



Les Misérables

AN ENGAGING VISUAL
JOURNEY

VICTOR HUGO

ILLUSTRATED by

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*Love is a portion of the soul itself,
and it is of the same nature as the celestial
breathing of the atmosphere of paradise.*

*In all heavens, beauty reigns,
Its beings possess much of divinity.*

Peace and harmony rule these realms,

Their beings know not the word war.

VICTOR HUGO





Madame Magloire understood him and, going to his bedroom, took from the mantel the two silver candlesticks, lighted the candles, and placed them on the table.

“Monsieur Curé,” said the man, “you are good; you don’t despise me. You take me into your house, you light your candles for me, and I haven’t kept from you where I come from and how miserable I am.”

The bishop, sitting near him, touched his hand gently and said, “You need not tell me who you are. This is not my house; it is the house of Christ. It does not ask any comer whether he has a name, but whether he has an affliction. You are suffering; you are hungry and thirsty; be welcome. And do not thank me; do not tell me that I take you into my house. This is the home of no man, except him who needs an asylum. I tell you, who are a traveler, that you are more at home here than I; whatever is here is yours. What need have I to know your name? Besides, before you told me, I knew it.”

The man opened his eyes in astonishment. “Really? You knew my name?”

“Yes,” answered the bishop. “Your name is My Brother.”

“Stop, stop, Monsieur Curé!” exclaimed the man. “I was famished when I came in, but you are so kind that now I don’t know what I am; that is all gone.”

The bishop looked at him again and said, “You have seen much suffering?”

“Oh, the red blouse*, the ball and chain, the plank to sleep on, the heat, the cold, the galley’s crew, the lash, the double chain for nothing, the dungeon for a word, even when sick in bed, the chain. Nineteen years! I am forty-six, and now a yellow passport. That is all.”

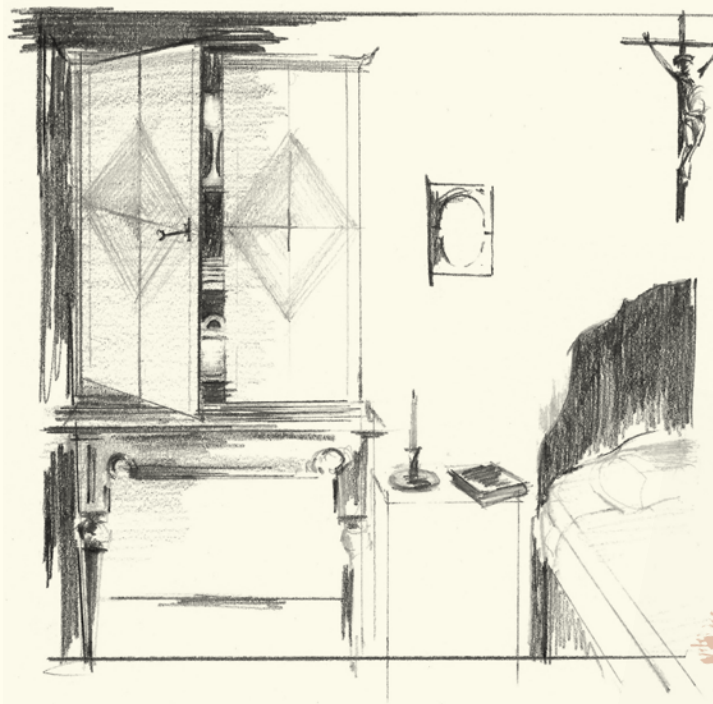
“Yes,” answered the bishop, “you have left a place of suffering. But listen, if you are leaving that sorrowful place with hate and anger against men, you are worthy of compassion. If you leave it with goodwill, gentleness, and peace, you are better than any of us.”

Meantime Madame Magloire had served up supper. The

bishop’s countenance was lighted up with an expression of pleasure, peculiar to hospitable natures. “To supper!” he said briskly, as was his habit. The bishop said the blessing and then served the soup himself, according to his usual custom. The man fell to eating greedily.

