## Chapter XXXIII

### Further Proceedings In Eden, And A Proceeding Out Of It. Martin Makes A Discovery Of Some Importance

From Mr Moddle to Eden is an easy and natural transition. Mr Moddle, living in the atmosphere of Miss Pecksniff's love, dwelt (if he had but known it) in a terrestrial Paradise. The thriving city of Eden was also a terrestrial Paradise, upon the showing of its proprietors. The beautiful Miss Pecksniff might have been poetically described as a something too good for man in his fallen and degraded state. That was exactly the character of the thriving city of Eden, as poetically heightened by Zephaniah Scadder, General Choke, and other worthies; part and parcel of the talons of that great American Eagle, which is always airing itself sky-high in purest aether, and never, no never, never, tumbles down with draggled wings into the mud.

When Mark Tapley, leaving Martin in the architectural and surveying offices, had effectually strengthened and encouraged his own spirits by the contemplation of their joint misfortunes, he proceeded, with new cheerfulness, in search of help; congratulating himself, as he went along, on the enviable position to which he had at last attained.

'I used to think, sometimes,' said Mr Tapley, 'as a desolate island would suit me, but I should only have had myself to provide for there, and being naturally a easy man to manage, there wouldn't have been much credit in THAT. Now here I've got my partner to take care on, and he's something like the sort of man for the purpose. I want a man as is always a-sliding off his legs when he ought to be on 'em. I want a man as is so low down in the school of life that he's always a-making figures of one in his copy-book, and can't get no further. I want a man as is his own great coat and cloak, and is always a-wrapping himself up in himself. And I have got him too,' said Mr Tapley, after a moment's silence. 'What a happiness!'

He paused to look round, uncertain to which of the log-houses he should repair.

'I don't know which to take,' he observed; 'that's the truth. They're equally prepossessing outside, and equally commodious, no doubt, within; being fitted up with every convenience that a Alligator, in a state of natur', could possibly require. Let me see! The citizen as turned out last night, lives under water, in the right hand dog-kennel at the corner. I don't want to trouble him if I can help it, poor man, for he is a melancholy object; a reg'lar Settler in every respect. There's house with a winder, but I am afraid of their being proud. I don't know whether a door ain't too aristocratic; but here goes for the first one!'

He went up to the nearest cabin, and knocked with his hand. Being desired to enter, he complied.

'Neighbour,' said Mark; 'for I AM a neighbour, though you don't know me; I've come a-begging. Hallo! hal - lo! Am I a-bed, and dreaming!'

He made this exclamation on hearing his own name pronounced, and finding himself clasped about the skirts by two little boys, whose faces he had often washed, and whose suppers he had often cooked, on board of that noble and fast-sailing line-of-packet ship, the Screw.

'My eyes is wrong!' said Mark. 'I don't believe 'em. That ain't my fellow-passenger younder, a-nursing her little girl, who, I am sorry to see, is so delicate; and that ain't her husband as come to New York to fetch her. Nor these,' he added, looking down upon the boys, 'ain't them two young shavers as was so familiar to me; though they are uncommon like 'em. That I must confess.'

The woman shed tears, in very joy to see him; the man shook both his hands and would not let them go; the two boys hugged his legs; the sick child in the mother's arms stretched out her burning little fingers, and muttered, in her hoarse, dry throat, his well-remembered name.

It was the same family, sure enough. Altered by the salubrious air of Eden. But the same.

'This is a new sort of a morning call,' said Mark, drawing a long breath. 'It strikes one all of a heap. Wait a little bit! I'm a-coming round fast. That'll do! These gentlemen ain't my friends. Are they on the visiting list of the house?'

The inquiry referred to certain gaunt pigs, who had walked in after him, and were much interested in the heels of the family. As they did not belong to the mansion, they were expelled by the two little boys.

'I ain't superstitious about toads,' said Mark, looking round the room, 'but if you could prevail upon the two or three I see in company, to step out at the same time, my young friends, I think they'd find the open air refreshing. Not that I at all object to 'em. A very handsome animal is a toad,' said Mr Tapley, sitting down upon a stool; 'very spotted; very like a partickler style of old gentleman about the throat; very bright-eyed, very cool, and very slippy. But one sees 'em to the best advantage out of doors perhaps.'

