

**VICTOR HUGO**

LES  
MISÉRABLES,  
V. 5

# Victor Hugo

# Les Misérables, v. 5

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*Les Misérables, v. 5/5: Jean Valjean:*

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**Victor Hugo**  
**Les Misérables, v.**  
**5/5: Jean Valjean**

**BOOK I**  
**THE WAR WITHIN FOUR WALLS**

**CHAPTER I**  
**THE CHARYBDIS OF THE**  
**FAUBOURG ST. ANTOINE**  
**AND THE SCYLLA OF THE**  
**FAUBOURG DU TEMPLE**

The two most memorable barricades which the observer of social diseases can mention do not belong to the period in which the action of this book is laid. These two barricades, both symbols under different aspects of a formidable situation, emerged from the earth during the fatal insurrection of June, 1848, the greatest street-war which history has seen. It happens sometimes that the canaille, that great despairing crowd, contrary

to principles, even contrary to liberty, equality, and fraternity, even contrary to the universal vote, the government of all by all, protests, in the depths of its agony, its discouragement, its destitution, its fevers, its distresses, its miasmas, its ignorance, and its darkness, and the populace offers battle to the people. The beggars attack the common right, the ochlocracy rises in insurrection against the demos. Those are mournful days; for there is always a certain amount of right even in this mania, there is suicide in this duel, and these words, intended to be insults, such as beggars, canaille, ochlocracy, and populace, prove, alas! rather the fault of those who reign than the fault of those who suffer; rather the fault of the privileged than the fault of the disinherited. For our part, we never pronounce these words without grief and respect, for when philosophy probes the facts with which they correspond it often finds much grandeur by the side of misery. Athens was an ochlocracy; the beggars produced Holland; the populace more than once saved Rome; and the canaille followed the Saviour. There is no thinker who has not at times contemplated the magnificence below. Saint Jerome doubtless thought of this canaille, of all these poor people, all these vagabonds, and all the wretches whence the apostles and martyrs issued, when he uttered the mysterious words, – "Fex urbis, lux orbis."

The exasperations of this mob, which suffers and which bleeds, its unwilling violence against the principles which are its life, its assaults upon the right, are popular coups d'état, and

must be repressed. The just man devotes himself, and through love for this very mob, combats it. But how excusable he finds it while resisting it; how he venerates it, even while opposing it! It is one of those rare moments in which a man while doing his duty feels something that disconcerts him, and almost dissuades him from going further; he persists, and must do so, but the satisfied conscience is sad, and the accomplishment of the duty is complicated by a contraction of the heart. June, 1848, was, let us hasten to say, a separate fact, and almost impossible to classify in the philosophy of history. All the words we have uttered must be laid aside when we have to deal with this extraordinary riot, in which the holy anxiety of labor claiming its right was felt. It must be combated, and it was a duty to do so, for it attacked the Republic; but, in reality, what was June, 1848? A revolt of the people against itself. When the subject is not left out of sight there is no digression, and hence we may be permitted to concentrate the reader's attention momentarily upon the two absolutely unique barricades to which we have alluded, and which characterized this insurrection. The one blocked up the entrance to the Faubourg St. Antoine, the other defended the approaches to the Faubourg du Temple; those before whom these two frightful masterpieces of civil war were raised in the dazzling June sun will never forget them.

The St. Antoine barricade was monstrous; it was three stories high and seven hundred feet in width. It barred from one corner to the other the vast mouth of the faubourg, that is

to say, three streets; ravined, slashed, serrated, surmounted by an immense jagged line, supported by masses which were themselves bastions, pushing out capes here and there, and powerfully reinforced by the two great promontories of the houses of the faubourg, it rose like a Cyclopean wall at the back of the formidable square which had seen July 14. There were nineteen barricades erected in the streets behind the mother barricade; but, on seeing it, you felt in the faubourg the immense agonizing suffering which had reached that extreme stage in which misery desires to come to a catastrophe. Of what was this barricade made? Of the tumbling in of three six-storied houses demolished on purpose, say some; of the prodigy of all the passions, say others. It possessed the lamentable aspect of all the buildings of hatred, ruin. You might ask who built this, and you might also ask who destroyed this. It was the improvisation of the ebullition. Here with that door, that grating, that awning, that chimney, that broken stove, that cracked stewpan! Give us anything! Throw everything in! Push, roll, pick, dismantle, overthrow, and pull down everything! It was a collaboration of the pavement-stones, beams, iron bars, planks, broken windows, unseated chairs, cabbage-stalks, rags, tatters, and curses. It was great and it was little; it was the abyss parodied on the square by the hurly-burly. It was the mass side by side with the atom, a pulled-down wall and a broken pipkin, a menacing fraternization of all fragments, into which Sisyphus had cast his rock and Job his potsherds. Altogether it was terrible, – it was the acropolis of

the barefooted. Overturned carts studded the slope; an immense wagon spread out across it, with its wheels to the sky, and looked like a scar on this tumultuous façade; an omnibus gayly hoisted by strength of arm to the very top of the pile, as if the architects of this savage edifice had wished to add mockery to the horror, offered its bare pole to the horses of the air. This gigantic mound, the alluvium of the riot, represented to the mind an Ossa upon Pelion of all revolutions, – '93 upon '89, the 9th Thermidor upon the 10th August, the 18th Brumaire upon January 21st, Vendémiaire upon Prairial, 1848 upon 1830. The place was worth the trouble, and this barricade was worthy of appearing upon the very spot whence the Bastille had disappeared. If the ocean made dykes it would build them in this way, and the fury of the tide was stamped on this shapeless encumbrance. What tide? The multitude. You fancied that you saw a petrified riot, and heard the enormous dark bees of violent progress humming about this barricade as if they had their hive there. Was it a thicket? Was it a Bacchanalian feast? Was it a fortress? Vertigo seemed to have built it with the flapping of its wings! There was a sewer in this redoubt, and something Olympian in this mass. You saw there in a confused heap, full of desperation, gables of roofs, pieces of garrets with their painted paper, window-frames with all their panes planted in the rubbish and awaiting the cannon, pulled-down mantelpieces, chests of drawers, tables, benches, a howling topsy-turvy, and those thousand wretched things cast away even by a beggar which contain at once fury



and nothingness. It may be said that it was the rags of a people, rags of wood, of iron, of bronze, of stone; that the Faubourg St. Antoine had swept them to their door with a gigantic broom, and made a barricade of their misery. Logs resembling executioners' blocks, disjointed chains, anvil-frames of the shape of gallows, horizontal wheels emerging from the heap, produced on this edifice of anarchy the representation of the old punishment suffered by the people. The St. Antoine barricade made a weapon of everything. All that civil war can throw at the head of society came from it; it was not a fight but a paroxysm: the muskets which defended this redoubt, among which were several blunderbusses, discharged stones, bones, coat-buttons, and even the casters of night-commodes, very dangerous owing to the copper. This barricade was furious; it hurled an indescribable clamor into the clouds; at certain moments when challenging the army it was covered with a crowd and a tempest; it had a prickly crest of guns, sabres, sticks, axes, pikes, and bayonets; a mighty red flag fluttered upon it in the breeze, and the cries of command, the songs of attack, the rolling of the drum, the sobs of women, and the sardonic laughter of men dying of starvation could be heard there. It was immeasurable and living, and a flash of lightning issued from it as from the back of an electric animal. The spirit of revolution covered with its cloud this summit, where that voice of the people which resembles the voice of God was growling, and a strange majesty was disengaged from this Titanic mass of stones. It was a dungheap, and it was Sinai.

As we said above, it attacked in the name of the revolution – what? The revolution. It, this barricade, an accident, a disorder, a misunderstanding, an unknown thing, had, facing it, the constituent assembly, the sovereignty of the people, universal suffrage, the nation, the republic: and it was the Carmagnole defying the Marseillaise. A mad defiance, but heroic, for this old faubourg is a hero. The faubourg and its redoubt supported each other; the faubourg rested on the redoubt, and the redoubt backed against the faubourg. The vast barricade was like a cliff against which the strategy of the African generals was broken. Its caverns, its excrescences, its warts, its humps, made grimaces, if we may employ the expression, and grinned behind the smoke. The grape-shot vanished in the shapeless heap; shells buried themselves in it and were swallowed up; cannon-balls only succeeded in forming holes, for of what use is it bombarding chaos? And the regiments, accustomed to the sternest visions of war, gazed with anxious eye at this species of wild-beast redoubt, which was a boar through its bristling and a mountain through its enormity.

A quarter of a league farther on, at the corner of the Rue du Temple, which debouches on the boulevard near the Chateau d'Eau, if you boldly advanced your head beyond the point formed by the projection of the magazine Dallemagne, you could see in the distance across the canal, and at the highest point of the ascent to Belleville, a strange wall rising to the second floor and forming a sort of connecting link between the houses on the right

and those on the left, as if the street had folded back its highest wall in order to close itself up. This was built of paving-stones; it was tall, straight, correct, cold, perpendicular, and levelled with the plumb-line and the square; of course there was no cement, but, as in some Roman walls, this in no way disturbed its rigid architecture. From its height, its thickness could be guessed, for the entablature was mathematically parallel to the basement. At regular distances almost invisible loopholes, resembling black threads, could be distinguished in the gray wall, separated from each other by equal intervals. This street was deserted throughout its length, and all the windows and doors were closed. In the background rose this bar, which converted the street into a blind alley; it was a motionless and tranquil wall; no one was seen, nothing was heard, not a cry, nor a sound, nor a breath. It was a sepulchre. The dazzling June sun inundated this terrible thing with light, – it was the barricade of the Faubourg du Temple. So soon as you reached the ground and perceived it, it was impossible even for the boldest not to become pensive in the presence of this mysterious apparition. It was adjusted, clamped, imbricated, rectilinear, symmetrical, and funereal; science and darkness were there. You felt that the chief of this barricade was a geometrician or a spectre, and as you gazed you spoke in a whisper. From time to time if any one – private, officer, or representative of the people – ventured to cross the solitary road, a shrill faint whistling was heard, and the passer-by fell wounded or dead; or, if he escaped, a bullet could be seen to bury itself

in some shutter, or the stucco of the wall. Sometimes it was a grape-shot, for the man of the barricade had made out of gas-pipes, stopped up at one end with tow and clay, two small cannon. There was no useless expenditure of gunpowder, and nearly every shot told. There were a few corpses here and there, and patches of blood on the pavement. I remember a white butterfly that fluttered up and down the street; summer does not abdicate. All the gateways in the vicinity were crowded with corpses, and you felt in this street that you were covered by some one you could not see, and that the whole street was under the marksman's aim.

The soldiers of the attacking column, massed behind the species of ridge which the canal bridge forms at the entrance of the Faubourg du Temple, watched gravely and thoughtfully this mournful redoubt, this immobility, this impassiveness, from which death issued. Some crawled on their stomachs to the top of the pitch of the bridge, while careful not to let their shakos pass beyond it. Brave Colonel Monteynard admired this barricade with a tremor. "How it is built," he said to a representative; "not a single paving-stone projects beyond the other. It is made of porcelain." At this moment a bullet smashed the cross on his chest and he fell. "The cowards!" the troops shouted, "Why do they not show themselves? They dare not! They hide!" The barricade of the Faubourg du Temple, defended by eighty men and attacked by ten thousand, held out for three days, and on the fourth day the troops acted as they had done at Zaatcha and Constantine, – they broke through houses, passed along

roofs, and the barricade was taken. Not one of the eighty cowards dreamed of flying; all were killed with the exception of Barthélemy, the chief, to whom we shall allude directly. The barricade of St. Antoine was the tumult of the thunder; the barricade of the Temple was the silence. There was between the two barricades the same difference as exists between the formidable and the sinister. The one seemed a throat, the other a mask. Admitting that the gigantic and dark insurrection of June was composed of a fury and an enigma, the dragon was seen in the first barricade and the sphinx behind the second.

These two fortresses were built by two men, Cournet and Barthélemy: Cournet made the St. Antoine barricade, Barthélemy the Temple barricade, and each of them was the image of the man who built it. Cournet was a man of tall stature; he had wide shoulders, a red face, a smashing fist, a brave heart, a loyal soul, a sincere and terrible eye. He was intrepid, energetic, irascible, and stormy; the most cordial of men, and the most formidable of combatants. War, contest, medley were the air he breathed, and put him in good temper. He had been an officer in the navy, and from his gestures and his voice it could be divined that he issued from the ocean and came from the tempest; he continued the hurricane in battle. Omitting the genius, there was in Cournet something of Danton, as, omitting the divinity, there was in Danton something of Hercules. Barthélemy, thin, weak, pale, and taciturn, was a species of tragical gamin, who, having been struck by a policeman, watched for him, waited for

him, and killed him, and at the age of seventeen was sent to the galleys. He came out and built this barricade. At a later date, when both were exiles in London, Barthélemy killed Cournet: it was a melancholy duel. Some time after that, Barthélemy, caught in the cog-wheels of one of those mysterious adventures in which passion is mingled, catastrophes in which French justice sees extenuating circumstances and English justice only sees death, was hanged. The gloomy social edifice is so built that, owing to maternal denudation and moral darkness, this wretched being, who had had an intellect, certainly firm and possibly great, began with the galleys in France and ended with the gibbet in England. Barthélemy only hoisted one flag, – it was the black one.

## CHAPTER II

### NOTHING TO DO IN THE ABYSS BUT TALK

Sixteen years count in the subterranean education of revolt, and June, 1848, knew a great deal more than June, 1832. Hence the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie was only a sketch and an embryo when compared with the two colossal barricades which we have just described; but for the period it was formidable. The insurgents, under the eye of Enjolras, – for Marius no longer looked at anything, – had turned the night to good account: the barricade had not only been repaired but increased. It had been raised two feet, and iron bars planted in the paving-stones resembled lances in rest. All sorts of rubbish, added and brought from all sides, complicated the external confusion, and the redoubt had been cleverly converted into a wall inside and a thicket outside. The staircase of paving-stones, which allowed the top of the barricade to be reached, was restored, the ground-floor of the room of the inn was cleared out, the kitchen converted into an infirmary, the wounds were dressed, the powder scattered about the tables and floor was collected, bullets were cast, cartridges manufactured, lint plucked, the fallen arms distributed; the dead were carried off and laid in a heap in the Mondétour Lane, of which they were

still masters. The pavement remained for a long time red at that spot. Among the dead were four suburban National Guards, and Enjolras ordered their uniforms to be laid on one side. Enjolras had advised two hours' sleep, and his advice was an order; still, only three or four took advantage of it, and Feuilly employed the two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall facing the wine-shop, —

## **"LONG LIVE THE PEOPLES."**

These four words, carved in the stone with a nail, could still be read on this wall in 1848. The three women took advantage of the respite to disappear entirely, which allowed the insurgents to breathe more at their ease; and they contrived to find refuge in some neighboring house. Most of the wounded could and would still fight. There were, on a pile of mattresses and trusses of straw laid in the kitchen converted into an infirmary, five men seriously wounded, of whom two were Municipal Guards; the wounds of the latter were dressed first. No one remained in the ground-floor room save Mabœuf under his black cere-cloth, and Javert fastened to the post.