Toward the end, at dessert, the man appeared to be very tired. The bishop said grace, after which he turned toward this man and said, “You must be in great need of sleep.” Madame Magloire quickly removed the tablecloth. Monseigneur Bienvenu took one of the silver candlesticks from the table, handed the other to his guest, and said to him, “Monsieur, I will show you to your room.” The man followed him.

The house was so arranged that one could reach the alcove in the oratory only by passing through the bishop’s sleeping chamber. Just as they were passing through this room Madame Magloire was putting up the silver in the cupboard at the head of the bed. It was the last thing she did every night before going to bed.



The bishop left his guest in the alcove, before a clean white bed. The man set down the candlestick upon a small table.

“Come,” said the bishop, “a good night’s rest to you. Tomorrow morning, before you go, you shall have a cup of warm milk from our cows.”

“Thank you, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said the traveler. “Have you reflected upon it? Who tells you that I am not a murderer?”

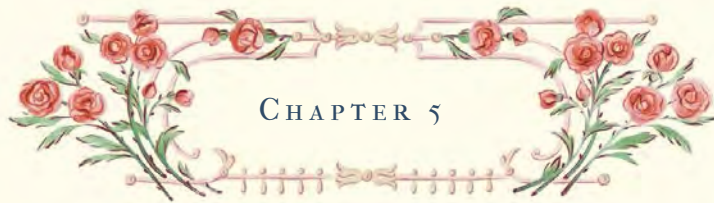
The bishop responded, “God will take care of that.”

Then with gravity, moving his lips like one praying or talking to himself, he raised two fingers of his right hand and blessed the man, who, however, did not bow; and without turning his head or looking behind him, went into his chamber.

When the alcove was occupied, a heavy serge* curtain was drawn in the oratory, concealing the altar. Before this curtain the bishop knelt as he exited and offered a short prayer. A moment afterward he was walking in the garden, surrendering mind and soul to the grand and mysterious works of God, which night makes visible to the eye.

As to the man, he was so completely exhausted that he did not even avail himself of the clean white sheets; he blew out the candle and fell on the bed, dressed as he was, into a sound sleep.

Midnight struck as the bishop came back to his chamber. A few moments afterward, all in the little house slept.



CHAPTER 5

Born of a poor peasant family, Jean Valjean had not been taught to read. When he was grown, he chose the occupation of a pruner at Faverolles. His mother’s name was Jeanne Mathieu, his father’s Jean Valjean. He had lost his parents when very young. His mother died of fever; his father, a pruner before him, was killed by a fall from a tree. Jean Valjean now had but one relative left, his sister, a widow with seven children, girls and boys. This sister had brought up Jean Valjean, and, as long as her husband lived, she had taken care of her young brother. Her husband died, leaving the eldest of these children at eight and the youngest at one year old. Jean Valjean had just reached his twenty-fifth year; he took the father’s place, and, in his turn, supported the sister who reared him. This he did naturally, as a duty. His youth was spent in rough and ill-recompensed labor. He had not time to be in love.

He earned in the pruning season eighteen sous a day; after that he hired out as a reaper, workman, teamster, or laborer. He did whatever he could find to do. His sister worked, but what could she do with seven little children? It was a sad group, which misery was grasping and closing upon, little by little. There was a very severe winter; Jean had no work, and the family had no bread—literally, no bread, and seven children.

red blouse : the predominate color of the prisoner’s costumes was red, the traditional color of the uniforms worn by the crews on the galleys; the costumes of the prisoners consisted of a white shirt, yellow trousers, red vest and smock and a cap which had different colors depending on the sentence duration; those sentenced to life imprisonment wore green caps, all the others red caps

serge : a durable twilled woolen or worsted fabric





It was Monsieur Madeleine's intention to go to Arras to the trial of this Champmathieu and there expose himself. But when he reached his home, he hesitated. He was safe; why should he stir up the deeds, the memories of his past life? He had kept in a secret cupboard all he possessed when he first came to Montreuil-sur-Mer. He burned them one by one in his hearth. As the old coat fell apart in charred pieces, a little silver coin fell on the bricks with a ringing sound. It was the forty-sous piece stolen from the little Savoyard. Suddenly his eyes fell upon the two silver candlesticks on the mantel, which were glistening dimly in the firelight.