While pretending, with such talk as this, to be perfectly at his ease, and to be the most indifferent and careless of men, Mark Tapley had an eye on all around him. The wan and meagre aspect of the family,

the changed looks of the poor mother, the fevered child she held in her lap, the air of great despondency and little hope on everything, were plain to him, and made a deep impression on his mind. He saw it all as clearly and as quickly, as with his bodily eyes he saw the rough shelves supported by pegs driven between the logs, of which the house was made; the flour-cask in the corner, serving also for a table; the blankets, spades, and other articles against the walls; the damp that blotched the ground; or the crop of vegetable rottenness in every crevice of the hut.

'How is it that you have come here?' asked the man, when their first expressions of surprise were over.

'Why, we come by the steamer last night,' replied Mark. 'Our intention is to make our fortuns with punctuality and dispatch; and to retire upon our property as soon as ever it's realised. But how are you all? You're looking noble!'

'We are but sickly now,' said the poor woman, bending over her child. 'But we shall do better when we are seasoned to the place.'

'There are some here,' thought Mark 'whose seasoning will last for ever.'

But he said cheerfully, 'Do better! To be sure you will. We shall all do better. What we've got to do is, to keep up our spirits, and be neighbourly. We shall come all right in the end, never fear. That reminds me, by the bye, that my partner's all wrong just at present; and that I looked in to beg for him. I wish you'd come and give me your opinion of him, master.'

That must have been a very unreasonable request on the part of Mark Tapley, with which, in their gratitude for his kind offices on board the ship, they would not have complied instantly. The man rose to accompany him without a moment's delay. Before they went, Mark took the sick child in his arms, and tried to comfort the mother; but the hand of death was on it then, he saw.

They found Martin in the house, lying wrapped up in his blanket on the ground. He was, to all appearance, very ill indeed, and shook and shivered horribly; not as people do from cold, but in a frightful kind of spasm or convulsion, that racked his whole body. Mark's friend pronounced his disease an aggravated kind of fever, accompanied with ague; which was very common in those parts, and which he predicted would be worse to-morrow, and for many more to-morrows. He had had it himself off and on, he said, for a couple of years or so; but he was thankful that, while so many he had known had died about him, he had escaped with life.

'And with not too much of that,' thought Mark, surveying his emaciated form. 'Eden for ever!'

They had some medicine in their chest; and this man of sad experience showed Mark how and when to administer it, and how he could best alleviate the sufferings of Martin. His attentions did not stop there; for he was backwards and forwards constantly, and rendered Mark good service in all his brisk attempts to make their situation more endurable. Hope or comfort for the future he could not bestow. The season was a sickly one; the settlement a grave. His child died that night; and Mark, keeping the secret from Martin, helped to bury it, beneath a tree, next day.

With all his various duties of attendance upon Martin (who became the more exacting in his claims, the worse he grew), Mark worked out of doors, early and late; and with the assistance of his friend and others, laboured to do something with their land. Not that he had the least strength of heart or hope, or steady purpose in so doing, beyond the habitual cheerfulness of his disposition, and his amazing power of self-sustainment; for within himself, he looked on their condition as beyond all hope, and, in his own words, 'came out strong' in consequence.

'As to coming out as strong as I could wish, sir,' he confided to Martin in a leisure moment; that is to say, one evening, while he was washing the linen of the establishment, after a hard day's work, 'that I give up. It's a piece of good fortune as never is to happen to me, I see!'

'Would you wish for circumstances stronger than these?' Martin retorted with a groan, from underneath his blanket.

'Why, only see how easy they might have been stronger, sir,' said Mark, 'if it wasn't for the envy of that uncommon fortun of mine, which is always after me, and tripping me up. The night we landed here, I thought things did look pretty jolly. I won't deny it. I thought they did look pretty jolly.'

'How do they look now?' groaned Martin.

'Ah!' said Mark, 'Ah, to be sure. That's the question. How do they look now? On the very first morning of my going out, what do I do? Stumble on a family I know, who are constantly assisting of us in all sorts of ways, from that time to this! That won't do, you know; that ain't what I'd a right to expect. If I had stumbled on a serpent and got bit; or stumbled on a first-rate patriot, and got bowie-knifed, or stumbled on a lot of Sympathisers with inverted shirt-collars, and got made a lion of; I might have distinguished myself, and earned some

credit. As it is, the great object of my voyage is knocked on the head. So it would be, wherever I went. How do you feel to-night, sir?'

