

"Les Miserables"

(Continued from previous page.)

A shadowy form moves and Javert steps out into the light.

Jean can't bring himself to do it. There is a terrific struggle going on within him. He shakes his head.

"Go, before the others do what I can't."

"You fool, you know what'll happen. I shall take you in the end. You know I will—you know I must. I can't help myself—I am what I am."

TOPICAL TITBITS, No. 1 RESULTS.

Correct Solution: "Great interest is being taken in the Rugby tour of England. The men disembarked safely at Tilbury and have made their headquarters at Newton Abbot. After two weeks exercising they decisively defeated Devon and Cornwall by 35 points to 6."

No competitor submitted an all correct solution and the first prize of £25 has been awarded to

Miss F. Mead, Paraparaumu, whose solution contained one error only. Her entry has been checked by "N.Z. Truth" and a Money Order has been posted.

Competitors in "Topical Titbits" competitions are reminded that each picture or symbol may represent one word or part of one word only. They are also reminded that two entries may be made for the entry fee of 1/-.

"I take what comes. Go!"

Jean remains looking after Javert, then fires the pistol into the air. He returns to the barricade. Eponine tries to pull him down from his exposed position and herself falls dead.

Mounted gendarmes begin to attack with drawn sabres. There is a scrimmage. Marius is felled with a blow on the head. Jean pulls him down through a half-open manhole into the sewers, picks up the unconscious boy and staggers along down the tunnel in water up to his knees. Marius comes to enough to nod to Jean and flounder along himself. Jean catters through the steel gate that bars them from the river and they pass through.

Through dark alleys they wind their way back to Jean's house in the Rue Druond. Cosette, on her knees before a small altar, rises and comes forward to Marius eagerly. For a moment it looks as though she has forgotten everything Jean has done.

Jean closes the door on them and backs into the hall. He senses the presence of another person.

"Javert! You're here, I know it—where are you?"

"I'm ready. All I ask is a few moments to say good-bye."

"The law allows you nothing."

Jean raises his head to Javert, a face so agonised, helpless and hopeless that

even Javert is moved. He nods slowly. He knows this man has saved his life but still he can't help himself.

"It's not I—it's the law that wants you—the law. I can't help myself" (astounded of his weakness). "Go ahead, I'll wait."

Jean goes in. "Cosette, I've come to say good-bye. It has to be—there are reasons. My dear, what little I could do I have done—in my poor, stupid way I have tried to do what I could. Now I give her to you (to Marius)—let her be as precious to you as she has been to me. Look after him, Cosette. Look after her."

His face is bathed in perspiration from the struggle going on within him. He turns, looks back and takes down the two candlesticks which he has kept with him all this time.

"Keep these always." He fingers them. "Silver, they say—but more than gold to me."

Cosette kisses him and clings to him, overcome with emotion. He moves over to Marius with her.

"Love each other—there's scarcely anything more in the world but that." Remember, as was once told me—life is to give, not to take. What I give—take, and give again."

The door clicks and he is gone. It is over. He has given up Cosette and now he has to face the other—the gauleys. He tries to move to the door to the street, but his strength cracks and he drops to one knee.

"Father of all—I've done what I could—take what you will—I've given all I can—I'm ready!"

With a great effort he rises and marches toward the open doorway to the street, his hands in front of him, his wrists drawn together to receive Javert's handcuffs, his eyes half-closed, repeating in a whisper the word "Give."

Javert Disappears.

But there is no Javert. The moonlit street beyond is empty. To Jean it is unbelievable—Javert is gone. He has left him. We can almost hear the voice of the old bishop over the scene. "Well done, my son. Well done!"

His eyes go up to the heavens—to the voice—his face lights up with a smile as if the whole soul were lifted—at last he is free.

Excited cries of "Down here! Down here! Hurry!" snap him out of his trance. Through a narrow opening in the street opposite is an alley leading to the river. There is a small crowd gathered—others are coming up.

Jean pulls himself together and as if drawn by a magnet races to the scene.

"What is it?"

"Suicide—must be—"

"I tried to stop him," adds another onlooker, "but he pushed me away and jumped in—the river's in flood."

Still another: "Look! It's a policeman's cloak—"

A gendarme takes it and looks it over. Jean immediately recognises it as Javert's. He turns and looks at the river. The water is swirling past. He now realises that Javert has left him for good. He is free, indeed—free to go back to Cosette and Marius.

THE END.

To the little girl most like Shirley Temple twenty-five pounds will be paid. See pages 30 and 31.

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