"Stop!" thought he. "Jean Valjean is contained in them too. They also must be destroyed."

He took the two candlesticks. There was fire enough to melt them quickly into an unrecognizable ingot*. He stirred the embers with one of the candlesticks. A minute more, and they would have been in the fire.

At that moment, it seemed to him that he heard a voice crying within him, "Jean Valjean! Jean Valjean!"

He felt that the bishop was there, that the bishop was present all the more now that he was dead, and was looking fixedly at him, that henceforth Mayor Madeleine with all his virtues would be abominable to him, and the galley slave, Jean Valjean, would be admirable and pure in his sight. That men saw his mask, but the bishop saw his face. That men saw his life, but the bishop saw his conscience. He must then go to Arras, deliver the wrong Jean Valjean, denounce the right one. Alas! That was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the final step to be taken, but he must do it. He could only enter into sanctity in the eyes of God by returning into infamy in the eyes of men!

He put his books in order. He threw into the fire a package of promissory notes which he held against needy small traders. He wrote a letter, which he sealed, and upon the envelope wrote, *Monsieur Laffitte, banker, Rue d'Artois, Paris*. He drew from a secretary a pocketbook containing some banknotes and his passport.

He put the letter to Monsieur Laffitte in his pocket as well as the pocketbook, and began to walk about the room. He still saw his duty clearly written in luminous letters which flared out before his eyes, and moved with his gaze: "Go! Avow thy name! Denounce thyself!"

The clock struck three. For five hours he had been walking thus, almost without interruption, when he dropped into his chair. He fell asleep and dreamed. But suddenly he awoke. He was chilly. A cold morning wind made the sashes of the



still-open window swing on their hinges. The fire had gone out. The candle was low in the socket. The night was yet dark.

He arose and went to the window. There were still no stars in the sky. From his window he could look into the courtyard and into the street. A harsh, rattling noise that suddenly resounded from the ground made him look down. He saw below him two red stars, whose rays danced back and forth grotesquely in the shadow. His mind was still half-buried in the mist of his reverie.

This confusion, however, faded away; a second noise like the first awakened him completely; he looked, and he saw that these two stars were the lamps of a carriage. It was a tilbury drawn by a small white horse. The noise which he had heard was the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the pavement.

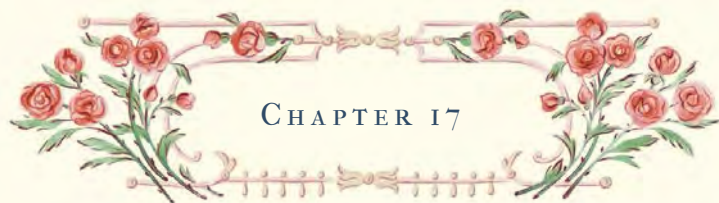
At that moment there was a loud rap at the door of his room. "Who is there?"

Someone answered, "I, Monsieur Mayor."

He recognized the voice of the old woman, his portress*.

"Monsieur Mayor, what shall I say to the driver?"

"Say that I am coming down."



CHAPTER 17

All that day Madeleine drove till he finally reached Arras, and there, through the courtesy of the judge of the court of assizes*, he was admitted to the bench where those who were to rule on the case of Champmathieu were sitting. The time had come for closing the case. The judge commanded the accused to rise, and put the usual question: "Have you anything to add to your defense?"

He could not persuade anyone that he was innocent. Finally, to bring added weight against him, the prosecuting

attorney brought in the three convicts: Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille. All three swore that they recognized in him their former fellow prisoner Jean Valjean.

It was evident that the man was lost.

"Officers," said the judge, "enforce order. I am about to sum up the case."

At this moment there was a movement near the judge. A voice was heard exclaiming, "Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochepaille, look this way!"

All eyes turned toward the spot whence it came. A man, who had been sitting among the privileged spectators behind the court, had risen and was standing in the center of the hall. The judge, the prosecuting attorney, and twenty other persons recognized him and exclaimed at once, "Monsieur Madeleine!"