'Worse than ever,' said poor Martin.

'That's something,' returned Mark, 'but not enough. Nothing but being very bad myself, and jolly to the last, will ever do me justice.'

'In Heaven's name, don't talk of that,' said Martin with a thrill of terror. 'What should I do, Mark, if you were taken ill!'

Mr Tapley's spirits appeared to be stimulated by this remark, although it was not a very flattering one. He proceeded with his washing in a brighter mood; and observed 'that his glass was arising.'

'There's one good thing in this place, sir,' said Mr Tapley, scrubbing away at the linen, 'as disposes me to be jolly; and that is that it's a reg'lar little United States in itself. There's two or three American settlers left; and they coolly comes over one, even here, sir, as if it was the wholesomest and loveliest spot in the world. But they're like the cock that went and hid himself to save his life, and was found out by the noise he made. They can't help crowing. They was born to do it, and do it they must, whatever comes of it.'

Glancing from his work out at the door as he said these words, Mark's eyes encountered a lean person in a blue frock and a straw hat, with a short black pipe in his mouth, and a great hickory stick studded all over with knots, in his hand; who smoking and chewing as he came along, and spitting frequently, recorded his progress by a train of decomposed tobacco on the ground.

'Here's one on 'em,' cried Mark, 'Hannibal Chollop.'

'Don't let him in,' said Martin, feebly.

'He won't want any letting in,' replied Mark. 'He'll come in, sir.' Which turned out to be quite true, for he did. His face was almost as hard and knobby as his stick; and so were his hands. His head was like an old black hearth-broom. He sat down on the chest with his hat on; and crossing his legs and looking up at Mark, said, without removing his pipe:

'Well, Mr Co.! and how do you git along, sir?'

It may be necessary to observe that Mr Tapley had gravely introduced himself to all strangers, by that name.

'Pretty well, sir; pretty well,' said Mark.

'If this ain't Mr Chuzzlewit, ain't it!' exclaimed the visitor 'How do YOU git along, sir?'

Martin shook his head, and drew the blanket over it involuntarily; for he felt that Hannibal was going to spit; and his eye, as the song says, was upon him.

'You need not regard me, sir,' observed Mr Chollop, complacently. 'I am fever-proof, and likewise agur.'

'Mine was a more selfish motive,' said Martin, looking out again. 'I was afraid you were going to - '

'I can calc'late my distance, sir,' returned Mr Chollop, 'to an inch.'

With a proof of which happy faculty he immediately favoured him.

'I re-quire, sir,' said Hannibal, 'two foot clear in a circ'lar di-rection, and can engage my-self toe keep within it. I HAVE gone ten foot, in a circ'lar di-rection, but that was for a wager.'

'I hope you won it, sir,' said Mark.

'Well, sir, I realised the stakes,' said Chollop. 'Yes, sir.'

He was silent for a time, during which he was actively engaged in the formation of a magic circle round the chest on which he sat. When it was completed, he began to talk again.

'How do you like our country, sir?' he inquired, looking at Martin.

'Not at all,' was the invalid's reply.

Chollop continued to smoke without the least appearance of emotion, until he felt disposed to speak again. That time at length arriving, he took his pipe from his mouth, and said:

'I am not surprised to hear you say so. It re-quires An elevation, and A preparation of the intellect. The mind of man must be prepared for Freedom, Mr Co.'

He addressed himself to Mark; because he saw that Martin, who wished him to go, being already half-mad with feverish irritation, which the droning voice of this new horror rendered almost insupportable, had closed his eyes, and turned on his uneasy bed.

'A little bodily preparation wouldn't be amiss, either, would it, sir,' said Mark, 'in the case of a blessed old swamp like this?'

'Do you con-sider this a swamp, sir?' inquired Chollop gravely.

'Why yes, sir,' returned Mark. 'I haven't a doubt about it myself.'

'The sentiment is quite Europian,' said the major, 'and does not surprise me; what would your English millions say to such a swamp in England, sir?'

