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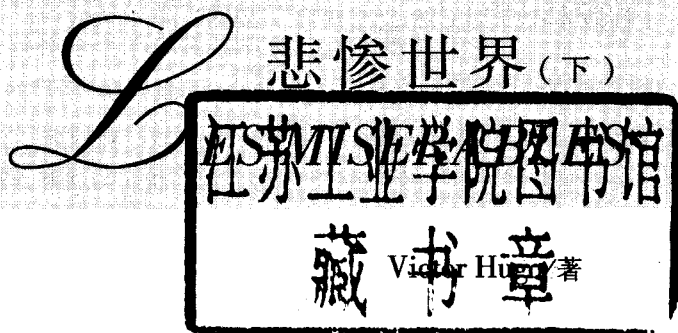
悲慘世界

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By Victor Hugo

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前 言

随着英语水平不断提高,我们不再仅仅满足于会写会读,更希望能与世界各国的朋友们无障碍的交谈。

由于种种原因,我们常常会按平常的语言习惯说英语,甚至于把我们的汉语直译成英文来使用,结果往往是词不达意,言语乏味。

为此,我们精心挑选这十几部可以代表西方文学的经典著作,不做任何改动,严格按照原著的风格,原汁原味地奉献给广大读者,让读者去自由地阅读、想象和发挥,从中学习了解西方人的语言思维方式。不知不觉中,你会发现,自己的英语水平已有了大幅度的提高,不仅是词汇语法,更可喜的是您会习惯于以西方人的语言思维写英语、说英语,在交谈中畅所欲言!

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*L*ITTLE GAVROCHE

CHAPTER I


THE MALICIOUS PLAYFULNESS OF THE WIND

Since 1823, when the tavern of Montfermeil was on the way to shipwreck and was being gradually engulfed, not in the abyss of a bankruptcy, but in the cesspool of petty debts, the Thenardier pair had had two other children; both males. That made five; two girls and three boys. Madame Thenardier had got rid of the last two, while they were still young and very small, with remarkable luck.

Got rid of is the word. There was but a mere fragment of nature in that woman. A phenomenon, by the way, of which there is more than one example extant. Like the Marechale de La Mothe-Houdancourt, the Thenardier was a mother to her daughters only.

There her maternity ended. Her hatred of the human race began with her own sons. In the direction of her sons her evil disposition was uncompromising, and her heart had a lugubrious wall in that quarter. As the reader has seen, she detested the eldest; she cursed the other two. Why? Because. The most terrible of motives, the most unanswerable of retorts--Because.

"I have no need of a litter of squalling brats," said this mother. Let us explain how the Thenardiens had succeeded in getting rid of their last two children; and even in drawing profit from the operation. The woman Magnon, who was mentioned a few pages further back, was the same one who had succeeded in making old Gillenormand support the two children



which she had had. She lived on the Quai des Celestins, at the corner of this ancient street of the Petit-Musc which afforded her the opportunity of changing her evil repute into good odor. The reader will remember the great epidemic of croup which ravaged the river districts of the Seine in Paris thirty-five years ago, and of which science took advantage to make experiments on a grand scale as to the efficacy of inhalations of alum, so beneficially replaced at the present day by the external tincture of iodine. During this epidemic, the Magnon lost both her boys, who were still very young, one in the morning, the other in the evening of the same day.

This was a blow. These children were precious to their mother; they represented eighty francs a month. These eighty francs were punctually paid in the name of M. Gillenormand, by collector of his rents, M. Barge, a retired tip-staff, in the Rue du Roi-de-Sicile. The children dead, the income was at an end. The Magnon sought an expedient.

In that dark free-masonry of evil of which she formed a part, everything is known, all secrets are kept, and all lend mutual aid. Magnon needed two children; the Thenardiers had two. The same sex, the same age. A good arrangement for the one, a good investment for the other. The little Thenardiers became little Magnons.

Magnon quitted the Quai des Celestins and went to live in the Rue Clocheperce. In Paris, the identity which binds an individual to himself is broken between one street and another.

The registry office being in no way warned, raised no objections, and the substitution was effected in the most simple manner in the world. Only, the Thenardier exacted for this loan of her children, ten francs a month, which Magnon promised to pay, and which she actually did pay. It is unnecessary to add that M. Gillenormand continued to perform his compact. He came to see the children every six months. He did not perceive the change.

"Monsieur," Magnon said to him, "how much they resemble you! "

Thenardier, to whom avatars were easy, seized this occasion to become Jondrette. His two daughters and Gavroche had hardly had time to



discover that they had two little brothers. When a certain degree of misery is reached, one is overpowered with a sort of spectral indifference, and one regards human beings as though they were spectres. Your nearest relations are often no more for you than vague shadowy forms, barely outlined against a nebulous background of life and easily confounded again with the invisible. On the evening of the day when she had handed over her two little ones to Magnon, with express intention of renouncing them forever, the Thenardier had felt, or had appeared to feel, a scruple. She said to her husband: "But this is abandoning our children!" Thenardier, masterful and phlegmatic, cauterized the scruple with this saying:

"Jean Jacques Rousseau did even better!" From scruples, the mother proceeded to uneasiness: "But what if the police were to annoy us? Tell me, Monsieur Thenardier, is what we have done permissible?"

Thenardier replied: "Everything is permissible. No one will see anything but true blue in it. Besides, no one has any interest in looking closely after children who have not a sou."

Magnon was a sort of fashionable woman in the sphere of crime.