It was he, indeed. The clerk's lamp lighted up his face. He held his hat in his hand; there was no disorder in his dress; his overcoat was carefully buttoned. He was very pale and trembled slightly. His hair was now perfectly white. All eyes were strained toward him. Before even the judge and prosecuting attorney could say a word, the man, whom all up to this moment called Monsieur Madeleine, had advanced toward the witnesses.

"Do you not recognize me?" said he.

All three stood confounded and indicated by a shake of the head that they did not know him. Monsieur Madeleine turned toward the jurors and court and said in a mild voice, "Gentlemen of the jury, release the accused. Your Honor, order my arrest. He is not the man whom you seek; it is I. I am Jean Valjean."

ingot : a block of gold, silver or other metal

portress : a woman doorkeeper of a convent or apartment building

Court of Assizes : a criminal trial court with limited jurisdiction to hear cases involving defendants accused of felonies *



There was such a post in the alley, put there for the convenience of the people who lived along it. But this night, thanks to the ample light afforded by the moon, it was not lit. Jean Valjean crossed at a bound, sprang the bolt of the little box with the point of his knife, and an instant after was back at the side of Cosette. He had a rope!

Meanwhile the hour, the place, the darkness, the preoccupation of Jean Valjean, his actions, his going to and fro, all this began to disturb Cosette. Any other child would have uttered loud cries long before. She contented herself with pulling Jean Valjean by the skirt of his coat. The sound of an approaching patrol was constantly becoming more and more distinct.

“Father,” said she, in a whisper, “I am afraid. Who is it that is coming?”

“Hush!” answered the unhappy man. “It is the Thénardiess.”

Cosette shuddered. He added, “Don’t say a word; I’ll take care of her. If you cry, if you make any noise, the Thénardiess will hear you. She is coming to catch you.”

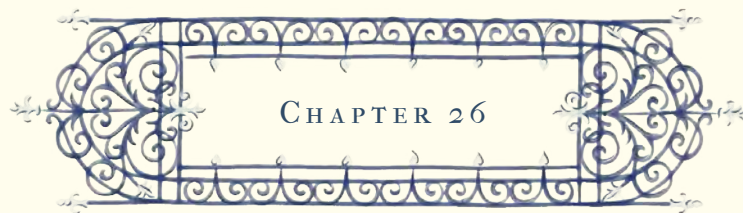
Then, without any haste, with a firm and rapid decision, so much the more remarkable at such a moment when the patrol and Javert might come upon him at any instant, he took off his cravat, passed it around Cosette’s body under the arms, taking care that it should not hurt the child, attached this cravat to an end of the rope, took the other end of the rope in his teeth, took off his shoes and stockings and threw them over the wall, climbed upon a pile of masonry, and began to raise himself in the angle of the wall and the gable with as much solidity and certainty as if he had the rungs of a ladder under his heels and his elbows. Half a minute had not passed before he was on his knees on the top of the wall.

Cosette watched him, stupefied, without saying a word. Jean Valjean’s charge and the name of Thénardiess had made her dumb. All at once, she heard Jean Valjean’s voice calling to her in a low whisper, “Put your back against the wall.”

She obeyed.

“Don’t speak, and don’t be afraid,” added Jean Valjean. And she felt herself lifted from the ground.

Before she had time to think where she was, she was at the top of the wall. Jean Valjean seized her, put her on his back, took her two little hands in his left hand, lay down flat and crawled along the top of the wall until he reached the lime tree, and made his way to the ground. Whether from terror or from courage, Cosette had not uttered a whisper.



Jean Valjean found himself in a sort of garden, very large, oblong, with a row of large poplars at the further end, some tall forest trees in the corners, and a clear space in the center. There were here and there stone benches which seemed black with moss. The walks were bordered with sorry little shrubs perfectly straight.

On one side there was a small building in ruins, but with some dismantled rooms, one of which was well filled and appeared to serve as a shed. A larger building ran back on the alley and presented upon this garden two square facades.

No other house could be seen. The further end of the garden was lost in mist and in darkness. Still, he could make out walls intersecting it, as if there were other cultivated grounds beyond. Nothing can be imagined more wild and more solitary than this garden. There was no one there, which was very natural on account of the hour, but it did not seem as if the place were made for anybody to walk in, even in broad noon.

