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opening extract from

Classics Illustrated: Les Miserables

written by

Victor Hugo

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Les MISERABLES

VICTOR HUGO

The unfortunate and the infamous are associated in the words, *Les Miserables*. There were many such people in France in 1815. One of them was Jean Valjean.

During the two months of joy Marius had had with Cosette, an insurrection against the government had been gathering. That day, it had broken out in open conflict. Barricades were being thrown up. Marius hastened to one defended by some of his friends. When he reached it, the fighting had already begun.

The soldiers will take the barricade!

He found a keg of powder, glided along the barricade, put the keg down, and seized a torch.

Begone, or I'll blow up the barricade!

Blow up the barricade! And yourself, also!

And myself, also.

He held the torch nearer to the keg of powder. The soldiers fled pell-mell, and the barricade was saved.