'They'd say it was an uncommon nasty one, I should think, said Mark; 'and that they would rather be inoculated for fever in some other way.'

'Europian!' remarked Chollop, with sardonic pity. 'Quite Europian!'

And there he sat. Silent and cool, as if the house were his; smoking away like a factory chimney.

Mr Chollop was, of course, one of the most remarkable men in the country; but he really was a notorious person besides. He was usually described by his friends, in the South and West, as 'a splendid sample of our na-tive raw material, sir,' and was much esteemed for his devotion to rational Liberty; for the better propagation whereof he usually carried a brace of revolving pistols in his coat pocket, with seven barrels a-piece. He also carried, amongst other trinkets, a sword-stick, which he called his 'Tickler.' and a great knife, which (for he was a man of a pleasant turn of humour) he called 'Ripper,' in allusion to its usefulness as a means of ventilating the stomach of any adversary in a close contest. He had used these weapons with distinguished effect in several instances, all duly chronicled in the newspapers; and was greatly beloved for the gallant manner in which he had 'jobbed out' the eye of one gentleman, as he was in the act of knocking at his own street-door.

Mr Chollop was a man of a roving disposition; and, in any less advanced community, might have been mistaken for a violent vagabond. But his fine qualities being perfectly understood and appreciated in those regions where his lot was cast, and where he had many kindred spirits to consort with, he may be regarded as having been born under a fortunate star, which is not always the case with a man so much before the age in which he lives. Preferring, with a view to the gratification of his tickling and ripping fancies, to dwell upon the outskirts of society, and in the more remote towns and cities, he was in the habit of emigrating from place to place, and establishing in each some business - usually a newspaper - which he presently sold; for the most part closing the bargain by challenging, stabbing, pistolling, or gouging the new editor, before he had quite taken possession of the property.

He had come to Eden on a speculation of this kind, but had abandoned it, and was about to leave. He always introduced himself to strangers as a worshipper of Freedom; was the consistent advocate of Lynch law, and slavery; and invariably recommended, both in print and speech, the 'tarring and feathering' of any unpopular person who differed from himself. He called this 'planting the standard of civilization in the wilder gardens of My country.'

There is little doubt that Chollop would have planted this standard in Eden at Mark's expense, in return for his plainness of speech (for the genuine Freedom is dumb, save when she vaunts herself), but for the utter desolation and decay prevailing in the settlement, and his own approaching departure from it. As it was, he contented himself with showing Mark one of the revolving-pistols, and asking him what he thought of that weapon.

'It ain't long since I shot a man down with that, sir, in the State of IllinOY,' observed Chollop.

'Did you, indeed!' said Mark, without the smallest agitation. 'Very free of you. And very independent!'

'I shot him down, sir,' pursued Chollop, 'for asserting in the Spartan Portico, a tri-weekly journal, that the ancient Athenians went a-head of the present Locofoco Ticket.'

'And what's that?' asked Mark.

'Europian not to know,' said Chollop, smoking placidly. 'Europian quite!'

After a short devotion to the interests of the magic circle, he resumed the conversation by observing:

'You won't half feel yourself at home in Eden, now?'

'No,' said Mark, 'I don't.'

'You miss the imposts of your country. You miss the house dues?' observed Chollop.

'And the houses - rather,' said Mark.

'No window dues here, sir,' observed Chollop.

'And no windows to put 'em on,' said Mark.

'No stakes, no dungeons, no blocks, no racks, no scaffolds, no thumbscrews, no pikes, no pillories,' said Chollop.

'Nothing but rewolwers and bowie-knives,' returned Mark. 'And what are they? Not worth mentioning!'

The man who had met them on the night of their arrival came crawling up at this juncture, and looked in at the door.

'Well, sir,' said Chollop. 'How do YOU git along?'

He had considerable difficulty in getting along at all, and said as much in reply.

'Mr Co. And me, sir,' observed Chollop, 'are disputating a piece. He ought to be slicked up pretty smart to disputate between the Old World and the New, I do expect?'

'Well!' returned the miserable shadow. 'So he had.'

'I was merely observing, sir,' said Mark, addressing this new visitor, 'that I looked upon the city in which we have the honour to live, as being swampy. What's your sentiments?'

