.

Richard came up one evening to Kate with a vexed, disturbed countenance.

"I must go to Jersey for a few days," he said, "upon a matter I cannot afford to neglect."

"But you won't stay long, Rick?"

"Certainly not. Not more than a week, at furthest; and then I can write, you know, every post."

"Don't fall in love with a native of the beautiful Channel island, and give me Dred to take care of."

He was not two days gone, when Tom Green, the attested clerk, called upon Captain Delmar. He left a parcel, with Mr. Carton's compliments. It was only Mr. Carton's bill, which Captain Delmar could look over at his leisure. When the noble captain opened the package, and just glanced at the first few sheets, he rubbed his hands together gleefully.

"Admirable, admirable!" he muttered; "this is the very thing to settle him!"

Kate just then entered the room, followed by Dred.

"I thought you were done with law papers, papa?"

"Ahem—my dear, this is Mr. Carton's bill of costs."

Bill; the word jarred harshly in Kate's ears—it was like the butcher or the grocer sending in that little account.

"You see he left instructions with Mr. Green to leave it with us," went on the captain.

Kate felt her cheek on fire.

"I don't wonder he was half ashamed of it himself, though. What do you think he has done?"

"I am sure I can't imagine."

"Try. Make an effort."

"I have not the least idea."

"Here, then, take this, and read for yourself."

And so saying, he handed her the red-lined paper and went out.

Oh! how bitter, bitter, that moment was which showed her the utter paltriness of the man to whom she had given her heart.

She quivered—her whole frame quivered—with indignation and scorn, as she saw marked down in that mean record every hour Richard Carton had spent with them, and for every hour he had entered a charge! She read on, column after column, sickening with shame as she did so, until, at last, the paper dropped from her hands.

Dred put his big paw upon it, and looked up into her pale face, only waiting for a signal to tear it in pieces. She sat for an hour in a stupid, sorrow-stricken maze; she then crept up to her little room, and to Dred's great surprise and dismay, slammed the door in his nose. Dred didn't know what to make of it. It had been all "cakes and ale" with him up to this. He had the *entrée* to that *penetrating*, from which he was now so ignominiously excluded. He growled like a double-bass in the bronchitis for twenty minutes, and then betook himself to the kitchen, where lying before the hot cooking range, he meditated on what a poor dog has to suffer from feminine caprice.

Carton wrote every other day, but Kate never got his letters; the gallant captain had made an arrangement with the postman, highly creditable to him as a half-pay officer and a gentleman. Poor Carton, waiting at St. Hillers, and watching the mail, was nearly mad with suspense.

Meanwhile, Kate became very listless and very pale. She had taken Dred into favour again, and walked with him on the strand every day. One morning she said to her father—

"I should like to leave this place for a while."

"Very well, love," replied her affectionate parent, crumbling Carton's last letter in his pocket; "very well; so you shall. By the way, I have sent our clever attorney's bill to be examined by Mr. Percival."

Then there came one more letter from Carton, in an envelope addressed to Captain Delmar, explaining his delay in St. Hillers, and how he might have to delay there as yet another fortnight. But why did not Kate answer his letters?

Captain Delmar replied that Mr. Carton need not on his account, or that of his daughter, in the least accelerate his movements, &c.

When Carton received this, it was near driving him to suicide. She had thrown him over no doubt. An old story. What a fool he had been! Well, he would strive to forget her; and then he very consistently made a fool of himself over her likeness in a locket.

He returned to Waterton; but the Delmars had left.

"Any message from the Captain or Miss Kate for me?" he inquired of faithful Tom Green.