"This is the charnel-house," said Enjolras.

In the interior of this room, which was scarce lighted by a solitary candle, the mortuary table at the end being behind the post like a horizontal bar, a sort of large vague cross resulted from Javert standing and Mabœuf lying down. Although the pole



of the omnibus was mutilated by the bullets, sufficient remained for a flag to be attached to it. Enjolras, who possessed that quality of a chief of always doing what he said, fastened to it the bullet-pierced and blood-stained coat of the killed old man. No meal was possible, for there was neither bread nor meat. The fifty men during the sixteen hours they had stood at the barricade speedily exhausted the scanty provisions of the inn. At a given moment every barricade that holds out becomes the raft of the *Méduse*, and the combatants must resign themselves to hunger. They had reached the early hours of that Spartan day, June 6, when at the barricade of St. Merry, Jeanne, surrounded by insurgents who cried for bread, answered, "What for? It is three o'clock; at four we shall be dead." As they could no longer eat, Enjolras prohibited drinking; he put the wine under an interdict, and served out the spirits. Some fifteen full bottles, hermetically sealed, were found in the cellar, which Enjolras and Combeferre examined. Combeferre on coming up again said, "It belongs to Father Hucheloup's stock at the time when he was a grocer." "It must be real wine," Bossuet observed; "it is lucky that Grantaire is asleep, for if he were up, we should have a difficulty in saving those bottles." Enjolras, in spite of the murmurs, put his veto on the fifteen bottles, and in order that no one might touch them, and that they should be to some extent sacred, he had placed them under the table on which Father Mabœuf lay.

At about two in the morning they counted their strength; there were still thirty-seven. Day was beginning to appear,

and the torch, which had been returned to its stone lantern, was extinguished. The interior of the barricade, that species of small yard taken from the street, was bathed in darkness, and resembled, through the vague twilight horror, the deck of a dismasted ship. The combatants moved about like black forms. Above this frightful nest of gloom the floors of the silent houses stood out lividly, and above them again the chimney-pots were assuming a roseate hue. The sky had that charming tint which may be white and may be blue, and the birds flew about in it with twitterings of joy. The tall house which formed the background of the barricade looked to the east, and had a pink reflection on its roof. At the third-floor window the morning breeze blew about the gray hair on the head of the dead man.

"I am delighted that the torch is put out," Courfeyrac said to Feuilly. "That flame flickering in the breeze annoyed me, for it seemed to be frightened. The light of torches resembles the wisdom of cowards; it illumines badly because it trembles."

The dawn arouses minds like birds, and all were talking. Joly, seeing a cat stalking along a gutter, extracted this philosophy from the fact.

"What is the cat?" he exclaimed. "It is a correction. *Le bon Dieu* having made a mouse, said to himself, 'Hilloh! I have done a foolish trick,' and he made the cat, which is the erratum of the mouse. The mouse plus the cat is the revised and corrected proof of creation."

Combeferre, surrounded by students and workmen, was

talking of the dead, of Jean Prouvaire, of Bahorel, of Mabœuf, and even of Cabuc, and the stern sorrow of Enjolras. He said, —

"Harmodius and Aristogiton, Brutus, Chereas, Stephanus, Cromwell, Charlotte Corday, Sand, all had their moment of agony after the blow was struck. Our heart is so quivering, and human life such a mystery, that even in a civic murder, even in a liberating murder, if there be such a thing, the remorse at having struck a man exceeds the joy of having benefited the human race."

And, such are the meanderings of interchanged words, a moment later, by a transition which came from Jean Prouvaire's verses, Combeferre was comparing together the translators of the *Georgics*, Raux with Cournand, Cournand with Delille, and pointing out the few passages translated by Malfilâtre, especially the wonders of the death of Cæsar, and at that name the conversation reverted to Brutus.

"Cæsar," said Combeferre, "fell justly. Cicero was severe to Cæsar, and was in the right, for such severity is not a diatribe. When Zoïlus insults Homer, when Mævius insults Virgil, when Visé insults Molière, when Pope insults Shakspeare, when Fréron insults Voltaire, it is an old law of envy and hatred being carried out; for genius attracts insult, and great men are all barked at more or less. But Zoïlus and Cicero are different. Cicero is a justiciary with thought in the same way as Brutus is a justiciary with the sword. For my part, I blame that last justice, the glaive; antiquity allowed it. Cæsar, the violator of the Rubicon,

conferring, as if coming from him, dignities that came from the people, and not rising on the entrance of the senate, behaved, as Eutropius said, like a king, and almost like a tyrant, *regiâ ac pene tyrannica*. He was a great man; all the worse or all the better, the lesson is the more elevated. His three-and-twenty wounds affect me less than the spitting on the brow of Christ. Cæsar is stabbed by the senators, Christ is buffeted by soldiers. God is felt in the greater outrage."

Bossuet, standing on a pile of stones, and commanding the speaker, exclaimed, gun in hand, —

"O Cydathenæum! O Myrrhinus! O Probalyntus! O graces of Æanthus! Oh, who will inspire me to pronounce the verses of Homer like a Greek of Laureum or Edapteon!"

## CHAPTER III

### CLEARING AND CLOUDING

Enjolras had gone out to reconnoitre, and had left by the Mondétour Lane, keeping in the shadow of the houses. The insurgents, we must state, were full of hope: the way in which they had repulsed the night attack almost made them disdain beforehand the attack at daybreak. They waited for it and smiled at it, and no more doubted of their success than of their cause; moreover, help was evidently going to reach them, and they reckoned on it. With that facility of triumphant prophecy which is a part of the strength of the French fighter, they divided into three certain phases the opening day, — at six in the morning a regiment, which had been worked upon, would turn; at mid-day insurrection all over Paris; at sunset the revolution. The tocsin of St. Merry, which had not ceased once since the previous evening, could be heard, and this was a proof that the other barricade, the great one, Jeanne's, still held out. All these hopes were interchanged by the groups with a species of gay and formidable buzzing which resemble the war-hum of a swarm of bees. Enjolras reappeared returning from his gloomy walk in the external darkness. He listened for a moment to all this joy with his arms folded, and then said, fresh and rosy in the growing light of dawn, —

"The whole army of Paris is out, and one third of that army

is preparing to attack the barricade behind which you now are. There is, too, the National Guard. I distinguished the shakos of the fifth line regiment and the colors of the sixth legion. You will be attacked in an hour; as for the people, they were in a state of ferment yesterday, but this morning do not stir. There is nothing to wait for, nothing to hope; no more a faubourg than a regiment. You are abandoned."

These words fell on the buzzing groups, and produced the same effect as the first drops of a storm do on a swarm. All remained dumb, and there was a moment of inexpressible silence, in which death might have been heard flying past. This moment was short, and a voice shouted to Enjolras from the thickest of the crowd, —

"Be it so. Let us raise the barricade to a height of twenty feet, and all fall upon it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses, and show that if the people abandon the republicans, the republicans do not abandon the people."

These words disengaged the thoughts of all from the painful cloud of individual anxieties, and an enthusiastic shout greeted them. The name of the man who spoke thus was never known; he was Rome unknown blouse-wearer, an unknown man, a forgotten man, a passing hero, that great anonymous always mixed up in human crises and social Geneses, who at the given moment utters the decisive word in a supreme fashion, and who fades away into darkness after having represented for a minute, in the light of a flash, the people and God. This inexorable

resolution was so strongly in the air of June 6, 1832, that almost at the same hour the insurgents of the St. Merry barricade uttered this cry, which became historical, – "Whether they come to our help, or whether they do not, what matter! Let us all fall here, to the last man!" As we see, the two barricades, though materially isolated, communicated.

## CHAPTER IV

### FIVE LESS AND ONE MORE

After the man, whoever he might be, who decreed the "protest of corpses," had spoken, sad given the formula of the common soul, a strangely satisfied and terrible cry issued from every mouth, funereal in its meaning and triumphal in its accent.

"Long live death! Let us all remain here."

"Why all?" Enjolras asked.

"All, all!"

Enjolras continued, —

"The position is good and the barricade fine. Thirty men are sufficient, then why sacrifice forty?"

They replied, —

"Because not one of us will go away."

"Citizens," Enjolras cried, and there was in his voice an almost irritated vibration, "the republic is not rich enough in men to make an unnecessary outlay. If it be the duty of some to go away, that duty must be performed like any other."

Enjolras, the man-principle, had over his co-religionists that kind of omnipotence which is evolved from the absolute. Still, however great that omnipotence might be, they murmured. A chief to the tips of his fingers, Enjolras, on seeing that they murmured, insisted. He continued haughtily, —

"Let those who are afraid to be only thirty say so."



The murmurs were redoubled.

"Besides," a voice in the throng remarked, "it is easy to say, 'Go away,' but the barricade is surrounded."

"Not on the side of the markets," said Enjolras. "The Rue Mondétour is free, and the Marché des Innocents can be reached by the Rue des Prêcheurs."

"And then," another voice in the group remarked, "we should be caught by falling in with some grand rounds of the line or the National Guard. They will see a man passing in blouse and cap: 'Where do you come from? Don't you belong to the barricade?' and they will look at your hands; you smell of powder, and will be shot."

Enjolras, without answering, touched Combeferre's shoulder, and both entered the ground-floor room. They came out again a moment after, Enjolras holding in his outstretched hands the four uniforms which he had laid on one side, and Combeferre followed him carrying the cross-belts and shakos.

"In this uniform," Enjolras said, "it is easy to enter the ranks and escape. Here are four at any rate."

And he threw the four uniforms on the unpaved ground; but as no one moved in the stoical audience, Combeferre resolved to make an appeal.

"Come," he said, "you must show a little pity. Do you know what the question is here? It is about women. Look you, are there wives, – yes or no? Are there children, – yes or no? Are these nothing, who rock a cradle with their foot, and have a heap of

children around them? Let him among you who has never seen a nurse's breast hold up his hand. Ah! you wish to be killed. I wish it too, I who am addressing you; but I do not wish to feel the ghosts of women twining their arms around me. Die, – very good; but do not cause people to die. Suicides like the one which is about to take place here are sublime; but suicide is restricted, and does not allow of extension, and so soon as it affects your relations, suicide is called murder. Think of the little fair heads, and think too of the white hair. Listen to me! Enjolras tells me that just now he saw at the corner of the Rue du Cygne a candle at a poor window on the fifth floor, and on the panes the shaking shadow of an old woman who appeared to have spent the night in watching at the window; she is perhaps the mother of one of you. Well, let that man go, and hasten to say to his mother, 'Mother, here I am!' Let him be easy in his mind, for the work will be done here all the same. When a man supports his relatives by his toil, he has no longer any right to sacrifice himself, for that is deserting his family. And then, too, those who have daughters, and those who have sisters! Only think of them. You let yourselves be killed, you are dead, very good; and tomorrow? It is terrible when girls have no bread, for man begs, but woman sells. Oh, those charming, graceful, and gentle creatures with flowers in their caps, who fill the house with chastity, who sing, who prattle, who are like a living perfume, who prove the existence of angels in heaven by the purity of virgins on earth; that Jeanne, that Lise, that Mimi, those adorable and honest

creatures, who are your blessing and your pride, – ah, my God! they will starve. What would you have me say to you? There is a human flesh-market, and you will not prevent them entering it with your shadowy hands trembling around them. Think of the street; think of the pavement covered with strollers; think of the shops before which women in low-necked dresses come and go in the mud. Those women, too, were pure. Think of your sisters, you who have any; misery, prostitution, the police. St Lazare, that is what these delicate maidens, these fragile marvels of chastity, modesty, and beauty, fresher than the lilies in May, will fall to. Ah, you have let yourselves be killed! Ah, you are no longer there! That is, – very good, – you have wished to withdraw the people from royalty, and you give your daughters to the police. My friends, take care and have compassion; we are not wont to think much about women, hapless women; we trust to the fact that women have not received the education of men. They are prevented reading, thinking, or occupying themselves with politics; but will you prevent them going to-night to the Morgue and recognizing your corpses? Come, those who have families must be good fellows, and shake our hand and go away, leaving us to do the job here all alone. I am well aware that courage is needed to go away, and that it is difficult; but the more difficult the more meritorious it is. Ton say, 'I have a gun and am at the barricade; all the worse, I remain.' 'All the worse' is easily said. My friends, there is a morrow, and that morrow you will not see; but your families will see it. And what sufferings! Stay; do you

know what becomes of a healthy child with cheeks like an apple, who chatters, prattles, laughs, and smiles as fresh as a kiss, when he is abandoned? I saw one, quite little, about so high; his father was dead, and poor people had taken him in through charity; but they had not bread for themselves. The child was always hungry, it was winter-time, but though he was always hungry he did not cry. He was seen to go close to the stove, whose pipe was covered with yellow earth. The boy detached with his fingers a piece of this earth and ate it; his breathing was hoarse, his face livid, his legs soft, and his stomach swollen. He said nothing, and when spoken to made no answer. He is dead, and was brought to die at the Necker Hospital, where I saw him, for I was a student there. Now, if there be any fathers among you, fathers who delight in taking a walk on Sunday, holding in their powerful hand a child's small fingers, let each of these fathers fancy this lad his own. The poor brat I can remember perfectly; I fancy I see him now, and when he lay on the dissecting table, his bones stood out under his skin like the tombs under the grass of a cemetery. We found a sort of mud in his stomach, and he had ashes between his teeth. Come, let us examine our conscience and take the advice of our heart; statistics prove that the mortality among deserted children is fifty-five per cent. I repeat, it is a question of wives, of mothers, of daughters, and babes. Am I saying anything about you? I know very well what you are. I know that you are all brave. I know that you have all in your hearts the joy and glory of laying down your lives for the great cause. I know very well that you feel yourselves

chosen to die usefully and magnificently, and that each of you clings to his share of the triumph. Very good. But you are not alone in this world, and there are other beings of whom you must think; you should not be selfish."