Jean Valjean put on his shoes; then he entered the shed with Cosette. Cosette trembled and pressed close to his side. They heard the tumultuous clamor of the patrol ransacking the

“Because they do not pay their rent; they owe for two terms.”

“How much is that?”

“Twenty francs,” said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer.

“Here,” said he, to the old woman, “there are twenty-five francs. Pay for these poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them that it is from me.”



Marius was now a fine-looking young man, of medium height, with heavy jet-black hair, a high intelligent brow, a frank and calm expression, the reddest lips, and the whitest teeth. At the time of his most wretched poverty, he noticed that girls turned when he passed, and with a deathly feeling in his heart he fled or hid himself. He thought they looked at him on account of his old clothes and that they were laughing at him; the truth is, they looked at him because of his graceful appearance. This wordless misunderstanding between him and the pretty girls he met had rendered him hostile to society. He attached himself to none; he fled before all.

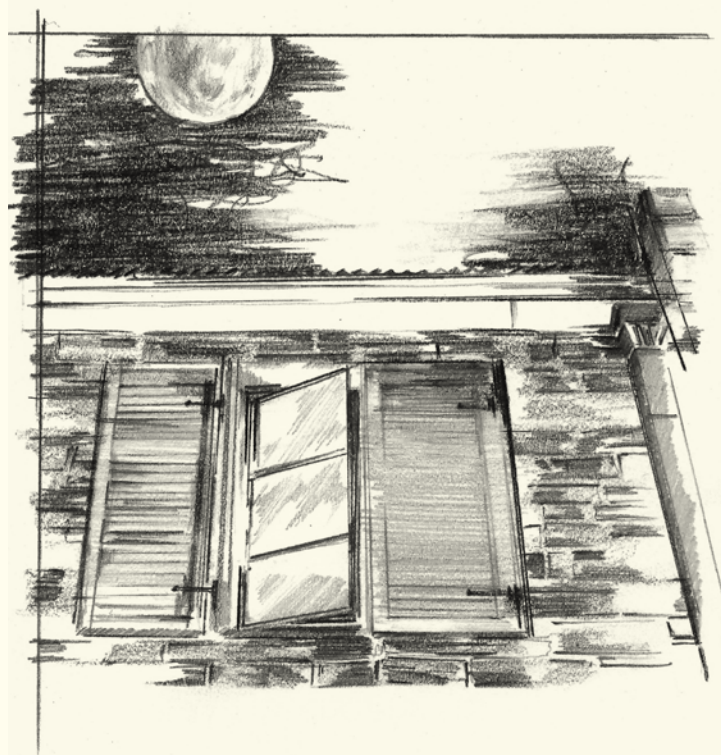
There were, however, in all the immensity of creation, two women from whom Marius never fled nor avoided. One was the old woman with the beard who swept his room; the other was a little girl whom he saw very often and whom he never looked at.

For more than a year Marius had noticed in a retired walk of the Luxembourg gardens a man and a girl quite young, nearly always sitting side by side on the same seat, near the RUE DE L'OUËST. Whenever chance led Marius to this walk, and it was almost every day, he found this couple there. The man might

be sixty years old; he seemed sad and serious; his whole person presented the robust but wearied appearance of a soldier retired from active service. Had he worn a decoration, Marius would have said he was an old officer. His expression was kind, but it did not invite approach, and he never returned a look. He wore a blue coat and a broad-brimmed hat, a black cravat, and Quaker linen. His hair was perfectly white.

The young girl who accompanied him looked about thirteen or fourteen. She wore the dress peculiar to the convent schoolgirl, an ill-fitting garment of coarse black. They appeared to be father and daughter. For two or three days Marius scrutinized this old man, who was not yet an aged man, and this little girl, not yet a woman; then he paid no more attention to them. For their part they did not even seem to see him.

Marius had acquired a sort of mechanical habit of promenading on this walk. He would generally reach the walk at the end opposite their seat, promenade the whole length of it, passing before them, then return to the end by which he







“Monsieur,” said Marius, “I come to ask your permission to marry.”

Grandfather Gillenormand returned and stood with his back to the fireplace. “You marry! At twenty-one! You have arranged that! You have nothing but a permission to ask! A formality. Sit down, monsieur. So you want to marry? Whom? Can the question be asked without indiscretion?”