'I opinionate it's moist perhaps, at certain times,' returned the man.

'But not as moist as England, sir?' cried Chollop, with a fierce expression in his face.

'Oh! Not as moist as England; let alone its Institutions,' said the man.

'I should hope there ain't a swamp in all Americay, as don't whip THAT small island into mush and molasses,' observed Chollop, decisively. 'You bought slick, straight, and right away, of Scadder, sir?' to Mark.

He answered in the affirmative. Mr Chollop winked at the other citizen.

'Scadder is a smart man, sir? He is a rising man? He is a man as will come up'ards, right side up, sir?' Mr Chollop winked again at the other citizen.

'He should have his right side very high up, if I had my way,' said Mark. 'As high up as the top of a good tall gallows, perhaps.'

Mr Chollop was so delighted at the smartness of his excellent countryman having been too much for the Britisher, and at the

Britisher's resenting it, that he could contain himself no longer, and broke forth in a shout of delight. But the strangest exposition of this ruling passion was in the other - the pestilence-stricken, broken, miserable shadow of a man - who derived so much entertainment from the circumstance that he seemed to forget his own ruin in thinking of it, and laughed outright when he said 'that Scadder was a smart man, and had draw'd a lot of British capital that way, as sure as sun-up.'

After a full enjoyment of this joke, Mr Hannibal Chollop sat smoking and improving the circle, without making any attempts either to converse or to take leave; apparently labouring under the not uncommon delusion that for a free and enlightened citizen of the United States to convert another man's house into a spittoon for two or three hours together, was a delicate attention, full of interest and politeness, of which nobody could ever tire. At last he rose.

'I am a-going easy,' he observed.

Mark entreated him to take particular care of himself.

'Afore I go,' he said sternly, 'I have got a leetle word to say to you. You are darnation 'cute, you are.'

Mark thanked him for the compliment.

'But you are much too 'cute to last. I can't con-ceive of any spotted Painter in the bush, as ever was so riddled through and through as you will be, I bet.'

'What for?' asked Mark.

'We must be cracked up, sir,' retorted Chollop, in a tone of menace. 'You are not now in A despotic land. We are a model to the airth, and must be jist cracked-up, I tell you.'

'What! I speak too free, do I?' cried Mark.

'I have draw'd upon A man, and fired upon A man for less,' said Chollop, frowning. 'I have know'd strong men obleeged to make themselves uncommon skase for less. I have know'd men Lynched for less, and beaten into punkin'-sarse for less, by an enlightened people. We are the intellect and virtue of the airth, the cream of human natur', and the flower Of moral force. Our backs is easy ris. We must be cracked-up, or they rises, and we snarls. We shows our teeth, I tell you, fierce. You'd better crack us up, you had!'

After the delivery of this caution, Mr Chollop departed; with Ripper, Tickler, and the revolvers, all ready for action on the shortest notice.

'Come out from under the blanket, sir,' said Mark, 'he's gone. What's this!' he added softly; kneeling down to look into his partner's face, and taking his hot hand. 'What's come of all that chattering and swaggering? He's wandering in his mind to-night, and don't know me!'

Martin indeed was dangerously ill; very near his death. He lay in that state many days, during which time Mark's poor friends, regardless of themselves, attended him. Mark, fatigued in mind and body; working all the day and sitting up at night; worn with hard living and the unaccustomed toil of his new life; surrounded by dismal and discouraging circumstances of every kind; never complained or yielded in the least degree. If ever he had thought Martin selfish or inconsiderate, or had deemed him energetic only by fits and starts, and then too passive for their desperate fortunes, he now forgot it all. He remembered nothing but the better qualities of his fellow-wanderer, and was devoted to him, heart and hand.

Many weeks elapsed before Martin was strong enough to move about with the help of a stick and Mark's arm; and even then his recovery, for want of wholesome air and proper nourishment, was very slow. He was yet in a feeble and weak condition, when the misfourtune he had so much dreaded fell upon them. Mark was taken ill. Mark fought against it; but the malady fought harder, and his efforts were in vain.

'Floored for the present, sir,' he said one morning, sinking back upon his bed; 'but jolly!'

Floored indeed, and by a heavy blow! As any one but Martin might have known beforehand.