All hung their heads with a gloomy air. Strange contradictions of the human heart in the sublimest moments! Combeferre, who spoke thus, was not an orphan; he remembered the mothers of others and forgot his own; he was going to let himself be killed, and was "selfish." Marius, fasting and feverish, who had successively given up all hope, cast ashore on grief, the most mournful of shipwrecks, saturated with violent emotions, and feeling the end coming, had buried himself deeper and deeper in that visionary stupor which ever precedes the fatal and voluntarily accepted hour. A physiologist might have studied in him the growing symptoms of that febrile absorption which is known and classified by science, and which is to suffering what voluptuousness is to pleasure, for despair also has its ecstasy. Marius had attained that stage; as we have said, things which occurred before him appeared to him remote, he distinguished the ensemble, but did not perceive the details. He saw people coming and going before him in a flash, and he heard voices speaking as if from the bottom of an abyss. Still this affected him, for there was in this scene a point which pierced to him and aroused him. He had but one idea, to die, and he did not wish to avert his attention from it; but he thought in his gloomy somnambulism that in destroying himself he was not prohibited

from saving somebody. He raked his voice, —

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," he said: "let us have no useless sacrifice. I join them, and we must make haste. Combeferre has told you decisive things: there are men among you who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, and children. Such must leave the ranks."

Not a soul stirred.

"Married men and supporters of families will leave the ranks," Marius repeated.

His authority was great, for though Enjolras was really the chief of the barricade, Marius was its savior.

"I order it," Enjolras cried.

"I implore it," Marius said.

Then these heme men, stirred up by Combeferre's speech, shaken by Enjolras's order, and moved by Marius's entreaty, began denouncing one another. "It is true," a young man said to a grown-up man, "you are a father of a family: begone!" "No! you ought to do so rather," the man replied, "for you have two sisters to support;" and an extraordinary contest broke out, in which each struggled not to be thrust out of the tomb.

"Make haste," said Combeferre; "in a quarter of an hour there will no longer be time."

"Citizens," Enjolras added, "we have a republic here, and universal suffrage reigns. Point out yourselves the men who are to leave us."

They obeyed, and at the end of a few minutes five were

unanimously pointed out and left the ranks.

"There are five of them!" Marius exclaimed.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," the five replied, "one will have to remain behind."

And then came who should remain, and who should find reasons for others not to remain. The generous quarrel began again.

"You have a wife who loves you. — You have your old mother. — You have neither father nor mother; what will become of your three little brothers? — You are the father of five children. — You have a right to live, for you are only seventeen, and it is too early to die."

These great revolutionary barricades were meeting-places of heroisms. The improbable was simple there, and these men did not astonish one another.

"Make haste," Courfeyrac repeated.

Cries to Marius came from the groups.

"You must point out the one who is to remain."

"Yes," the five said; "do you choose, and we will obey you."

Marius did not believe himself capable of any emotion; still, at this idea of choosing a man for death all the blood flowed back to his heart, and he would have tamed pale could he have grown paler. He walked up to the five, who smiled upon him, and each, with his eye full of that great flame which gleams through history on Thermopylae, cried to him, —

"I! I! I!"

And Marius stupidly counted them. There were still five! Then his eyes settled on the four uniforms. All at once a fifth uniform fell, as if from heaven, on the other four; the fifth man was saved. Marius raised his eyes, and recognized M. Fauchelevant.

Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade; either through information he had obtained, through instinct, or through accident, he arrived by the Mondétour Lane, and, thanks to his National Guard uniform, passed without difficulty. The vedette stationed by the insurgents in the Rue Mondétour had no cause to give the alarm-signal for a single National Guard, and had let him enter the street, saying to himself, "He is probably a reinforcement, or at the worst a prisoner." The moment was too serious for a sentry to turn away from his duty or his post of observation. At the moment when Jean Valjean entered the redoubt, no one noticed him, for all eyes were fixed on the five chosen men and the four uniforms. Jean Valjean, however, had seen and heard, and silently took off his coat and threw it on the pile formed by the other coats. The emotion was indescribable.

"Who is this man?" Bossuet asked.

"He is a man," Combeferre replied, "who saves his fellow-man."

Marius added in a grave voice, —

"I know him."

This bail was sufficient for all, and Enjolras turned to Jean Valjean.



"Citizen, you are welcome."

And he added, —

"You are aware that you will die."

Jean Valjean, without answering, helped the man he was saving to put on his uniform.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE HORIZON ONE SEES FROM BARRICADE'S SUMMIT**

The situation of the whole party in this fatal hour, and at this inexorable spot, had as result and pinnacle the supreme melancholy of Enjolras. Enjolras had within him the plenitude of the revolution; he was imperfect, however, so far as the absolute can be so, – he had too much of St. Just and not enough of Anacharsis Clootz; still his mind in the society of the Friends of the A. B. C. had eventually received a certain magnetism of Combeferre's ideas. For some time past he had been gradually emerging from the narrow form of dogmatism and yielding to the expansion of progress, and in the end he had accepted, as the definitive and magnificent evolution, the transformation of the great French republic into the immense human republic. As for the immediate means, a violent situation being given, he was willing to be violent; in that he did not vary, and he still belonged to that epic and formidable school which is resumed in the words "93." Enjolras was standing on the paving-stone steps, with one of his elbows on the muzzle of his gun. He was thinking; he trembled, as men do when a blast passes, for spots where death lurks produce this tripod effect. A sort of stifled fire issued from beneath his eyelashes, which were full of the internal glance. All

at once he raised his head, his light hair fell back like that of the angel on the dark quadriga composed of stars, and he cried: —

"Citizens, do you represent the future to yourselves? The streets of towns inundated with light, green branches on the thresholds, nations sisters, men just, old men blessing children, the past loving the present, men thinking at perfect liberty, believers enjoying perfect equality, for religion the heaven, God, the direct priest, the human conscience converted into an altar, no more hatred, the fraternity of the workshop and the school, notoriety the sole punishment and reward, work for all, right for all, peace for all, no more bloodshed, no more wars, and happy mothers! To subdue the matter is the first step, to realize the ideal is the second. Reflect on what progress has already done; formerly the first human races saw with terror the hydra that breathed upon the waters, the dragon that vomited fire, the griffin which was the monster of the air, and which flew with the wings of an eagle and the claws of a tiger, pass before their eyes, — frightful beasts which were below man. Man, however, set his snares, the sacred snares of intellect, and ended by catching the monsters in them. We have subdued the hydra, and it is called the steamer; we have tamed the dragon, and it is called the locomotive; we are on the point of taming the griffin, we hold it already, and it is called the balloon. The day on which that Promethean task is terminated and man has definitively attached to his will the triple antique chimera, the dragon, the hydra, and the griffin, he will be master of water, fire, and air, and he

will be to the rest of animated creation what the ancient gods were formerly to him. Courage, and forward! Citizens, whither are we going? To science made government, to the strength of things converted into the sole public strength, to the natural law having its sanction and penalty in itself and promulgating itself by evidence, and to a dawn of truth corresponding with the dawn of day. We are proceeding to a union of the peoples; we are proceeding to a unity of man. No more fictions, no more parasites. The real governed by the true is our object. Civilization will hold its assize on the summit of Europe, and eventually in the centre of the continent, in a great Parliament of intellect. Something like this has been seen already; the Amphictyons held two sessions a year, one at Delphi, the place of the gods, the other at Thermopylæ, the place of heroes. Europe will have her Amphictyons, the globe will have its Amphictyons, France bears the sublime future within her, and this is the gestation of the 19th century. What Greece sketched out is worthy of being finished by France. Harken to me, Feuilly, valiant workman, man of the people, man of the people. I venerate thee; yes, thou seest clearly future times; yes, thou art right. Thou hast neither father nor mother, Feuilly, and thou hast adopted humanity as thy mother and right as thy father. Thou art about to die here, that is to say, to triumph. Citizens, whatever may happen to-day, we are about to make a revolution, by our defeat as well as by our victory. In the same way as fires light up a whole city, revolutions light up the whole human race. And what a revolution shall we

make? I have just told you, the revolution of the True. From the political point of view, there is but one principle, the sovereignty of man over himself. This sovereignty of me over me is called liberty, and where two or three of these liberties are associated the State begins. But in this association there is no abdication, and each sovereignty concedes a certain amount of itself to form the common right. This quality is the same for all, and this identity of concession which each makes to all is called Equality. The common right is nought but the protection of all radiating over the right of each. This protection of all over each is termed Fraternity. The point of intersection of all aggregated societies is called Society, and this intersection being a junction, the point is a knot. Hence comes what is called the social tie; some say the social contract, which is the same thing, as the word contract is etymologically formed with the idea of a tie. Let us come to an understanding about equality; for if liberty be the summit, equality is the base. Equality, citizens, is not all vegetation on a level, a society of tall blades of grass and small oaks, or a neighborhood of entangled jealousies; it is, civilly, every aptitude having the same opening, politically, all votes having the same weight, and religiously, all consciences having the same right. Equality has an organ in gratuitous and compulsory education, and it should begin with the right to the alphabet. The primary school imposed on all, the secondary school offered to all, such is the law, and from the identical school issues equal instruction. Yes, instruction! Light, light! Everything comes from light and

everything returns to it Citizens, the 19th century is great, but the 20th century will be happy. Then there will be nothing left resembling ancient history, there will be no cause to fear, as at the present day, a conquest, an invasion, usurpation, an armed rivalry of nations, an interruption of civilization depending on a marriage of kings, a birth in hereditary tyrannies, a division of peoples by Congress, a dismemberment by the collapse of dynasties, a combat of two religions, clashing, like two goats of the darkness, on the bridge of infinity; there will be no cause longer to fear famine, exhaustion, prostitution through destiny, misery through stoppage of work, and the scaffold, and the sword, and battles, and all the brigandage of accident in the forest of events; we might almost say there will be no more events, we shall be happy; the human race will accomplish its law as the terrestrial globe does its law; harmony will be restored between the soul and the planet, and the soul will gravitate round the truth as the planet does round light. Friends, the hour we are now standing in is a gloomy hour, but there are such terrible purchases of the future. Oh, the human race will be delivered, relieved, and consoled! We affirm it on this barricade, and where should the cry of love be raised if not on the summit of the sacrifice? Oh, my brothers, this is the point of junction between those who think and those who suffer. This barricade is not made of paving-stones, beams, and iron bars; it is made of two masses, – a mass of ideas and a mass of sorrows. Misery meets then the ideal; day embraces the night there, and says to it, 'I am

about to die with thee, and thou wilt be born again with me.' Faith springs from the embrace of all the desolations; sufferings bring hither their agony, and ideas their immortality. This agony and this immortality are about to be mingled and compose one death. Brothers, the man who dies here dies in the radiance of the future, and we shall enter a tomb all filled with dawn."

Enjolras interrupted himself rather than was silent; his lips moved silently as if he were talking to himself, which attracted attention, and in order still to try to hear him they held their tongues. There was no applause, but they whispered together for a long time. Language being breath, the rustling of intellects resembles the rustling of leaves.

## CHAPTER VI

### MARIUS HAGGARD, JAVERT LACONIC

Let us describe what was going on in Marius's thoughts. Our readers will remember his state of mind, for, as we just now said, everything was only a vision to him. His appreciation was troubled, for he was (we urge the fact) beneath the shadow of the great gloomy wings opened above the dying. He felt that he had entered the tomb, he fancied that he was already on the other side of the wall, and he only saw the faces of the living with the eyes of a dead man. How was M. Fauchelevent present? Why was he here, and what did he come to do? Marius did not ask himself all these questions. Moreover, as our despair has the peculiar thing about it that it envelops others as it does ourselves, it appeared to him logical that everybody should die. Still he thought of Cosette with a contraction of the heart. However, M. Fauchelevent did not speak to him, did not look at him, and did not even seem to hear Marius when he raised his voice, saying, "I know him." As for Marius, this attitude of M. Fauchelevent relieved him, and if such a word were permissible for such impressions, we might say that it pleased him. He had ever felt an absolute impossibility in addressing this enigmatical man, who was at once equivocal and imposing to him. It was a very long time too since he had



seen him; and this augmented the impossibility for a timid and reserved nature like Marius's.

The five men selected left the barricade by the Mondétour Lane, perfectly resembling National Guards. One of them wept as he went away, and before doing so they embraced those who remained. When the five men sent back to life had left, Enjolras thought of the one condemned to death. He went to the ground-floor room, where Javert, tied to the post, was reflecting.

"Do you want anything?" Enjolras asked him.

Javert answered, —

"When will you kill me?"

"Wait. We require all our cartridges at this moment."

"In that case, give me some drink," Javert said.

Enjolras himself held out to him a glass of water, and, as Javert was bound, helped him to drink.

"Is that all?" Enjolras resumed.

"I feel uncomfortable at this post," Javert replied; "you did not act kindly in leaving me fastened to it the whole night. Bind me as you please, but you might surely lay me on a table, like the other man."

And with a nod of the head he pointed to M. Mabœuf's corpse. It will be remembered that there was at the end of the room a long, wide table on which bullets had been run and cartridges made. All the cartridges being made, and all the powder expended, this table was free. By Enjolras's order, four insurgents unfastened Javert from the post, and while they

did so a fifth held a bayonet to his chest. His hands remained fastened behind his back, a thin strong cord was attached to his feet, which enabled him to step fifteen inches, like those who are going to ascend the scaffold, and he was forced to walk to the table at the end of the room, on which they laid him, securely fastened round the waist. For greater security, a system of knotting was employed by means of a cord fastened to the neck, which rendered any escape impossible; it was the sort of fastening called in prisons a martingale, which starts from the nape, of the neck, is crossed on the stomach, and is turned round the hands after passing between the legs. While Javert was being bound, a man standing in the doorway regarded him with singular attention, and the shadow this man cast caused Javert to turn his head. He raised his eyes and recognized Jean Valjean, but he did not even start; he merely looked down haughtily, and restricted himself to saying, "It is all plain."

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **THE SITUATION**

### **BECOMES AGGRAVATED**

Day grew rapidly, but not a window opened, not a door was ajar; it was the dawn, not an awaking. The end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie opposed to the barricade had been evacuated by the troops, as we stated; it appeared to be free and open for passers-by with sinister tranquillity. The Rue St. Denis was dumb as the Avenue of the Sphinxes at Thebes; there was not a living being on the square, which a sunbeam whitened. Nothing is so melancholy as this brightness of deserted streets; nothing could be seen, but something could be heard, and there was a mysterious movement at a certain distance off. It was evident that the critical moment was arriving, and, as on the previous evening, the vedettes fell back, but this time all of them did so. The barricade was stronger than at the prior attack, for since the departure of the five it had been heightened. By the advice of the vedette who had been watching the region of the Halles, Enjolras, through fear of a surprise in the rear, formed a serious resolution. He barricaded the small passage of the Mondétour Lane, which had hitherto remained free, and for this purpose a further portion of the street was unpaved. In this way the barricade, walled in on three sides, – in front by the Rue de la Chanvrerie, on the left by the Rue du

Cygne, and on the right by the Rue Mondétour, – was truly almost impregnable, but it is true that they were fatally enclosed within it. It had three fronts but no issue, it was a fortress but a mouse-trap, as Courfeyrac said with a smile. Enjolras had some thirty paving-stones piled up by the door of the inn. "They dug up more than enough," said Bossuet. The silence was now so profound in the direction whence the attack must come, that Enjolras ordered all his men to return to their fighting-posts, and a ration of brandy was distributed to each man.