He stopped, and, before Marius had time to answer, he added violently, “Come now, you have a business? Your fortune made? How much do you earn at your lawyer’s trade?”

“Nothing,” said Marius, with a firmness and resolution which were almost savage.

“Nothing? You have nothing to live on but the twelve hundred livres which I send you?”

Marius made no answer.

M. Gillenormand continued, “Then I understand the girl is rich?”

“As I am.”

“What! No dowry?”

“No.”

“Some expectations?”

“I believe not.”

The old man burst into a shrill, dreary laugh.

“Father!”

“Never!”

It was that single word, *Father*, dropped by Marius, which had caused this revolution. The young man sat down, smiling. “Father,” resumed Marius, “my good father, if you knew. I loved her the first time that I saw her. Now I see her every day at her own house; her father does not know it, but we see each other in the garden in the evening. Now her father wants to take her to England, so I said to myself: ‘I will go and see my grandfather and tell him about it.’ I should go crazy in the first place; I should die; I should throw myself into the river. I must marry her. That is the whole truth; I do not believe that I have forgotten anything. She lives in the Rue Plumet.”

Grandfather Gillenormand, radiant with joy, had sat down by Marius’s side. At those words, *Rue Plumet*, he let his snuff fall on his knee.

“RUE PLUMET! You say RUE PLUMET? Are there not some barracks down there? Why yes, your cousin Théodule—the lancer, the officer—has told me about her. A lassie, my good friend, a lassie! RUE PLUMET, it comes back to me now. I have heard tell about this little girl of the RUE PLUMET. Your taste is not bad. They say she is nice; make her your mistress.”

Marius turned pale. Marius understood and saw it as a deadly insult to Cosette. That phrase, “*Make her your mistress*,” entered the heart of the chaste young man like a sword.

He rose, picked up his hat, which was on the floor, and walked toward the door with a firm and assured step. There he turned, bowed profoundly before his grandfather, raised his head again, and said, “Five years ago you slandered my father; today you have slandered my wife. I ask nothing more of you, monsieur. Adieu.”

Grandfather Gillenormand, astounded, opened his mouth, stretched out his arms, attempted to rise, but before he could utter a word, the door closed and Marius had disappeared. The old man was for a few moments motionless, and as it were thunderstruck, unable to speak or breathe. At last he tore himself from his chair, ran to the door as fast as a man who is ninety-one can run, opened it, and cried, “Help!”

His daughter appeared, then the servants. He continued with a pitiful rattle in his voice, “Run after him! Catch him! What have I done to him! He is mad! He is going away! Oh! This time he will not come back!”

He went to the window which looked upon the street, opened it with his tremulous old hands, hung more than half his body outside, and cried, “Marius! Marius!”

But Marius was already out of hearing. The nonagenarian lifted his hands to his temples two or three times with an expression of anguish, drew back tottering, and sank into an armchair, pulseless, voiceless, tearless, shaking his head,



these dumb and dead houses, which throbbed with no human motion; enwrapped by the deepening shadows of the twilight, which was beginning to fall, and this silence, through which they felt the advance of something inexpressibly terrifying; isolated, armed, determined, tranquil, they waited.



It was now a quiet night; nothing came. This prolonged respite was a sign that the government was taking its time and massing its forces. These fifty men were awaiting sixty thousand.

Enjolras went to find Gavroche, who had set himself to making cartridges in the basement room. Gavroche at this moment was very much engaged, not exactly with his cartridges. The man from the RUE DES BILLETES had just entered the basement room and had taken a seat at the table which was least lighted. When he came in, Gavroche mechanically followed him with his eyes, admiring his musket; then, suddenly, when the man had sat down, the gamin arose. The man had fallen into a kind of meditation. The gamin approached this thoughtful personage and began to turn about him.

It was in the deepest of this examination that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are small," said Enjolras. "Nobody will see you. Go out of the barricades, glide along by the houses, look about the streets a little, and come and tell me what is going on."

Gavroche straightened himself up. "I will go! Meantime, trust the little folks; distrust the big—" And Gavroche, raising his head and lowering his voice, added, pointing to the man of the RUE DES BILLETES, "He is a spy."