If Mark's friends had been kind to Martin (and they had been very), they were twenty times kinder to Mark. And now it was Martin's turn to work, and sit beside the bed and watch, and listen through the long, long nights, to every sound in the gloomy wilderness; and hear poor Mr Tapley, in his wandering fancy, playing at skittles in the Dragon, making love-remonstrances to Mrs Lupin, getting his sea-legs on board the Screw, travelling with old Tom Pinch on English roads, and burning stumps of trees in Eden, all at once.

But whenever Martin gave him drink or medicine, or tended him in any way, or came into the house returning from some drudgery without, the patient Mr Tapley brightened up and cried: 'I'm jolly, sir; 'I'm jolly!'

Now, when Martin began to think of this, and to look at Mark as he lay there; never reproaching him by so much as an expression of regret; never murmuring; always striving to be manful and staunch; he began to think, how was it that this man who had had so few advantages, was so much better than he who had had so many? And attendance upon a sick bed, but especially the sick bed of one whom we have been accustomed to see in full activity and vigour, being a great breeder of reflection, he began to ask himself in what they differed.

He was assisted in coming to a conclusion on this head by the frequent presence of Mark's friend, their fellow-passenger across the ocean, which suggested to him that in regard to having aided her, for example, they had differed very much. Somehow he coupled Tom Pinch with this train of reflection; and thinking that Tom would be very likely to have struck up the same sort of acquaintance under similar circumstances, began to think in what respects two people so extremely different were like each other, and were unlike him. At first sight there was nothing very distressing in these meditations, but they did undoubtedly distress him for all that.

Martin's nature was a frank and generous one; but he had been bred up in his grandfather's house; and it will usually be found that the meaner domestic vices propagate themselves to be their own antagonists. Selfishness does this especially; so do suspicion, cunning, stealth, and covetous propensities. Martin had unconsciously reasoned as a child, 'My guardian takes so much thought of himself, that unless I do the like by MYself, I shall be forgotten.' So he had grown selfish.

But he had never known it. If any one had taxed him with the vice, he would have indignantly repelled the accusation, and conceived himself unworthily aspersed. He never would have known it, but that being newly risen from a bed of dangerous sickness, to watch by such another couch, he felt how nearly Self had dropped into the grave, and what a poor dependent, miserable thing it was.

It was natural for him to reflect - he had months to do it in - upon his own escape, and Mark's extremity. This led him to consider which of them could be the better spared, and why? Then the curtain slowly rose a very little way; and Self, Self, Self, was shown below.

He asked himself, besides, when dreading Mark's decease (as all men do and must, at such a time), whether he had done his duty by him, and had deserved and made a good response to his fidelity and zeal. No. Short as their companionship had been, he felt in many, many instances, that there was blame against himself; and still inquiring

why, the curtain slowly rose a little more, and Self, Self, Self, dilated on the scene.

It was long before he fixed the knowledge of himself so firmly in his mind that he could thoroughly discern the truth; but in the hideous solitude of that most hideous place, with Hope so far removed, Ambition quenched, and Death beside him rattling at the very door, reflection came, as in a plague-beleaguered town; and so he felt and knew the failing of his life, and saw distinctly what an ugly spot it was.

Eden was a hard school to learn so hard a lesson in; but there were teachers in the swamp and thicket, and the pestilential air, who had a searching method of their own.

He made a solemn resolution that when his strength returned he would not dispute the point or resist the conviction, but would look upon it as an established fact, that selfishness was in his breast, and must be rooted out. He was so doubtful (and with justice) of his own character, that he determined not to say one word of vain regret or good resolve to Mark, but steadily to keep his purpose before his own eyes solely; and there was not a jot of pride in this; nothing but humility and steadfastness; the best armour he could wear. So low had Eden brought him down. So high had Eden raised him up.

After a long and lingering illness (in certain forlorn stages of which, when too far gone to speak, he had feebly written 'jolly!' on a slate), Mark showed some symptoms of returning health. They came and went, and flickered for a time; but he began to mend at last decidedly; and after that continued to improve from day to day.

As soon as he was well enough to talk without fatigue, Martin consulted him upon a project he had in his mind, and which a few months back he would have carried into execution without troubling anybody's head but his own.