Nothing is more curious than a barricade preparing for an assault; every man chooses his place, as at the theatre. They crowd, elbow, and shoulder one another, and some make stalls of paving-stones. Here an angle of the wall is in the way, and it is avoided; there is a redan which may offer protection, and they seek shelter in it. Left-handed men are precious, for they take places inconvenient for others. Many arrange so as to fight seated, for they wish to be at their ease to kill, and comfortable in dying. In the fatal war of June, 1848, an insurgent, who was a wonderful marksman, and who fought from a terraced roof, had a Voltaire easy-chair carried there, and was knocked over in it by a volley of grape-shot. So soon as the chief has given the signal for action all disorderly movements cease; there is no longer any sharp-shooting, any conversations or asides: all that minds contain converges, and is changed into the expectation of the assailant. A barricade before danger is a chaos, in danger discipline, for peril produces order. So soon as Enjolras had

taken his double-barrelled gun, and placed himself at a species of parapet which he reserved for himself, all were silent; a quick, sharp crackling ran confusedly along the wall of paving-stones; it was the muskets being cocked. However, the attitudes were haughtier and more confident than ever, for an excess of sacrifice is a consolidation, and though they no longer had hope, they had despair, – despair, that last weapon, which at times gives victory, as Virgil tells us. Supreme resources issue from extreme resolutions. To embark on death is at times the means of escaping the shipwreck, and the cover of the coffin becomes a plank of salvation. As on the previous evening, all their attention was turned upon the end of the street, which was now lighted up and visible. They had not long to wait ere the movement began again, distinctly in the direction of St. Leu, but it did not resemble the sound of the first attack. A rattling of chains, the alarming rolling of a heavy weight, a clang of bronze leaping on the pavement, and a species of solemn noise, announced that a sinister engine was approaching; there was a tremor in the entrails of these old peaceful streets, pierced and built for the fruitful circulation of interests and ideas, and which are not made for the monstrous rolling of the wheels of war. The fixity of the eyes turned toward the end of the street became stern, as a cannon appeared. The gunners pushed the gun on; the limber was detached, and two men supported the carriage, while four were at the wheels; others followed with the tumbril, and the lighted match could be seen smoking.

"Fire!" shouted Enjolras.

The whole barricade burst into a flame, and the detonation was frightful; an avalanche of smoke covered and concealed the gun and the men. A few seconds after the cloud was dispersed, and the gun and the men reappeared; the gunners were bringing it up to the front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without hurry; not one had been wounded. Then the captain of the gun, hanging with his whole weight on the breech to elevate the muzzle, began pointing the gun with the gravity of an astronomer setting a telescope.

"Bravo for the artillery!" cried Bossuet.

And all the men at the barricade clapped their hands. A moment after the gun, standing in the very centre of the street across the gutter, was in position, and a formidable mouth yawned at the barricade.

"Come, we are going to be gay," said Courfeyrac. "Here is the brutality; after the fillip the blow with the fist. The army is extending its heavy paw toward us, and the barricade is going to be seriously shaken. The musketry-fire feels, and the cannon takes."

"It is an eight-pounder of the new pattern in bronze," Combeferre added. "Those guns, if the proportion of ten parts of tin to one hundred of copper is exceeded, are liable to burst, for the excess of tin renders them too soft. It thus happens that have holes and cavities in the vent, and in order to obviate this danger and be able to load, it would perhaps be advisable to revert to the

process of the 14th century, circling and reinforcing the gun with a series of steel rings, without any welding from the breech to the trunnions. In the mean while they remedy the defect as well as they can, and they manage to discover where the holes are in the vent of the gun by means of a searcher; but there is a better method in Gribeauval's movable star."

"In the 16th century," Bossuet observed, "guns were rifled."

"Yes," Combeferre replied; "that augments the ballistic force, but lessens the correctness of aim. At short distances the trajectory has not all the desirable rigidity, the parabola is exaggerated, the path of the projectile is not sufficiently rectilinear for it to hit intermediate objects, though that is a condition of fighting whose importance grows with the proximity of the enemy and the precipitation of the firing. This defective tension of the curve of the projectile in rifled cannon of the 16th century emanated from the weakness of the charge; weak charges for such engines are imposed by the ballistic necessities, such, for instance, as the preservation of the carriage. After all, the cannon, that despot, cannot do all that it wishes, and strength is a great weakness. A cannon-ball goes only six hundred leagues an hour, while light covers seventy thousand leagues per second. This is the superiority of Jesus Christ over Napoleon."

"Reload your guns," said Enjolras.

In what manner would the revetment of the barricade behave against a cannon-ball? Would a breach be formed? That was the question. While the insurgents were reloading their guns the

artillerymen loaded the cannon. The anxiety within the redoubt was profound; the shot was fired, and the detonation burst forth.

"Present!" a joyous voice cried.

And at the same time as the cannon-ball struck the barricade, Gavroche bounded inside it. He came from the direction of the Rue du Cygne, and actively clambered over the accessory barricade which fronted the labyrinth of the Little Truanderie. Gavroche produced greater effect at the barricade than the cannon-ball did; for the latter was lost in the heap of rubbish. It had broken a wheel of the omnibus, and finished the old truck, on seeing which the insurgents burst into a laugh.

"Persevere!" cried Bossuet to the gunners.



## CHAPTER VIII

# THE ARTILLERY SETS TO WORK IN EARNEST

Gavroche was surrounded, but he had no time to report anything, as Marius, shuddering, drew him on one side.

"What have you come to do here?"

"What a question?" the boy said; "and you, pray?"

And he gazed fixedly at Marius with his epic effrontery: his eyes were dilated by the proud brightness which they contained. It was with a stern accent that Marius continued, —

"Who told you to return? I only trust that you have delivered my letter at its address."

Gavroche felt some degree of remorse in the matter of the letter; for, in his hurry to return to the barricade, he had got rid of it rather than delivered it. He was forced to confess to himself that he had confided somewhat too lightly in this stranger, whose face he had not even been able to distinguish. It is true that this man was bareheaded, but that was not enough. In short, he reproached himself quietly for his conduct, and feared Marius's reproaches. He took the simplest process to get out of the scrape, — he told an abominable falsehood.

"Citizen, I delivered the letter to the porter. The lady was asleep, and she will have the letter when she wakes."

Marius had two objects in sending the letter, — to bid Cosette farewell and save Gavroche. He was obliged to satisfy himself with one half of what he wanted. The connection between the bending of the letter and M. Fauchelevent's presence at the barricade occurred to his mind, and he pointed him out to Gavroche.

"Do you know that man?"

"No," said Gavroche.

Gavroche, in truth, as we know, had only seen Jean Valjean by night. The troubled and sickly conjectures formed in Marius's mind were dissipated. Did he know M. Fauchelevent's opinions? Perhaps he was a republican; hence his presence in the action would be perfectly simple. In the mean while Gavroche had run to the other end of the barricade, crying, "My gun!" and Courfeyrac ordered it to be given to him. Gavroche warned "his comrades," as he called them, that the barricade was invested, and he had found great difficulty in reaching it. A battalion of the line, with their arms piled in the Little Truanderie, was observing on the side of the Rue du Petit Cygne; on the opposite side the Municipal Guard occupied the Rue des Prêcheurs; while in front of them they had the main body of the army. This information given, Gavroche added, —

"I authorize you to give them a famous pill."

Enjolras was in the mean while watching at his loop-hole with open ears; for the assailants, doubtless little satisfied with the gun-shot, had not repeated it. A company of line infantry had

come up to occupy the extremity of the street behind the gun. The soldiers unpaved the street, and erected with the stones a small low wall, a species of epaulement, only eighteen inches high, and facing the barricade. At the left-hand angle of this work could be seen the head of a suburban column, massed in the Rue St. Denis. Enjolras, from his post, fancied he could hear the peculiar sound produced by canister when taken out of its box, and he saw the captain of the gun change his aim and turn the gun's muzzle slightly to the left. Then the gunners began loading, and the captain of the gun himself took the port-fire and walked up to the vent.

"Fall on your knees all along the barricade," Enjolras shouted.

The insurgents, scattered in front of the wine-shop, and who had left their posts on Gavroche's arrival, rushed pell-mell toward the barricade; but ere Enjolras's order was executed, the discharge took place with the frightful rattle of a round of grape-shot; it was one, in fact. The shot was aimed at the opening in the redoubt, and ricocheted against the wall, killing two men and wounding three. If this continued, the barricade would be no longer tenable, for the grape-shot entered it. There was a murmur of consternation.

"Let us stop a second round," Enjolras said: and levelling his carbine he aimed at the captain of the gun, who was leaning over the breech and rectifying the aim. He was a handsome young sergeant of artillery, fair, gentle-faced, and having the intelligent look peculiar to that predestined and formidable arm

which, owing to its constant improvement, must end by killing war. Combeferre, who was standing by Enjolras's side, gazed at this young man.

"What a pity!" said Combeferre. "What a hideous thing such butchery is! Well, when there are no kings left there will be no war. Enjolras, you aim at that sergeant, but do not notice him. Just reflect that he is a handsome young man; he is intrepid. You can see that he is a thinker, and these young artillerymen are well educated; he has a father, mother, and family; he is probably in love; he is but twenty-five years of age at the most, and might be your brother."

"He is so," said Enjolras.

"Yes," Combeferre added, "and mine too. Do not kill him."

"Let me alone. It must be."

And a tear slowly coursed down Enjolras's marble cheek. At the same time he pulled the trigger and the fire flashed forth. The artilleryman turned twice on his heel, with his arms stretched out before him, and his head raised as if to breathe the air, and then fell across the cannon motionless. His back could be seen, from the middle of which a jet of blood gushed forth; the bullet had gone right through his chest, and he was dead. It was necessary to bear him away and fill up his place, and thus a few minutes were gained.

# **CHAPTER IX**

## **EMPLOYMENT OF THE POACHER'S OLD SKILL AND HIS UNERRING SHOT, WHICH HAD AN INFLUENCE ON THE CONDEMNATION IN 1796**

Opinions varied in the barricade, for the firing of the piece was going to begin again, and the barricade could not hold out for a quarter of an hour under the grape-shot; it was absolutely necessary to abate the firing. Enjolras gave the command.

"We must have a mattress here."

"We have none," said Combeferre; "the wounded are lying on them."

Jean Valjean, seated apart on a bench, near the corner of the wine-shop, with his gun between his legs, had not up to the present taken any part in what was going on. He did not seem to hear the combatants saying around him, "There is a gun that does nothing." On hearing the order given by Enjolras, he rose. It will be remembered that on the arrival of the insurgents in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, an old woman, in her terror of the bullets, placed her mattress in front of her window. This window, a garret window, was on the roof of a six-storied house, a little beyond the

barricade. The mattress, placed across it, leaning at the bottom upon two clothes-props, was held above by two ropes, which, at a distance, seemed two pieces of pack-thread, and were fastened to nails driven into the frames of the roof. These cords could be distinctly seen on the sky, like hairs.

"Can any one lend me a double-barrelled gun?" Jean Valjean asked.

Enjolras, who had just reloaded his, handed it to him. Jean Valjean aimed at the garret window and fired; one of the two cords of the mattress was cut asunder, and it hung by only one thread. Jean Valjean fired the second shot, and the second cord lashed the garret window; the mattress glided between the two poles and fell into the street. The insurgents applauded, and every voice cried, —

"There is a mattress."

"Yes," said Combeferre, "but who will go and fetch it?"

The mattress, in truth, had fallen outside the barricade, between the besiegers and besieged. Now, as the death of the sergeant of artillery had exasperated the troops, for some time past they had been lying flat behind the pile of paving-stones which they had raised; and in order to make up for the enforced silence of the gun, they had opened fire on the barricade. The insurgents, wishing to save their ammunition, did not return this musketry: the fusillade broke against the barricade, but the street which it filled with bullets was terrible. Jean Valjean stepped out of the gap, entered the street, traversed the hail of bullets, went to

the mattress, picked it up, placed it on his back, and re-entering the barricade, himself placed the mattress in the gap, and fixed it against the wall, so that the gunners should not see it. This done, they waited for the next round, which was soon fired. The gun belched forth its canister with a hoarse roar, but there was no ricochet, and the grape-shot was checked by the mattress. The expected result was obtained, and the barricade saved.

"Citizen," Enjolras said to Jean Valjean, "the republic thanks you."

Bossuet admired, and laughingly said, —

"It is immoral for a mattress to have so much power: it is the triumph of that which yields over that which thunders. But no matter, glory to the mattress that annuls a cannon!"

## CHAPTER X

### DAWN

At this moment Cosette awoke: her bed-room was narrow, clean, circumspect, with a long window on the east side looking out into the court-yard of the house. Cosette knew nothing of what was going on in Paris, for she had returned to her bed-room at the time when Toussaint said, "There is a row." Cosette had slept but a few hours, though well. She had had sweet dreams, which resulted perhaps from the fact that her small bed was very white. Somebody, who was Marius, appeared to her in light; and she rose with the sun in her eyes, which at first produced the effect of a continuation of her dream upon her. Her first thought on coming out of the dream was of a smiling nature, and she felt quite reassured. Like Jean Valjean a few hours before, she was passing through that reaction of the soul which absolutely desires no misfortune. She began hoping with all her strength, without knowing why, and then suffered from a contraction of the heart. She had not seen Marius for three days; but she said to herself that he must have received her letter, that he knew where she was, that he was clever and would find means to get to her, – certainly to-day, and perhaps that very morning. It was bright day, but the sunbeam was nearly horizontal, and so she thought that it must be early, but that she ought to rise in order to receive Marius. She felt that she could not live without Marius, and that consequently was



sufficient, and Marius would come. No objection was admissible; all this was certain. It was monstrous enough to have suffered for three days: Marius absent for three days, that was horrible on the part of le bon Dieu. Now this cruel suspense sent from on high was a trial passed through; Marius was about to come and bring good news. Thus is youth constituted: it wipes away its tears quickly, and finding sorrow useless, does not accept it. Youth is the smile of the future of an unknown thing, which is itself: it is natural for it to be happy, and it seems as if its breath were made of hope.