"You are sure?"

"It isn't a fortnight since he pulled me by the ear off the cornice of the Pont Royal."

Enjolras hastily left the gamin and murmured a few words very low to a workingman who was there. The workingman went out of the room and returned almost immediately, accompanied by three others. The four men, four broad-shouldered porters, placed themselves discreetly behind the table on which the man of the Rue des Billetes was leaning.

Then Enjolras approached the man and asked him, "Who are you?"

At this abrupt question, the man gave a start. He smiled disdainfully and resolutely, and answered with a haughty gravity, "I am an officer of the government."

"Your name is?"

"Javert."

Enjolras made a sign to the four men. In a twinkling, before Javert had had time to turn around, he was collared, thrown down, bound, searched. They found upon him a little round card bearing on one side the arms of France, engraved with the legend *Surveillance et vigilance*, and on the other side this endorsement: *JAVERT, inspector of police, aged fifty-two*, and the signature of the prefect of police of the time. He had besides, his watch and his purse, which contained a few pieces of money. They left him his purse and his watch.

The search finished, they raised Javert, tied his arms behind his back, and fastened him standing backed up against a post in the middle of the basement room. Gavroche, who had witnessed the whole scene and approved it all by silent nods of his head, approached Javert and said to him, "The mouse has caught the cat."

All this was executed rapidly, and Javert had not uttered a cry. He was so surrounded with ropes that he could make no movement. He held up his head with the intrepid serenity of the man who has never lied.

"It is a spy," said Enjolras to Courfeyrac and Combeferre,



LOVE EACH OTHER

DEARLY

ALWAYS.

THERE IS SCARCELY

ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD

BUT THAT:

TO LOVE

ONE ANOTHER.

VICTOR HUGO

“Citizens,” continued Enjolras, “this is the republic, and universal suffrage reigns. Designate yourselves those who ought to go.”

They obeyed. In a few minutes five were unanimously designated and left the ranks.

“There are five!” exclaimed Marius. “But there are only the four uniforms of the wounded guards.”

At this moment a fifth uniform dropped, as if from heaven, upon the four others. The fifth man was saved.

Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade.

At the moment he entered the redoubt, nobody had noticed him, all eyes being fixed upon the five chosen ones and upon the four uniforms. Jean Valjean himself saw and understood. He silently stripped off his coat and threw it upon the pile with the others. The commotion was indescribable.

“Who is this man?” asked Bossuet.

“He is,” answered Combeferre, “a man who saves others.”

Marius added in a grave voice, “I know him.”

This assurance was enough for all.

Enjolras turned toward Jean Valjean. “Citizen, you are welcome.” And he added, “You know that we are going to die?”

Jean Valjean, without answering, helped the insurgent whom he saved to put on his uniform.

When the five men sent away into life had gone, Enjolras thought of the one condemned to death. He went into the basement room. Javert, tied to the pillar, was thinking.

“Do you need anything?” Enjolras asked him.

“I am uncomfortable at this post,” answered Javert. “It was inconsiderate to leave me to pass the night here. Tie me as you please, but you can surely lay me on a table. Like the other.” And with a motion of his head he indicated M. Mabeuf’s body.

There was, at the back of the room, a long, wide table, upon which they had cast balls and made cartridges. All the cartridges being made and all the powder used up, this table was free. While they were binding Javert to the table, a man

at the threshold of the door gazed at him with singular attention. The shade which this man produced made Javert turn his head. He raised his eyes and recognized Jean Valjean. He did not even start; he haughtily dropped his eyelids and merely said, “It is very natural.”

It was growing light rapidly. The extremity of the RUE DE LA CHANVRERIE opposite the barricade had been evacuated by the troops. The RUE SAINT DENIS was as silent as the grave.

They had not long to wait. Upon the mouth of the street a piece of artillery appeared. The gunners pushed forward the piece; it was already loaded; the smoke of the burning match was seen.

“Fire!” cried Enjolras.