'Ours is a desperate case,' said Martin. 'Plainly. The place is deserted; its failure must have become known; and selling what we have bought to any one, for anything, is hopeless, even if it were honest. We left home on a mad enterprise, and have failed. The only hope left us, the only one end for which we have now to try, is to quit this settlement for ever, and get back to England. Anyhow! by any means! only to get back there, Mark.'

'That's all, sir,' returned Mr Tapley, with a significant stress upon the words; 'only that!'

'Now, upon this side of the water,' said Martin, 'we have but one friend who can help us, and that is Mr Bevan.'

'I thought of him when you was ill,' said Mark.

'But for the time that would be lost, I would even write to my grandfather,' Martin went on to say, 'and implore him for money to free us from this trap into which we were so cruelly decoyed. Shall I try Mr Bevan first?'

'He's a very pleasant sort of a gentleman,' said Mark. 'I think so.'

'The few goods we brought here, and in which we spent our money, would produce something if sold,' resumed Martin; 'and whatever they realise shall be paid him instantly. But they can't be sold here.'

'There's nobody but corpses to buy 'em,' said Mr Tapley, shaking his head with a rueful air, 'and pigs.'

'Shall I tell him so, and only ask him for money enough to enable us by the cheapest means to reach New York, or any port from which we may hope to get a passage home, by serving in any capacity? Explaining to him at the same time how I am connected, and that I will endeavour to repay him, even through my grandfather, immediately on our arrival in England?'

'Why to be sure,' said Mark: 'he can only say no, and he may say yes. If you don't mind trying him, sir - '

'Mind!' exclaimed Martin. 'I am to blame for coming here, and I would do anything to get away. I grieve to think of the past. If I had taken your opinion sooner, Mark, we never should have been here, I am certain.'

Mr Tapley was very much surprised at this admission, but protested, with great vehemence, that they would have been there all the same; and that he had set his heart upon coming to Eden, from the first word he had ever heard of it.

Martin then read him a letter to Mr Bevan, which he had already prepared. It was frankly and ingenuously written, and described their situation without the least concealment; plainly stated the miseries they had undergone; and preferred their request in modest but straightforward terms. Mark highly commended it; and they determined to dispatch it by the next steamboat going the right way, that might call to take in wood at Eden - where there was plenty of wood to spare. Not knowing how to address Mr Bevan at his own place of abode, Martin superscribed it to the care of the memorable Mr

Norris of New York, and wrote upon the cover an entreaty that it might be forwarded without delay.

More than a week elapsed before a boat appeared; but at length they were awakened very early one morning by the high-pressure snorting of the 'Esau Slodge;' named after one of the most remarkable men in the country, who had been very eminent somewhere. Hurrying down to the landing-place, they got it safe on board; and waiting anxiously to see the boat depart, stopped up the gangway; an instance of neglect which caused the 'Capting' of the Esau Slodge to 'wish he might be sifted fine as flour, and whittled small as chips; that if they didn't come off that there fixing right smart too, he'd spill 'em in the drink;' whereby the Capting metaphorically said he'd throw them in the river.

They were not likely to receive an answer for eight or ten weeks at the earliest. In the meantime they devoted such strength as they had to the attempted improvement of their land; to clearing some of it, and preparing it for useful purposes. Monstrously defective as their farming was, still it was better than their neighbours'; for Mark had some practical knowledge of such matters, and Martin learned of him; whereas the other settlers who remained upon the putrid swamp (a mere handful, and those withered by disease), appeared to have wandered there with the idea that husbandry was the natural gift of all mankind. They helped each other after their own manner in these struggles, and in all others; but they worked as hopelessly and sadly as a gang of convicts in a penal settlement.

Often at night when Mark and Martin were alone, and lying down to sleep, they spoke of home, familiar places, houses, roads, and people whom they knew; sometimes in the lively hope of seeing them again, and sometimes with a sorrowful tranquillity, as if that hope were dead. It was a source of great amazement to Mark Tapley to find, pervading all these conversations, a singular alteration in Martin.

'I don't know what to make of him,' he thought one night, 'he ain't what I supposed. He don't think of himself half as much. I'll try him again. Asleep, sir?'

'No, Mark.'