However, Cosette could not succeed in recalling to mind what Marius had said to her on the subject of this absence, which was only to last one day, and what explanation he had given her about it. Every one will have noticed with what skill a coin let fall on the ground runs to hide itself, and what art it has in rendering itself invisible. There are thoughts which play us the same trick; they conceal themselves in a corner of our brain: it is all over, they are lost, and it is impossible to recall them to memory. Cosette felt somewhat vexed at the little useless effort her memory made, and said to herself that it was very wrong and culpable of her to forget words pronounced by Marius. She left her bed, and performed the two ablutions of the soul and the body, her prayers and her toilette.

We may, if absolutely required, introduce a reader into a nuptial chamber, but not into a virgin's room. Verse could hardly venture it, prose ought not. It is the interior of a still closed

flower, a whiteness in the gloaming, the inner cell of a closed lily, which must not be gazed at by man till it has been gazed at by the sun. Woman in the bud is sacred: this innocent bud which discovers itself, this adorable semi-nudity which is afraid of itself, this white foot which takes refuge in a slipper, this throat which veils itself before a mirror as if the mirror were an eye, this chemise which hurriedly rises and covers the shoulder at the sound of a piece of furniture creaking or a passing vehicle, these knotted strings, this stay-lace, this tremor, this shudder of cold and shame, this exquisite shyness in every movement, this almost winged anxiety when there is nothing to fear, the successive phases of the apparel, which are as charming as the clouds of dawn, – it is not befitting that all this should be described, and it is too much to have merely indicated it. The eye of man must to even more religious before the rising of a maiden than before the rising of a star. The possibility of attaining ought to be turned into augmented respect. The down of the peach, the first bloom of the plum, the crystal radiance of the snow, the butterfly's wing powdered with feathers, are but coarse things by the side of this chastity, which does not know itself that it is chaste. The maiden is only the flash of the dream, and is not yet a statue; her alcove is concealed in the dim part of the ideal, and the indiscreet touch of the eye brutalizes this vague twilight. In this case contemplation is profanation. We will therefore say nothing about the sweet awaking and rising of Cosette. An Eastern fable tells us that the rose was made white by God, but that Adam having looked at it

for a moment when it opened, it felt ashamed, and turned pink. We are of those who feel themselves abashed in the presence of maidens and flowers, for we find them worthy of veneration.

Cosette dressed herself very rapidly, and combed and dressed her hair, which was very simple at that day, when women did not swell their ringlets and plaits with cushions and pads, and placed no crinoline in their hair. Then she opened the window and looked all around, hoping to discern a little of the street, an angle of the house, or a corner of the pavement, to watch for Marius. But nothing could be seen of the outside: the court-yard was surrounded by rather lofty walls, and was bounded by other gardens. Cosette declared these gardens hideous, and for the first time in her life considered flowers ugly. The paltriest street gutter would have suited her purpose better; and she resolved to look up to heaven, as if she thought that Marius might possibly come thence. Suddenly she burst into tears, not through any fickleness of temperament, but her situation consisted of hopes dashed with despondency. She confusedly felt something horrible; that it was really in the air. She said to herself that she was sure of nothing, that letting herself out of sight was losing herself; and the idea that Marius might return to her from heaven appeared to her no longer charming but lugubrious. Then – for such these clouds are – calmness returned, and hope, and a species of smile, unconscious, but trusting in God.

Everybody was still asleep in the house, and a provincial silence prevailed. No shutter was opened, and the porter's lodge

was still closed. Toussaint was not up, and Cosette naturally thought that her father was asleep. She must have suffered greatly, and must still be suffering, for she said to herself that her father had been unkind, but she reckoned on Marius. The eclipse of such a light was decidedly impossible. At moments she heard some distance off a sort of heavy shock, and thought how singular it was that gates were opened and shut at so early an hour; it was the sound of the cannon-balls battering the barricade. There was a martin's nest a few feet below Cosette's window in the old smoke-blackened cornice, and the mouth of the nest projected a little beyond the cornice, so that the interior of this little Paradise could be seen from above. The mother was there expanding her wings like a fan over her brood; the male bird fluttered round, went away, and then returned, bringing in his bill food and kisses. The rising day gilded this happy thing; the great law, increase and multiply, was there smiling and august; and the sweet mystery was unfolded in the glory of the morn. Cosette, with her hair in the sunshine, her soul in flames, enlightened by love within and the dawn without, bent forward as if mechanically, and, almost without daring to confess to herself that she was thinking at the same time of Marius, she began looking at these birds, this family, this male and female, this mother and her little ones, with all the profound agitation which the sight of a nest occasions a virgin.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SHOT WHICH DOES NOT MISS AND WHICH KILLS NOBODY

The fire of the assailants continued, and the musketry and grape-shot alternated, though without producing much mischief. The upper part of Corinth alone suffered, and the first-floor and garret windows, pierced by slugs and bullets, gradually lost their shape. The combatants posted there were compelled to withdraw; but, in fact, such are the tactics of an attack on a barricade, — to skirmish for a long time and exhaust the ammunition of the insurgents, if they commit the error of returning the fire. When it is discovered by the slackening of their fire that they have no powder or ball left, the assault is made. Enjolras had not fallen into this trap, and the barricade did not reply. At each platoon fire Gavroche thrust his tongue into his cheek, a sign of supreme disdain.

"That's good," he said; "tear up the linen, for we require lint."

Courfeyrac addressed the grape-shot on its want of effect, and said to the cannon, —

"You are becoming diffuse, my good fellow."

In battle, intrigues take place as at a ball; and it is probable that the silence of the redoubt was beginning to render the assailants anxious, and make them fear lest some unexpected

incident had occurred. They felt a need of seeing clearly through this pile of paving-stones, and what was going on behind this impassive wall, which received shots without answering them. The insurgents suddenly perceived a helmet glistening in the sun upon an adjoining roof: a sapper was leaning against a tall chimney-pot and apparently a sentry there. He looked down into the barricade.

"That's a troublesome spy," said Enjolras.

Jean had returned Enjolras his fowling-piece, but still had his own musket. Without saying a word he aimed at the sapper, and a second later the helmet, struck by a bullet, fell noisily into the street. The soldier disappeared with all possible haste. A second watchman took his place, and it was an officer. Jean Valjean, who had reloaded his musket, aimed at the new-comer, and sent the officer's helmet to join the private's. The officer was not obstinate, but withdrew very quickly. This time the hint was understood, and no one again appeared on the roof.

"Why did you not kill the man?" Bossuet asked Jean Valjean, who, however, made no reply.

## CHAPTER XII

### DISORDER THE PARTISAN OF ORDER

Bossuet muttered in Combeferre's ear, —

"He has not answered my question."

"He is a man who does kind actions with musket-shots," said Combeferre.

Those who have any recollection of this now distant epoch know that the suburban National Guards were valiant against the insurrection, and they were peculiarly brave and obstinate in the days of June, 1832. Any worthy landlord, whose establishment the insurrection injured, became leonine on seeing his dancing-room deserted, and let himself be killed in order to save order represented by the suburban public-house. At this time, which was at once heroic and bourgeois, in the presence of ideas which had their knights, interests had their Paladins, and the prosaic nature of the motive took away none of the bravery of the movement. The decrease of a pile of crowns made bankers sing the Marseillaise, men lyrically shed their blood for the till, and defended with Lacedæmonian enthusiasm the shop, that immense diminutive of the country. Altogether there was a good deal that was very serious in all this; social interests were entering into a contest, while awaiting the day when they would enter a

state of equilibrium. Another sign of this time was the anarchy mingled with the governmentalism (a barbarous name of the correct party), and men were for order without discipline. The drums played unexpectedly fancy calls, at the command of some colonel of the National Guard: one captain went under fire through inspiration, while some National Guards fought "for the idea," and on their own account. In critical moments during the riots men followed the advice of their chiefs less than their own instincts, and there were in the army of order real Guerilleros, some of the sword like Fannicot, and others of the pen like Henry Fonfrède. Civilization, unhappily represented at this period more by an aggregation of interests than by a group of principles, was, or believed itself to be, in danger; it uttered the alarm cry, and every man, constituting himself a centre, defended, succored, and protected it in his own way, and the first comer took on himself to save society.

Zeal sometimes went as far as extermination; a platoon of National Guards constituted themselves of their own authority a council of war, and tried and executed in five minutes an insurgent prisoner. It was an improvisation of this nature which killed Jean Prouvaire. It is that ferocious Lynch law with which no party has the right to reproach another, for it is applied by the Republic in America as by monarchy in Europe. This Lynch law was complicated by mistakes. On a day of riot a young poet of the name of Paul Aimé Garnier was pursued on the Place Royale at the bayonet's point, and only escaped by taking shelter under



the gateway at No. 6. "There's another of those Saint Simonians," they shouted, and wished to kill him. Now, he had under his arm a volume of the Memoirs of the Duc de Saint Simon; a National Guard read on the back the words "Saint Simon," and shouted, "Death to him!" On June 6, 1832, a company of suburban National Guards, commanded by Captain Fannicot, to whom we have already referred, decimated the Rue de la Chanvrerie for his own good pleasure, and on his own authority. This fact, singular though it is, was proved by the judicial report drawn up in consequence of the insurrection of 1832. Captain Fannicot, an impatient and bold bourgeois, a species of condottiere of order, and a fanatical and insubmissive governmentalist, could not resist the attraction of firing prematurely, and taking the barricade all by himself, that is to say, with his company. Exasperated at the successive apparition of the red flag and the old coat, which he took for the black flag, he loudly blamed the generals and commanders of corps, who were holding councils, as they did not think the decisive moment for assault had arrived, but were "letting the insurrection stew in its own gravy," according to a celebrated expression of one of them. As for him, he thought the barricade ripe, and as everything that is ripe is bound to fall, he made the attempt.

He commanded men as resolute as himself. "Mad-men," a witness called them. His company, the same which had shot Jean Prouvaire, was the first of the battalion posted at the street corner. At the moment when it was least expected the captain

dashed his men at the barricade; but this movement, executed with more good-will than strategy, cost Fannicot's company dearly. Before it had covered two thirds of the street a general discharge from the barricade greeted it; four, the boldest men of all, running at the head, were shot down in point-blank range at the very foot of the barricade, and this courageous mob of National Guards, very brave men, but not possessing the military tenacity, was compelled to fall back after a few moments, leaving fifteen corpses in the street. The momentary hesitation gave the insurgents time to reload, and a second and most deadly discharge assailed the company before the men were able to regain their shelter at the corner of the street. In a moment they were caught between two fires, and received the volley from the cannon, which, having no orders to the contrary, did not cease firing. The intrepid and imprudent Fannicot was one of those killed by this round of grape-shot; he was laid low by the cannon. This attack, which was more furious than serious, irritated Enjolras.

"The asses!" he said, "they have their men killed and expend our ammunition for nothing."

Enjolras spoke like the true general of the riot that he was: insurrection and repression do not fight with equal arms; for the insurrection, which can be soon exhausted, has only a certain number of rounds to fire and of combatants to expend. An expended cartouche-box and a killed man cannot have their place filled up. Repression, on the other hand, having the army,

does not count men, and having Vincennes, does not count rounds. Repression has as many regiments as the barricade has men, and as many arsenals as the barricade has cartouche-boxes. Hence these are always contests of one man against a hundred, which ever end by the destruction of the barricade, unless revolution, suddenly dashing up, casts into the balance its flashing archangel's glaive. Such things happen, and then everything rises, paving-stones get into a state of ebullition, and popular redoubts swarm. Paris has a sovereign tremor, the *quid divinum* is evolved; there is an August 10 or a July 29 in the air, a prodigious light appears, the yawning throat of force recoils, and the army, that lion, sees before it, standing erect and tranquil, that prophet, France.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GLEAMS WHICH FADE

In the chaos of feelings and passions which defend a barricade there is everything, – bravery, youth, the point of honor, enthusiasm, the ideal, conviction, the obstinacy of the gambler, and above all intermitting gleams of hope. One of these intermittences, one of these vague quiverings of hope, suddenly ran along the Chanvrière barricade at the most unexpected moment.

"Listen," Enjolras, who was ever on the watch, exclaimed. "I fancy that Paris is waking up."

It is certain that on the morning of June 6 the insurrection had for an hour or two a certain reanimation. The obstinacy of the tocsin of St. Merry aroused a few slight desires, and barricades were begun in the Rue du Poirier and in the Rue des Gravilliers. In front of the Porte St. Martin, a young man armed with a gun attacked a squadron of cavalry alone, unprotected, and on the open boulevard he knelt down, raised his gun, fired and killed the Major, and then turned away, saying, "There's another who will do us no more mischief." He was cut down. In the Rue St. Denis a woman fired at the National Guard from behind a Venetian shutter, and the wooden laths could be seen to tremble every moment. A boy of fourteen was arrested in the Rue de la Cossonnerie with his pockets full of cartridges, and

several guard-houses were attacked. At the entrance of the Rue Bertin Poirée a very sharp and quite unexpected fusillade greeted a regiment of cuirassiers, at the head of which rode General Cavaignac de Barague. In the Rue Planche Mibray old crockery and household utensils were thrown from the roofs down on the troops; this was a bad sign, and when Marshal Soult was informed of the fact, Napoleon's old lieutenant became pensive, for he remembered Suchet's remark at Saragossa: "We are lost when old women empty their pots de chambre on our heads." These general symptoms manifested at a moment when the riots were supposed to be localized, this fever of anger which regained the upper hand, these will-o'-the-wisps flying here and there over the profound masses of combustible matter which are called the faubourgs of Paris, and all the accompanying facts, rendered the chiefs anxious, and they hastened to extinguish the beginnings of the conflagration. Until these sparks were quenched, the attacks on the barricades Maubuée, de la Chanvrerie, and St. Merry were deferred, so that all might be finished at one blow. Columns of troops were sent through the streets in a state of fermentation, clearing the large streets and searching the smaller ones, on the right and on the left, at one moment slowly and cautiously, at another at quick march. The troops broke open the doors of the houses whence firing was heard, and at the same time cavalry manœuvres dispersed the groups on the boulevards. This repression was not effected without turmoil, and that tumultuous noise peculiar to collisions between the army and the people, and

it was this that had attracted Enjolras's attention in the intervals between the cannonading and the platoon fire. Moreover, he had seen wounded men carried along the end of the street on litters, and said to Courfeyrac, "Those wounded are not our handiwork."

The hope lasted but a short time, and the gleam was quickly eclipsed. In less than half an hour what there was in the air vanished; it was like a flash of lightning without thunder, and the insurgents felt that leaden pall, which the indifference of the people casts upon abandoned obstinate men, fall upon them again. The general movement, which seemed to have been obscurely designed, failed, and the attention of the Minister of War and the strategy of the generals could now be concentrated on the three or four barricades that remained standing. The sun rose on the horizon, and an insurgent addressed Enjolras, —

"We are hungry here. Are we really going to die like this, without eating?"

Enjolras, still leaning at his parapet, made a nod of affirmation, without taking his eyes off the end of the street.