The whole barricade flashed fire. The explosion was terrible; an avalanche of smoke covered and effaced the gun and the men; in a few seconds the cloud dissipated, and the cannon and the men reappeared; those in charge of the piece placed it in position in front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without haste. Not a man had been touched. Then the gunner, bearing his weight on the breech to elevate the range, began to point the cannon with the gravity of an astronomer adjusting a telescope. There was intense anxiety in the barricade. The gun went off; the detonation burst upon them.

“Present!” cried a cheerful voice. And at the same time as the ball, Gavroche tumbled into the barricade. Marius, in sending his letter, had two objects: to say farewell to Cosette and to save Gavroche. He was obliged to be content with half of what he intended.

The gun was about to be fired again. They could not hold out a quarter of an hour in that storm of grape. It was absolutely necessary to deaden the blows. Enjolras threw out his command. “We must put a mattress there.”

“We have none,” said Combeferre. “The wounded are on them.”

There was a mattress, fallen into the street in front of the



YOU WHO

LOVE *THE* LORD.

HATE EVIL!

HE PROTECTS THE LIVES

OF HIS GODLY PEOPLE AND

RESCUES

THEM FROM THE POWER OF
THE WICKED.

PSALM 97:10

Monsieur Baron, I am in possession of a secret concerning an individual. This individual concerns you. I hold the secret at your disposition, desiring to have the honor of being useful to you.

The letter was signed THÉNARD. The signature was not a false one. It was only a little abridged.

The emotion of Marius was deep. Let him now find the other man whom he sought, the man who had saved him, and he would have nothing more to wish.

“Show him in,” said Marius.

Marius examined the man from head to foot, while the personage bowed without measure, and asked the visitor in a sharp tone, “What do you want?”

“I would like to go and establish myself in America. The voyage is long and dear. I must have a little money.”

“How does that concern me?” inquired Marius.

“Then Monsieur the Baron has not read my letter?”

“Explain.”

“Certainly. I have a secret to sell you.”

“What is this secret?”

Marius examined the man more and more closely while listening to him.

“I commence gratis,” said the stranger. “You will see that I am interesting.”

“Go on.”

“Monsieur Baron, you have in your house a robber and a murderer.”

Marius shuddered.

The stranger continued, “Murderer and robber. Observe, Monsieur Baron, that I do not speak here of acts old, bygone, and withered. I speak of recent acts, present acts, acts yet unknown to justice at this hour. This man has glided into your confidence, and almost into your family, under a false name. I am going to tell you his true name. And to tell it to you for nothing.”

“I am listening.”

“His name is Jean Valjean.”

“I know it.”

“I am going to tell you, also for nothing, who he is. He is an old convict.”

“I know it.”

The stranger resumed with a smile, “I do not permit myself to contradict Monsieur the Baron. At all events, you must see that I am informed. Now, what I have to acquaint you with is known to myself alone. It concerns the fortune of Madame the Baroness. It is an extraordinary secret. It is for sale, cheap. Twenty thousand francs.”

“I know your extraordinary secret, just as I knew Jean Valjean’s name, just as I know your name.”

“That is not difficult, Monsieur Baron. I have had the honor of writing it to you and telling it to you. Thénard.”

“Thénardier,” Marius replied. “You are also the workman Jondrette, and you have kept a chophouse at Montfermeil, and you are Thénardier.”

“Thanks!” Then bluntly, “Well, so be it, I am Thénardier.”

Marius interrupted, “Thénardier, I have told you your name. Now your secret, what you came to make known to me—do you want me to tell you that? I too have my means of information. You shall see that I know more about it than you do. Jean Valjean, as you have said, is a murderer and a robber. A robber, because he robbed a rich manufacturer, M. Madeleine, whose ruin he caused. A murderer, because he slew the police officer Javert.”

“I don’t understand, Monsieur Baron,” said Thénardier.

“I will make myself understood. Listen. There was, in 1822, a man who had had some old difficulty with justice, and who, under the name of M. Madeleine, had reformed and reestablished himself. He had become in the full force of the term an upright man. By means of the manufacture of black glass trinkets, he had made the fortune of an entire city. He was the foster father of the poor. He founded hospitals,



*No one has ever seen God.
But if we love each other,
God lives in us, and his love is brought
to full expression in us.*

I JOHN 4:12



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