'Thinking of home, sir?'

'Yes, Mark.'

'So was I, sir. I was wondering how Mr Pinch and Mr Pecksniff gets on now.'

'Poor Tom!' said Martin, thoughtfully.

'Weak-minded man, sir,' observed Mr Tapley. 'Plays the organ for nothing, sir. Takes no care of himself?'

'I wish he took a little more, indeed,' said Martin. 'Though I don't know why I should. We shouldn't like him half as well, perhaps.'

'He gets put upon, sir,' hinted Mark.

'Yes!' said Martin, after a short silence. 'I know that, Mark.'

He spoke so regretfully that his partner abandoned the theme, and was silent for a short time until he had thought of another.

'Ah, sir!' said Mark, with a sigh. 'Dear me! You've ventured a good deal for a young lady's love!'

'I tell you what. I'm not so sure of that, Mark,' was the reply; so hastily and energetically spoken, that Martin sat up in his bed to give it. 'I begin to be far from clear upon it. You may depend upon it she is very unhappy. She has sacrificed her peace of mind; she has endangered her interests very much; she can't run away from those who are jealous of her, and opposed to her, as I have done. She has to endure, Mark; to endure without the possibility of action, poor girl! I begin to think that she has more to bear than ever I had. Upon my soul I do!'

Mr Tapley opened his eyes wide in the dark; but did not interrupt.

'And I'll tell you a secret, Mark,' said Martin, 'since we ARE upon this subject. That ring - '

'Which ring, sir?' Mark inquired, opening his eyes still wider.

'That ring she gave me when we parted, Mark. She bought it; bought it; knowing I was poor and proud (Heaven help me! Proud!) and wanted money.'

'Who says so, sir?' asked Mark.

'I say so. I know it. I thought of it, my good fellow, hundreds of times, while you were lying ill. And like a beast, I took it from her hand, and wore it on my own, and never dreamed of this even at the moment when I parted with it, when some faint glimmering of the truth might surely have possessed me! But it's late,' said Martin, checking himself, 'and you are weak and tired, I know. You only talk to cheer me up. Good night! God bless you, Mark!'

'God bless you, sir! But I'm reg'larly defrauded,' thought Mr Tapley, turning round with a happy face. 'It's a swindle. I never entered for this sort of service. There'll be no credit in being jolly with HIM!'

The time wore on, and other steamboats coming from the point on which their hopes were fixed, arrived to take in wood; but still no answer to the letter. Rain, heat, foul slime, and noxious vapour, with all the ills and filthy things they bred, prevailed. The earth, the air, the vegetation, and the water that they drank, all teemed with deadly properties. Their fellow-passenger had lost two children long before; and buried now her last. Such things are much too common to be widely known or cared for. Smart citizens grow rich, and friendless victims smart and die, and are forgotten. That is all.

At last a boat came panting up the ugly river, and stopped at Eden. Mark was waiting at the wood hut when it came, and had a letter handed to him from on board. He bore it off to Martin. They looked at one another, trembling.

'It feels heavy,' faltered Martin. And opening it a little roll of dollar-notes fell out upon the ground.

What either of them said, or did, or felt, at first, neither of them knew. All Mark could ever tell was, that he was at the river's bank again out of breath, before the boat had gone, inquiring when it would retrace its track and put in there.

The answer was, in ten or twelve days; notwithstanding which they began to get their goods together and to tie them up that very night. When this stage of excitement was passed, each of them believed (they found this out, in talking of it afterwards) that he would surely die before the boat returned.

They lived, however, and it came, after the lapse of three long crawling weeks. At sunrise, on an autumn day, they stood upon her deck.

'Courage! We shall meet again!' cried Martin, waving his hand to two thin figures on the bank. 'In the Old World!'

'Or in the next one,' added Mark below his breath. 'To see them standing side by side, so quiet, is a'most the worst of all!'

They looked at one another as the vessel moved away, and then looked backward at the spot from which it hurried fast. The log-house, with the open door, and drooping trees about it; the stagnant morning mist, and red sun, dimly seen beyond; the vapour rising up from land and river; the quick stream making the loathsome banks it washed

more flat and dull; how often they returned in dreams! How often it was happiness to wake and find them Shadows that had vanished!