## CHAPTER XIV

### IN WHICH WE READ THE NAME OF THE MISTRESS OF ENJOLRAS

Courfeyrac, seated on a stone by the side of Enjolras, continued to insult the cannon, and each time that the gloomy shower of projectiles which is called a grape-shot passed with its monstrous noise he greeted it with an ironical remark.

"You are wasting your breath, my poor old brute, and I feel sorry for you, as your row is thrown away. That is not thunder, but a cough."

And those around him laughed Courfeyrac and Bossuet, whose valiant good-humor increased with danger, made up for the want of food, like Madame Scarron, by jests, and as wine was short, poured out gayety for all.

"I admire Enjolras," said Bossuet. "His temerity astonishes me. He lives alone, which, perhaps, renders him a little sad; and Enjolras is to be pitied for his greatness, which attaches him to widowhood. We fellows have all, more or less, mistresses, who make us mad, that is to say brave, and when a man is as full of love as a tiger the least he can do is to fight like a lion. That is a way of avenging ourselves for the tricks which our grisettes play us. Roland lets himself be killed to vex Angelique, and all our heroism comes from our women. A man without a woman is like

a pistol without a hammer, and it is the woman who makes the man go off. Well, Enjolras has no woman, he is not in love, and finds means to be intrepid. It is extraordinary that a man can be cold as ice and daring as fire."

Enjolras did not appear to listen; but any one who had been near him might have heard him murmur, in a low voice, *Patria*. Bossuet laughed again, when Courfeyrac shouted, "Here's something fresh."

And assuming the voice of a groom of the chambers who announces a visitor, he added, – "Mr. Eight-Pounder."

In fact, a new character had come on the stage; it was a second piece of artillery. The gunners rapidly got it into position by the side of the first one, and this was the beginning of the end. A few minutes later both guns, being actively served, were at work against the barricade, and the platoon fire of the line and the suburban National Guards supported the artillery. Another cannonade was audible some distance off. At the same time that the two guns were furiously assaulting the redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, two other pieces placed in position, one in the Rue St. Denis, the other in the Rue Aubry le Boucher, were pounding the St. Merry barricade. The four guns formed a lugubrious echo to one another, the barks of the grim dogs of war answered one another. Of the two guns now opened on the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, one fired shell, the other solid shot. The gun which fired the latter was pointed at a slight elevation, and the firing was so calculated that the ball struck the extreme edge of



the crest of the barricades, and hurled the broken paying-stones on the heads of the insurgents. This mode of fire was intended to drive the combatants from the top of the redoubt, and compel them to close up in the interior; that is to say, it announced the assault. Once the combatants were driven from the top of the barricade by the cannon, and from the windows of the public-house by the canister, the columns of attack could venture into the street without being aimed at, perhaps without even being seen, suddenly escalate the barricade, as on the previous evening, and take it by surprise.

"The annoyance of these guns must be reduced," said Enjolras; and he shouted, "Fire at the artillerymen!"

All were ready: the barricade, which had so long been silent, was belted with flame; seven or eight rounds succeeded one another with a sort of rage and joy; the street was filled with a blinding smoke, and at the expiration of a few minutes there might be confusedly seen through the mist, all striped with flame, two thirds of the artillerymen lying under the gun-wheels. Those who remained standing continued to serve the guns with a stern tranquillity, but the fire was reduced.

"Things are going well," said Bossuet to Enjolras; "that is a success."

Enjolras shook his head, and replied, —

"Another quarter of an hour of that success, and there will not be ten cartridges left in the barricade."

It appears that Gavroche heard the remark.

## CHAPTER XV

### GAVROCHE OUTSIDE

Courfeyrac all at once perceived somebody in the street, at the foot of the barricade, amid the shower of bullets. Gavroche had fetched a hamper from the pot-house, passed through the gap, and was quickly engaged in emptying into it the full cartouche-boxes of the National Guards killed on the slope of the barricade.

"What are you doing there?" Courfeyrac said.

Gavroche looked up.

"Citizen, I am filling my hamper."

"Do you not see the grape-shot?"

Gavroche replied, —

"Well, it is raining; what then?"

Courfeyrac cried, "Come in."

"Directly," said Gavroche.

And with one bound he reached the street. It will be borne in mind that Fannicot's company, in retiring, left behind it a number of corpses; some twenty dead lay here and there all along the pavement of the street. That made twenty cartouche-boxes for Gavroche, and a stock of cartridges for the barricade. The smoke lay in the street like a fog; any one who has seen a cloud in a mountain gorge, between two precipitous escarpments, can form an idea of this smoke, contracted, and as it were rendered denser, by the two dark lines of tall houses. It rose slowly, and was

incessantly renewed; whence came a gradual obscurity, which dulled even the bright daylight. The combatants could scarce see one another from either end of the street, which was, however, very short. This darkness, probably desired and calculated on by the chiefs who were about to direct the assault on the barricade, was useful for Gavroche. Under the cloak of this smoke, and thanks to his shortness, he was enabled to advance a considerable distance along the street unnoticed, and he plundered the first seven or eight cartouche-boxes without any great danger. He crawled on his stomach, galloped on all fours, took his hamper in his teeth, writhed, glided, undulated, wound from one corpse to another, and emptied the cartouche-box as a monkey opens a nut. They did not cry to him from the barricade, to which he was still rather close, to return, for fear of attracting attention to him. On one corpse, which was a corporal's, he found a powder-flask.

"For thirst," he said, as he put it in his pocket.

While moving forward, he at length reached the point where the fog of the fire became transparent, so that the sharp-shooters of the line, drawn up behind their parapet of paving-stones, and the National Guard at the corner of the street, all at once pointed out to one another something stirring in the street. At the moment when Gavroche was taking the cartridges from a sergeant lying near a post, a bullet struck the corpse.

"Oh, for shame!" said Gavroche; "they are killing my dead for me."

A second bullet caused the stones to strike fire close to him,

while a third upset his hamper. Gavroche looked and saw that it came from the National Guards. He stood upright, with his hair floating in the breeze, his hands on his hips, and his eyes fixed on the National Guards who were firing, and he sang, —

"On est laid à Nanterre,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire,  
Et bête à Palaiseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

Then he picked up his hamper, put into it the cartridges scattered around without missing one, and walked toward the firing party, to despoil another cartouche-box. Then a fourth bullet missed him. Gavroche sang, —

"Je ne suis pas notaire,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire;  
Je suis petit oiseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

A fifth bullet only succeeded so far as to draw a third couplet from him, —

"Joie est mon caractère,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire;  
Misère est mon trousseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

They went on for some time longer, and the sight was at once terrific and charming; Gavroche, while fired at, ridiculed the firing, and appeared to be greatly amused. He was like a sparrow deriding the sportsmen, and answered each discharge by a verse. The troops aimed at him incessantly, and constantly missed him, and the National Guards and the soldiers laughed while covering him. He lay down, then rose again, hid himself in a doorway, then bounded, disappeared, reappeared, ran off, came back, replied to the grape-shot by putting his fingers to his nose, and all the while plundered cartridges, emptied boxes, and filled his hamper. The insurgents watched him, as they panted with anxiety, but while the barricade trembled he sang. He was not a child, he was not a man, he was a strange goblin gamin, and he resembled the invulnerable dwarf of the combat. The bullets ran after him, but he was more active than they; he played a frightful game of hide-and-seek with death: and each time that the snub-nosed face of the spectre approached the gamin gave it a fillip. One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the rest, at length struck the will-o'-the-wisp lad; Gavroche was seen to totter and then sink. The whole barricade uttered a cry, but there was an Antæus in this pygmy: for a gamin to touch the pavement is like the giant touching the earth; and Gavroche had only fallen to rise again. He remained in a sitting posture, a long jet of blood ran down his face, he raised both arms in the air, looked in the direction whence the shot had come, and began singing, —

"Je suis tombé par terre,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire;  
Le nez dans le ruisseau,  
C'est la faute à – "

He did not finish, for a second shot from the same marksman stopped him short. This time he lay with his face on the pavement, and did not stir again. This little great soul had flown away.

## CHAPTER XVI

### HOW A BROTHER BECOMES A FATHER

There were at this very moment in the Luxembourg garden – for the eye of the drama must be everywhere present – two lads holding each other's hand. One might be seven, the other five, years of age. As they were wet through with the rain they walked along sunshiny paths; the elder led the younger, both were in rags and pale, and they looked like wild birds. The younger said, "I am very hungry." The elder, who had already a protecting air, led his brother with the left hand, and had a switch in his right. They were alone in the garden, which was deserted, as the gates were closed by police order on account of the insurrection. The troops who had bivouacked there had issued forth for the exigences of the combat. How were these children here? Perhaps they had escaped from some guard-room where the door was left ajar; perhaps in the vicinity, at the Barrière d'Enfer, on the esplanade of the Observatory, or in the neighboring square overshadowed by the cornice, on which may be read, *Invenerunt parvulum pannis involutum*, there was some mountebank's booth from which they had fled; perhaps they had on the previous evening kept out of sight of the garden inspectors at the hour of closing, and had spent the night in one of those summer-

houses in which people read the papers: the fact is, that they were wandering about, and seemed to be free. To be a wanderer, and to appear free, is to be lost, and these poor little creatures were really lost. The two lads were the same about whom Gavroche had been in trouble, and whom the reader will remember, sons of Thénardier, let out to Magnon, attributed to M. Gillenormand, and now leaves fallen from all these rootless branches, and rolled along the ground by the wind.

Their clothes, clean in the time of Magnon, and which served her as a prospectus to M. Gillenormand, had become rags; and these beings henceforth belonged to the statistics of "deserted children," whom the police pick up, lose, and find again on the pavement of Paris. It needed the confusion of such a day as this for these two poor little wretches to be in this garden. If the inspectors had noticed these rags they would have expelled them, for poor little lads do not enter public gardens, and yet it ought to be remembered that as children they have a right to flowers. They were here, thanks to the locked gates, and were committing an offence; they had stepped into the garden and remained there. Though locked gates do not give a holiday to the keepers, and their surveillance is supposed to continue, it grows weaker and rests; and the inspectors, also affected by the public affairs, and more busied about the outside than the inside, did not look at the garden, and had not seen the two delinquents. It had rained on the previous evening, and even slightly on this morning, but in June, showers are of no great consequence. People hardly perceive,



an hour after a storm, that this fair beauteous day has wept, for the earth dries up as rapidly as a child's cheek. At this moment of the solstice the midday light is, so to speak, poignant, and it seizes everything. It clings to and spreads itself over the earth with a sort of suction, and we might say that the sun is thirsty. A shower is a glass of water, and rain is at once drunk up. In the morning everything glistens, in the afternoon everything is dusty. Nothing is so admirable as verdure cleansed by the rain and dried by the sun; it is warm freshness. Gardens and fields, having water in their roots and sunshine in their flowers, become censers of incense, and smoke with all their perfumes at once. Everything laughs, sings, and offers itself, and we feel softly intoxicated: summer is a temporary Paradise, and the sun helps man to be patient.

There are beings who ask no more, – living creatures who, having the azure of heaven, say it is enough; dreamers absorbed in the prodigy, drawing from the idolatry of nature indifference to good and evil; contemplators of the Cosmos, radiantly distracted from man, who do not understand how people can trouble themselves about the hunger of one person, the thirst of another, the nudity of the poor man in winter, the lymphatic curvature of a small backbone, the truck-bed, the garret, the cell, and the rags of young shivering girls, when they can dream under the trees: they are peaceful and terrible minds, pitilessly satisfied, and, strange to say, infinitude suffices them. They ignore that great want of man, the finite which admits of an embrace, and

do not dream of the finite which admits of progress, that sublime toil. The indefinite, which springs from the divine and human combination of the infinite and the finite, escapes them, and provided that they can be face to face with immensity, they smile. They never feel joy, but always ecstasy, and their life is one of abstraction. The history of humanity is to them but a grand detail: the All is not in it, the All remains outside of it. Of what use is it to trouble one's self about that item, man? Man suffers, it is possible, but just look at Aldebaran rising! The mother has no milk left, the new-born babe is dying. I know nothing of all that, but just look at the marvellous rose made by a sprig of hawthorn when looked at through a microscope; just compare the finest Mechlin lace with that! These thinkers forget to love, and the zodiac has such an attraction over them that it prevents them seeing the weeping child. God eclipses their soul, and they are a family of minds at once great and little. Homer belonged to it; so did Goethe, and possibly Lafontaine, magnificent egotists of the infinite, calm spectators of sorrow, who do not see Nero if the weather be fine; from whom the sun hides the pyre; who would look at a guillotining to seek a light effect in it; who hear neither cries nor sobs, nor the death-rattle nor the tocsin; for whom everything is good, since there is the month of May; who so long as they have clouds of purple and gold above their heads declare themselves satisfied; and who are determined to be happy until the radiance of the stars and the song of birds are exhausted.

These are darkly radiant, and they do not suspect that they

are to be pitied. But they are certainly so, for the man who does not weep does not see. We must admire and pity them, as we would pity and admire a being at once night and day, who had no eyes under his brows, but a star in the centre of his forehead. The indifference of these thinkers is, according to some, a grand philosophy. Be it so; but in this superiority there is infirmity. A man may be immortal and limp, as witness Vulcan, and he may be more than man and less than man; there is immense incompleteness in nature, and who knows whether the sun be not blind? But in that case, whom to trust? *Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?* Hence, certain geniuses, certain human deities, star-men, might be mistaken? What is above at the summit, at the zenith, which pours so much light on the earth, might see little, see badly, not see at all? Is not that desperate? No: but what is there above the sun? God.

On June 6, 1832, at about eleven in the forenoon, the Luxembourg, solitary and depopulated, was delicious. The quincunxes and flower-beds sent balm and dazzlement into the light, and the branches, wild in the brilliancy of midday, seemed trying to embrace one another. There was in the sycamores a twittering of linnets, the sparrows were triumphal, and the woodpeckers crept along the chestnut, gently tapping holes in the bark. The beds accepted the legitimate royalty of the lilies, for the most august of perfumes is that which issues from whiteness. The sharp odor of the carnations was inhaled, and the old rooks of Marie de Medicis made love on the lofty trees. The sun gilded,

purpled, and illumined the tulips, which are nothing but all the varieties of flame made into flowers. All around the tulip-beds hummed the bees, the flashes of these fire-flowers. All was grace and gayety, even the coming shower, for that relapse by which the lilies of the valley and honeysuckles would profit had nothing alarming about it, and the swallows made the delicious menace of flying low. What was there inhaled happiness: life smelt pleasantly, and all this nature exhaled candor, help, assistance, paternity, caresses, and dawn. The thoughts that fell from heaven were as soft as a babe's little hand that we kiss. The statues under the trees, nude and white, were robed in dresses of shadow shot with light; these goddesses were all ragged with sunshine, and beams hung from them on all sides. Around the great basin the earth was already so dry as to be parched, and there was a breeze sufficiently strong to create here and there small riots of dust. A few yellow leaves remaining from the last autumn joyously pursued one another, and seemed to be sporting.

The abundance of light had something strangely reassuring about it; life, sap, heat, and exhalations overflowed, and the greatness of the source could be felt beneath creation. In all these blasts penetrated with love, in this movement of reflections and gleams, in this prodigious expenditure of beams, and in this indefinite outpouring of fluid gold, the prodigality of the inexhaustible could be felt; and behind this splendor, as behind a curtain of flames, glimpses of God, that millionaire of the stars, could be caught. Thanks to the sand, there was not a speck

of mud; and, thanks to the rain, there was not a grain of dust. The bouquets had just performed their ablutions, and all the velvets, all the satins, all the varnish, and all the gold which issue from the earth in the shape of flowers, were irreproachable. This magnificence was clean, and the grand silence of happy nature filled the garden, – a heavenly silence, compatible with a thousand strains of music, the fondling tones from the nests, the buzzing of the swarms, and the palpitations of the wind. All the harmony of the season was blended into a graceful whole, the entrances and exits of spring took place in the desired order, the lilacs were finishing, and the jessamine beginning, a few flowers were behindhand, a few insects before their time, and the vanguard of the red butterflies of June fraternized with the rearguard of the white butterflies of May. The plane-trees were putting on a fresh skin, and the breeze formed undulations in the magnificent enormity of the chest-nut-trees. It was splendid. A veteran from the adjoining barracks who was looking through the railings said, "Spring presents arms in full dress."

All nature was breakfasting; the creation was at table; it was the hour: the great blue cloth was laid in heaven, and the great green one on earth, while the sun gave an *à giorno* illumination. God was serving His universal meal, and each being had its pasture or its pasty. The wood-pigeon found hempseed, the chaffinch found millet, the goldfinch found chickweed, the redbreast found worms, the bee found flowers, the fly found infusoria, and the greenfinch found flies. They certainly

devoured one another to some extent, which is the mystery of evil mingled with good, but not a single animal had an empty stomach. The two poor abandoned boys had got near the great basin, and somewhat confused by all this light, tried to hide themselves, which is the instinct of the poor and the weak in the presence of magnificence, even when it is impersonal, and they kept behind the swan's house. Now and then, at intervals when the wind blew, confused shouts, a rumbling, a sort of tumultuous death-rattle which was musketry, and dull blows which were cannon-shots, could be heard. There was smoke above the roofs in the direction of the markets, and a bell which seemed to be summoning sounded in the distance. The children did not seem to notice the noises, and the younger lad repeated every now and then in a low voice, "I am hungry."

Almost simultaneously with the two boys another couple approached the basin, consisting of a man of about fifty, leading by the hand a boy of six years of age. It was doubtless a father with his son. The younger of the two had a cake in his hand. At this period certain contiguous houses in the Rue Madame and the Rue d'Enfer had keys to the Luxembourg, by which the lodgers could let themselves in when the gates were locked; but this permission has since been withdrawn. This father and son evidently came from one of these houses. The two poor little creatures saw "this gentleman" coming, and hid themselves a little more. He was a citizen, and perhaps the same whom Marius during his love-fever had one day heard near the same great basin

counselling his son "to avoid excesses." He had an affable and haughty look, and a mouth which, as it did not close, always smiled. This mechanical smile, produced by too much jaw and too little skin, shows the teeth rather than the soul. The boy with the bitten cake which he had not finished, seemed gluttoned; the boy was dressed in a National Guard's uniform, on account of the riots, and the father remained in civilian garb for the sake of prudence. Father and son had halted near the great basin, in which the two swans were disporting. This bourgeois appeared to have a special admiration for the swans, and resembled them in the sense that he walked like them. At this moment the swans were swimming, which is their principal talent, and were superb. Had the two little fellows listened, and been of an age to comprehend, they might have overheard the remarks of a serious man; the father was saying to his son, —

"The sage lives contented with little; look at me, my son, I do not care for luxury. You never see me in a coat glistening with gold and precious stones; I leave that false lustre to badly-organized minds."

Here the deep shouts which came from the direction of the Halles broke out, with a redoublement of hells and noise.

"What is that?" the lad asked.

The father replied, —

"That is the saturnalia."

All at once he perceived the two little ragged boys standing motionless behind the swan's green house.

"Here is the beginning," he said.

And after a silence he added, —

"Anarchy enters this garden."

In the mean while the boy bit the cake, spat it out again, and suddenly began crying.

"Why are you crying?" the father asked.

"I am no longer hungry," said the boy.

The father's smile became more marked than ever.

"You need not be hungry to eat a cake."

"I am tired of cake; it is so filling."

"Don't you want any more?"

"No."

The father showed him the swans.

"Throw it to those palmipeds."

The boy hesitated, for if he did not want any more cake that was no reason to give it away.

The father continued, —

"Be humane: you ought to have pity on animals."

And, taking the cake from his son, he threw it into the basin, where it fell rather near the bank. The swans were some distance off, near the centre of the basin, and engaged with some prey: they had seen neither the citizen nor the cake. The citizen, feeling that the cake ran a risk of being lost, and affected by this useless shipwreck, began a telegraphic agitation which eventually attracted the attention of the swans. They noticed something floating on the surface, tacked, like the vessels they are, and came



towards the cake slowly, with the majesty that befits white beasts.

"Swans understand signs," said the bourgeois, pleased at his own cleverness.

At this moment the distant tumult of the city was suddenly swollen. This time it was sinister, and there are some puffs of wind which speak more distinctly than others. The one which blew at this moment distinctly brought up the rolling of drums, shouts, platoon fires, and the mournful replies of the tocsin, and the cannon. This coincided with a black cloud which suddenly veiled the sky. The swans had not yet reached the cake.

"Let us go home," the father said; "they are attacking the Tuileries,"

He seized his son's hand again, and then continued, —

"From the Tuileries to the Luxembourg there is only the distance which separates the royalty from the peerage; and that is not far. It is going to rain musketry."

He looked at the cloud, —

"And perhaps we shall have rain of the other sort too; heaven is interfering: the younger branch is condemned. Let us make haste home."

"I should like to see the swans eat the cake," said the boy.

"It would be imprudent," the father answered; and he led away his little bourgeois. The son, regretting the swans, turned his head toward the basin, until a bend in the quincunxes concealed it from him. The two little vagabonds had in the mean while approached the cake simultaneously with the swans. It was floating on the

water; the smaller boy looked at the cake; the other looked at the citizen, who was going off. Father and son entered the labyrinth of trees that runs to the grand staircase of the clump of trees in the direction of the Rue Madame. When they were no longer in sight, the elder hurriedly lay down full length on the rounded bank of the basin, and holding by his left hand, while bending over the water, till he all but fell in, he stretched out his switch toward the cake with the other. The swans, seeing the enemy, hastened up, and in hastening their breasts produced an effect useful to the little fisher: the water flowed back in front of the swans, and one of the gentle, concentric undulations slightly impelled the cake toward the boy's switch. When the swans came up, the stick was touching the cake; the lad gave a quick blow, startled the swans, seized the cake, and arose. The cake was soaking, but they were hungry and thirsty. The elder boy divided the cake into two parts, a large one and a small one, kept the small one for himself, and gave the larger piece to his brother, saying, —

"Shove that into your gun."

## CHAPTER XVII

# MORTUUS PATER FILIUM MORITURUM EXPECTAT

Marius rushed out of the barricade, and Combeferre followed him; but it was too late, and Gavroche was dead. Combeferre brought in the hamper of cartridges, and Marius the boy. Alas! he thought he was requiting the son for what the father had done for his father; but Thénardier had brought in his father alive, while he brought in the lad dead. When Marius re-entered the barricade with Gavroche in his arms, his face was deluged with blood, like the boy's; for at the very instant when he stooped to pick up Gavroche, a bullet had grazed his skull, but he had not noticed it. Courfeyrac took off his neckcloth and bound Marius's forehead; Gavroche was deposited on the same table with Mabœuf, and the black shawl was spread over both bodies; it was large enough for the old man and the child. Combeferre distributed the cartridges which he had brought in, and they gave each man fifteen rounds to fire. Jean Valjean was still at the same spot, motionless on his bench. When Combeferre offered him his fifteen cartridges he shook his head.

"That is a strange eccentric," Combeferre said in a whisper to Enjolras. "He manages not to fight inside this barricade."

"Which does not prevent him from defending it," Enjolras

answered.

"Heroism has its original characters," Combeferre resumed. And Courfeyrac, who overheard him, said, —  
"He is a different sort from Father Maboëuf."

It is a thing worth mentioning, that the fire which struck the barricade scarce disturbed the interior. Those who have never passed the tornado of a warfare of this nature cannot form any idea of the singular moments of calmness mingled with these convulsions. Men come and go, they talk, they jest, they idle. A friend of ours heard a combatant say to him, in the midst of the grape-shot, "It is like being at a bachelor's breakfast here." The redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, we repeat, appeared internally most calm; and all the incidents and phases were, or would shortly be, exhausted. The position had become from critical menacing, and from menacing was probably about to become desperate. In proportion as the situation grew darker an heroic gleam more and more purpled the barricade. Enjolras commanded it in the attitude of a young Spartan, devoting his bare sword to the gloomy genius, Epidotas. Combeferre, with an apron tied round him, was dressing the wounded. Bossuet and Feuilly were making cartridges with the powder-flask found by Gavroche on the dead corporal, and Bossuet was saying to Feuilly, "We are soon going to take the diligence for another planet." Courfeyrac, seated on the few paving-stones which he had set aside near Enjolras, was preparing and arranging an entire arsenal — his sword-cane, his gun, two hostler-pistols, and

a club – with the ease of a girl setting a small what-not in order. Jean Valjean was silently looking at the wall facing him, and a workman was fastening on his head, with a piece of string, a broad-brimmed straw bonnet of Mother Hucheloup's, "for fear of sun-strokes," as he said. The young men of the Aix Cougourde were gayly chatting together, as if desirous to talk patois for the last time: Joly, who had taken down Widow Hucheloup's mirror, was examining his tongue in it; while a few combatants, who had discovered some nearly mouldering crusts of bread in a drawer, were eating them greedily. Marius was anxious about what his father would say to him.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE VULTURE BECOMES PREY

We must lay a stress upon a psychological fact peculiar to barricades, for nothing which characterizes this surprising war of streets ought to be omitted. Whatever the internal tranquillity to which we have just referred may be, the barricade does not the less remain a vision for those who are inside it. There is an apocalypse in a civil war, all the darkness of the unknown world is mingled with these stern flashes, revolutions are sphinxes, and any one who has stood behind a barricade believes that he has gone through a dream. What is felt at these spots, as we have shown in the matter of Marius, and whose consequences we shall see, is more and less than life. On leaving a barricade, a man no longer knows what he has seen; he may have been terrible, but he is ignorant of the fact. He has been surrounded there by combating ideas which possessed human faces, and had his head in the light of futurity. There were corpses laid low and phantoms standing upright; and the hours were colossal, and seemed hours of eternity. A man has lived in death, and shadows have passed. What was it? He has seen hands on which was blood; it was a deafening din, but at the same time a startling silence: there were open mouths that cried, and other open mouths which were silent, and men were in smoke, perhaps in night. A man fancies he has touched the sinister dripping of unknown depths, and he

looks at something red which he has in his nails, but he no longer recollects anything.

Let us return to the Rue de la Chanvrerie. Suddenly, between two discharges, the distant sound of a clock striking was heard.

"It is midday," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not died out ere Enjolras drew himself up to his full height and hurled the loud cry from the top of the barricade, —

"Take up the paving-stones into the house, and line the windows with them. One half of you to the stones, the other half to the muskets. There is not a moment to lose."

A party of sappers, with their axes on their shoulders, had just appeared in battle-array at the end of the street. This could only be the head of a column; and of what column? Evidently the column of attack; for the sappers ordered to demolish the barricade always precede the troops appointed to escalate it. It was plain that the moment was at hand which M. Clermont Tonnerre called in 1822 "a strong pull."

Enjolras's order was carried out with that correct speed peculiar to ships and barricades, the only two battle-fields whence escape is impossible. In less than a minute two thirds of the paving-stones which Enjolras had ordered to be piled up against the door of Corinth were carried to the first-floor and attic, and before a second minute had passed these paving-stones, artistically laid on one another, walled up one half of the window. A few spaces carefully arranged by Feuilly, the chief constructor,

allowed the gun-barrels to pass through. This armament of the windows was the more easily effected because the grape-shot had ceased. The two cannon were now firing solid shot at the centre of the barricade, in order to make a hole, and if possible a breach, for the assault. When the stones intended for the final assault were in their places, Enjolras carried to the first-floor the bottles he had placed under the table on which Mabœuf lay.

"Who will drink that?" Bossuet asked him.

"They will," Enjolras answered.

Then the ground-floor window was also barricaded, and the iron bars which closed the door at night were held in readiness. The fortress was complete; the barricade was the rampart, and the wine-shop the keep. With the paving-stones left over the gap was stopped up. As the defenders of a barricade are always obliged to save their ammunition, and the besiegers are aware of the fact, the latter combine their arrangements with a sort of irritating leisure, expose themselves before the time to the fire, though more apparently than in reality, and take their ease. The preparations for the attack are always made with a certain methodical slowness, and after that comes the thunder. This slowness enabled Enjolras to revise and render everything perfect. He felt that since such men were about to die, their death must be a masterpiece. He said to Marius, —

"We are the two chiefs. I am going to give the final orders inside, while you remain outside and watch."

Marius posted himself in observation on the crest of the



barricade, while Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which it will be remembered served as ambulance, nailed up.

"No splashing on the wounded," he said.

He gave his final instructions in the ground-floor room in a sharp but wonderfully calm voice, and Feuilly listened and answered in the name of all.

"At the first-floor hold axes ready to cut down the stairs. Have you them?"

"Yes," Feuilly answered.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a crowbar."

"Very good. In all, twenty-six fighting men left. How many guns are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep those guns loaded like the others, and within reach. Place your sabres and pistols in your belts. Twenty men to the barricade. Six will ambush themselves in the garret and at the first-floor window, to fire on the assailants through the loop-holes in the paving-stones. There must not be an idle workman here. Presently, when the drummer sounds the charge, the twenty men below will rush to the barricade, and the first to arrive will be the best placed."

These arrangements made, he turned to Javert, and said to him, —

"I have not forgotten you."

And laying a pistol on the table he added, —

"The last man to leave here will blow out this spy's brains."

"Here?" a voice answered.

"No, let us not have this corpse near ours. It is easy to stride over the small barricade in Mondétour Lane, as it is only four feet high. This man is securely bound, so lead him there and execute him."

Some one was at this moment even more stoical than Enjolras; it was Javert. Here Jean Valjean appeared; he was mixed up with the group of insurgents, but stepped forward and said to Enjolras,

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"Are you the commander?"

"Yes."

"You thanked me just now."

"In the name of the Republic. The barricade has two saviors, — Marius Pontmercy and yourself."

"Do you think that I deserve a reward?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, I ask one."

"What is it?"

"To let me blow out that man's brains myself."

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, gave an imperceptible start, and said, "It is fair."

As for Enjolras, he was reloading his gun. He looked around him.

"Is there no objection?"

And he turned to Jean Valjean.

"Take the spy."

Jean Valjean took possession of Javert by seating himself on the end of the table. He seized the pistol, and a faint clink showed that he had cocked it. Almost at the same moment the bugle-call was heard.

"Mind yourselves!" Marius shouted from the top of the barricade.

Javert began laughing that noiseless laugh peculiar to him, and, looking intently at the insurgents, said to them, —

"You are no healthier than I am."

"All outside," Enjolras cried.

The insurgents rushed tumultuously forth, and as they passed, Javert smote them on the back, so to speak, with the expression, "We shall meet again soon."

# **CHAPTER XIX**

## **JEAN VALJEAN**

### **REVENGES HIMSELF**

So soon as Jean Valjean was alone with Javert he undid the rope which fastened the prisoner round the waist, the knot of which was under the table. After this, he made him a signal to rise. Javert obeyed with that indefinable smile in which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed. Jean Valjean seized Javert by the martingale, as he would have taken an ox by its halter, and dragging him after him, quitted the wine-shop slowly, for Javert, having his feet hobbled, could only take very short steps. Jean Valjean held the pistol in his hand, and they thus crossed the inner trapeze of the barricade; the insurgents, prepared for the imminent attack, turned their backs.

Marius alone, placed at the left extremity of the barricade, saw them pass. This group of the victim and the executioner was illumined by the sepulchral gleams which he had in his soul. Jean Valjean forced Javert to climb over the barricade with some difficulty, but did not loosen the cord. When they had crossed the bar, they found themselves alone in the lane, and no one could now see them, for the elbow formed by the houses hid them from the insurgents. The corpses removed from the barricade formed a horrible pile a few paces from them. Among the dead could be

distinguished a livid face, dishevelled hair, a pierced hand, and a half-naked female bosom; it was Éponine. Javert looked askance at this dead girl, and said with profound calmness, —

"It seems to me I know that girl."

Then he turned to Jean Valjean, who placed the pistol under his arm, and fixed on Javert a glance which had no need of words to say, "Javert, it is I."

Javert answered, "Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean took a knife from his pocket and opened it.

"A clasp-knife," Javert exclaimed. "You are right, that suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had round his neck, then he cut the ropes on his wrists, and stooping down, those on his feet; then rising again, he said, "You are free."

It was not easy to astonish Javert, still, master though he was of himself, he could not suppress his emotion; he stood gaping and motionless, while Jean Valjean continued, —

"I do not believe that I shall leave this place. Still, if by accident I do, I live under the name of Fauchelevent, at No. 7, Rue de l'Homme Armé."

Javert gave a tigerish frown, which opened a corner of his mouth, and muttered between his teeth, —

"Take care!"

"Begone!" said Jean Valjean.

Javert added, —

"You said Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé?"

"No. 7."

Javert repeated in a low voice, — "No. 7."

He rebuttoned his frock-coat, restored his military stiffness between his shoulders, made a half turn, crossed his arms while supporting his chin with one of his hands, and walked off in the direction of the markets. Jean Valjean looked after him. After going a few yards Javert turned and said, —

"You annoy me. I would sooner be killed by you."

Javert did not even notice that he no longer addressed Jean Valjean with familiarity.

"Begone!" said Jean Valjean.

Javert retired slowly, and a moment after turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs. When Javert had disappeared, Jean Valjean discharged the pistol in the air, and then returned to the barricade, saying, —

"It is all over."

This is what had taken place in the mean while. Marius, more occupied with the outside than the inside, had not hitherto attentively regarded the spy fastened up at the darkened end of the ground-floor room. When he saw him in the open daylight bestriding the barricade, he recognized him, and a sudden hope entered his mind. He remembered the inspector of the Rue de Pontoise, and the two pistols he had given him, which he, Marius, had employed at this very barricade, and he not only remembered his face but his name.

This recollection, however, was foggy and disturbed, like all

his ideas. It was not an affirmation he made so much as a question which he asked himself. "Is that not the Police Inspector, who told me that his name was Javert?" Marius shouted to Enjolras, who had just stationed himself at the other end of the barricade,

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"Enjolras?"

"Well?"

"What is that man's name?"

"Which man?"

"The police agent. Do you know his name?"

"Of course I do, for he told it to us."

"What is it?"

"Javert."

Marius started, but at this moment a pistol-shot was heard, and Jean Valjean reappeared, saying, "*It is all over.*" A dark chill crossed Marius's heart.

## **CHAPTER XX**

# **THE DEAD ARE RIGHT AND THE LIVING ARE NOT WRONG**

The death-struggles of the barricade were about to begin, and everything added to the tragical majesty of this supreme moment, – a thousand mysterious sounds in the air, the breathing of armed masses set in motion in streets which could not be seen, the intermittent gallop of cavalry, the heavy rumor of artillery, the platoon firing and the cannonade crossing each other in the labyrinth of Paris, the smoke of the battle rising all golden above the roofs, distant and vaguely terrible cries, flashes of menace everywhere, the tocsin of St. Merry, which now had the sound of a sob, the mildness of the season, the splendor of the sky full of sunshine and clouds, the beauty of the day, and the fearful silence of the houses. For since the previous evening the two rows of houses in the Rue de la Chanvrière had become two walls, – ferocious walls with closed doors, closed windows, and closed shutters.

At that day, so different from the present time, when the hour arrived in which the people wished to be done with a situation which had lasted too long, with a conceded charter or a restricted suffrage, when the universal wrath was diffused in the atmosphere, when the city consented to an upheaving of



paving-stones, when the insurrection made the bourgeoisie smile by whispering its watchword in their ear, then the inhabitant, impregnated with riot, so to speak, was the auxiliary of the combatant, and the house fraternized with the improvised fortress which it supported. When the situation was not ripe, when the insurrection was not decidedly accepted, when the masses disavowed the movement, it was all over with the combatants, the town was changed into a desert round the revolt, minds were chilled, the asylums were walled up, and the street became converted into a defile to help the army in taking the barricade. A people cannot be forced to move faster than it wishes by a surprise, and woe to the man who tries to compel it; a people will not put up with it, and then it abandons the insurrection to itself. The insurgents become lepers; a house is an escarpment, a door is a refusal, and a façade is a wall. This wall sees, hears, and will not; it might open and save you, but no, the wall is a judge, and it looks at you and condemns you. What gloomy things are these closed houses! They seem dead though they are alive, and life, which is, as it were, suspended, clings to them. No one has come out for the last four-and-twenty hours, but no one is absent. In the interior of this rock people come and go, retire to bed and rise again; they are in the bosom of their family, they eat and drink, and are afraid, terrible to say. Fear excuses this formidable inhospitality, and the alarm offers extenuating circumstances. At times even, and this has been witnessed, the fear becomes a passion, and terror may be

changed into fury, and prudence into rage; hence the profound remark, "The enraged moderates." There are flashes of supreme terror, from which passion issues like a mournful smoke. "What do these people want? They are never satisfied; they compromise peaceable men. As if we had not had revolutions of that nature! What have they come to do here? Let them get out of it as they can. All the worse for them, it is their fault, and they have only what they deserve. That does not concern us. Look at our poor street torn to pieces by cannon: they are a heap of scamps; above all do not open the door." And the house assumes the aspect of a tomb: the insurgent dies a lingering death before their door; he sees the grape-shot and naked sabres arrive; if he cries out, he knows there are people who hear him but will not help him; there are walls which might protect him, and men who might save him, and these walls have ears of flesh, and these men have entrails of stone.

Whom should we accuse? Nobody and everybody, – the imperfect times in which we live. It is always at its own risk and peril that the Utopia converts itself into an insurrection, and becomes an armed protest instead of a philosophic protest, – a Pallas and no longer a Minerva. The Utopia which grows impatient and becomes a riot knows what awaits it, and it nearly always arrives too soon. In that case it resigns itself, and stoically accepts the catastrophe in lieu of a triumph. It serves, without complaining, and almost exculpating them, those who deny it, and its magnanimity is to consent to abandonment. It is

indomitable against obstacles, and gentle toward ingratitude. Is it ingratitude after all? Yes, from the human point of view; no, from the individual point of view. Progress is the fashion of man; the general life of the human race is called progress; and the collective step of the human race is also called progress. Progress marches; it makes the great human and earthly journey toward the celestial and divine; it has its halts where it rallies the straying flock; it has its stations where it meditates, in the presence of some splendid Canaan suddenly unveiling its horizon; it has its nights when it sleeps; and it is one of the poignant anxieties of the thinker to see the shadow on the human soul, and to feel in the darkness sleeping progress, without being able to awaken it.

"God is perhaps dead," Gérard de Nerval said one day to the writer of these lines, confounding progress with God, and taking the interruption of the movement for the death of the Being. The man who despairs is wrong: progress infallibly reawakens, and we might say that it moves even when sleeping, for it has grown. When we see it upright again we find that it is taller. To be ever peaceful depends no more on progress than on the river; do not raise a bar, or throw in a rock, for the obstacle makes the water foam, and humanity boil. Hence come troubles; but after these troubles we notice that way has been made. Until order, which is nought else than universal peace, is established, until harmony and unity reign, progress will have revolutions for its halting-places. What, then, is progress? We have just said, the permanent life of the peoples. Now, it happens at times that the

momentary life of individuals offers a resistance to the eternal life of the human race.

Let us avow without bitterness that the individual has his distinct interest, and can without felony stipulate for that interest and defend it; the present has its excusable amount of egotism, momentary right has its claims, and cannot be expected to sacrifice itself incessantly to the future. The generation which at the present moment is passing over the earth is not forced to abridge it for the generations, its equals, after all, whose turn will come at a later date. "I exist," murmurs that some one, who is everybody. "I am young and in love, I am old and wish to rest, I am father of a family, I work, I prosper, I do a good business, I have houses to let, I have money in the funds, I am happy, I have wife and children, I like all that, I wish to live, and so leave us at peace." Hence at certain hours a profound coldness falls on the magnanimous vanguard of the human race. Utopia, moreover, we confess it, emerges from its radiant sphere in waging war. It, the truth of to-morrow, borrows its process, battle, from the falsehood of yesterday. It, the future, acts like the past; it, the pure idea, becomes an assault. It complicates its heroism with a violence for which it is but fair that it should answer, – a violence of opportunity and expediency, contrary to principles, and for which it is fatally punished. The Utopia, when in a state of insurrection, combats with the old military code in its hand; it shoots spies, executes traitors, suppresses living beings and hurls them into unknown darkness. It makes use of death,

a serious thing. It seems that the Utopia no longer pats faith in the radiance, which is its irresistible and incorruptible strength. It strikes with the sword, but no sword is simple; every sword has two edges, and the man who wounds with one wounds himself with the other.

This reservation made, and made with all severity, it is impossible for us not to admire, whether they succeed or no, the glorious combatants of the future, the confessors of the Utopia. Even when they fail they are venerable, and it is perhaps in ill-success that they possess most majesty. Victory, when in accordance with progress, deserves the applause of the peoples, but an heroic defeat merits their tenderness. The one is magnificent, the other sublime. With us who prefer martyrdom to success, John Brown is greater than Washington, and Pisacane greater than Garibaldi. There should be somebody to take the part of the conquered, and people are unjust to these great assayers of the future when they foil. Revolutionists are accused of sowing terror, and every barricade appears an attack. Their theory is incriminated, their object is suspected, their after-thought is apprehended, and their conscience is denounced. They are reproached with elevating and erecting against the reigning social fact a pile of miseries, griefs, iniquities, and despair, and with pulling down in order to barricade themselves behind the ruins and combat. People shout to them, "You are unpaving hell!" And they might answer, "That is the reason why our barricade is made of good intentions." The best thing is certainly the pacific

solution; after all, let us allow, when people see the pavement, they think of the bear, and it is a good will by which society is alarmed. But it depends on society to save itself, and we appeal to its own good-will. No violent remedy is necessary: study the evil amicably, and then cure it, – that is all we desire.

However this may be, those men, even when they have fallen, and especially then, are august, who at all points of the universe, with their eyes fixed on France, are struggling for the great work with the inflexible logic of the ideal; they give their life as a pure gift for progress, they accomplish the will of Providence, and perform a religious act. At the appointed hour, with as much disinterestedness as an actor who takes up his cue, they enter the tomb in obedience to the divine scenario, and they accept this hopeless combat and this stoical disappearance in order to lead to its splendid and superior universal consequences. The magnificent human movement irresistibly began on July 14. These soldiers are priests, and the French revolution is a gesture of God. Moreover, there are – and it is proper to add this distinction to the distinctions already indicated in another chapter, – there are accepted insurrections which are called revolutions; and there are rejected revolutions which are called riots. An insurrection which breaks out is an idea which passes its examination in the presence of the people. If the people drops its blackball, the idea is dry fruit, and the insurrection is a street-riot. Waging war at every appeal and each time that the Utopia desires it is not the fact of the peoples; for nations have not

always, and at all hours, the temperament of heroes and martyrs. They are positive; *a priori* insurrection is repulsive to them, in the first place, because it frequently has a catastrophe for result, and, secondly, because it always has an abstraction as its starting-point.

For, and this is a grand fact, those who devote themselves do so for the ideal, and the ideal alone. An insurrection is an enthusiasm, and enthusiasm may become a fury, whence comes an uprising of muskets. But every insurrection which aims at a government or a regime aims higher. Hence, for instance, we will dwell on the fact that what the chiefs of the insurrection of 1832, and especially the young enthusiasts of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, combated was not precisely Louis Philippe. The majority, speaking candidly, did justice to the qualities of this king who stood between monarchy and revolution, and not one of them hated him. But they attacked the younger branch of the right divine in Louis Philippe, as they had attacked the elder branch in Charles X., and what they wished to overthrow in overthrowing the Monarchy in France was, as we have explained, the usurpation of man over man, and the privilege opposing right throughout the universe. Paris without a king has as its counterstroke the world without despots. They reasoned in this way. Their object was far off without doubt, vague perhaps, and retreating before the effort, but grand.

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