She was careful about her toilet. She shared her lodgings, which were furnished in an affected and wretched style, with a clever gallicized English thief. This English woman, who had become a naturalized Parisienne, recommended by very wealthy relations, intimately connected with the medals in the Library and Mademoiselle Mar's diamonds, became celebrated later on in judicial accounts.

She was called Mamselle Miss.

The two little creatures who had fallen to Magnon had no reason to complain of their lot. Recommended by the eighty francs, they were well cared for, as is everything from which profit is derived; they were neither badly clothed, nor badly fed; they were treated almost like "little gentlemen,"—better by their false mother than by their real one. Magnon played the lady, and talked no thieves' slang in their presence.

Thus passed several years. Thenardier augured well from the fact.

One day, he chanced to say to Magnon as she handed him his monthly

stipend of ten francs: "The father must give them some education."

All at once, these two poor children, who had up to that time been protected tolerably well, even by their evil fate, were abruptly hurled into life and forced to begin it for themselves.

A wholesale arrest of malefactors, like that in the Jondrette garret, necessarily complicated by investigations and subsequent incarcerations, is a veritable disaster for that hideous and occult counter-society which pursues its existence beneath public society; an adventure of this description entails all sorts of catastrophes in that sombre world.

The Thenardier catastrophe involved the catastrophe of Magnon.

One day, a short time after Magnon had handed to Éponine the note relating to the Rue Plumet, a sudden raid was made by the police in the Rue Clocheperce; Magnon was seized, as was also Mamselle Miss; and all the inhabitants of the house, which was of a suspicious character, were gathered into the net. While this was going on, the two little boys were playing in the back yard, and saw nothing of the raid. When they tried to enter the house again, they found the door fastened and the house empty. A cobbler opposite called them to him, and delivered to them a paper which "their mother" had left for them. On this paper there was an address: M. Barge, collector of rents, Rue du Roi-de-Sicile, No. 8. The proprietor of the stall said to them:

"You cannot live here any longer. Go there. It is near by. The first street on the left. Ask your way from this paper."

The children set out, the elder leading the younger, and holding in his hand the paper which was to guide them. It was cold, and his benumbed little fingers could not close very firmly, and they did not keep a very good hold on the paper. At the corner of the Rue Clocheperce, a gust of wind tore it from him, and as night was falling, the child was not able to find it again. They began to wander aimlessly through the streets.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH LITTLE GAVROCHE EXTRACTS PROFIT FROM NAPOLEON THE GREAT

Spring in Paris is often traversed by harsh and piercing breezes which do not precisely chill but freeze one; these north winds which sadden the most beautiful days produce exactly the effect of those puffs of cold air which enter a warm room through the cracks of a badly fitting door or window. It seems as though the gloomy door of winter had remained ajar, and as though the wind were pouring through it.

In the spring of 1832, the epoch when the first great epidemic of this century broke out in Europe, these north gales were more harsh and piercing than ever. It was a door even more glacial than that of winter which was ajar. It was the door of the sepulchre.

In these winds one felt the breath of the cholera.

From a meteorological point of view, these cold winds possessed this peculiarity, that they did not preclude a strong electric tension.

Frequent storms, accompanied by thunder and lightning, burst forth at this epoch.

One evening, when these gales were blowing rudely, to such a degree that January seemed to have returned and that the bourgeois had resumed their cloaks, Little Gavroche, who was always shivering gayly under his rags, was standing as though in ecstasy before a wig-maker's shop in the vicinity of the Orme-Saint-Gervais. He was adorned with a woman's woollen shawl, picked up no one knows where, and which he had converted into a neck comforter. Little Gavroche appeared to be engaged in intent admiration of a wax bride, in a low-necked dress, and crowned with orange-flowers, who was revolving in the window, and displaying her smile to passers-by, between two argand lamps; but in reality, he was taking an observation of the shop, in order to discover whether he could not "prig"



from the shop-front a cake of soap, which he would then proceed to sell for a sou to a "hair-dresser" in the suburbs. He had often managed to breakfast off of such a roll. He called his species of work, for which he possessed special aptitude, "shaving barbers."

While contemplating the bride, and eyeing the cake of soap, he muttered between his teeth: "Tuesday. It was not Tuesday. Was it Tuesday? Perhaps it was Tuesday. Yes, it was Tuesday."

No one has ever discovered to what this monologue referred.

Yes, perchance, this monologue had some connection with the last occasion on which he had dined, three days before, for it was now Friday.

The barber in his shop, which was warmed by a good stove, was shaving a customer and casting a glance from time to time at the enemy, that freezing and impudent street urchin both of whose hands were in his pockets, but whose mind was evidently unsheathed.

While Gavroche was scrutinizing the shop-window and the cakes of windsor soap, two children of unequal stature, very neatly dressed, and still smaller than himself, one apparently about seven years of age, the other five, timidly turned the handle and entered the shop, with a request for something or other, alms possibly, in a plaintive murmur which resembled a groan rather than a prayer. They both spoke at once, and their words were unintelligible because sobs broke the voice of the younger, and the teeth of the elder were chattering with cold. The barber wheeled round with a furious look, and without abandoning his razor, thrust back the elder with his left hand and the younger with his knee, and slammed his door, saying:

"The idea of coming in and freezing everybody for nothing! "

The two children resumed their march in tears. In the meantime, a cloud had risen; it had begun to rain.

Little Gavroche ran after them and accosted them:—

"What's the matter with you, brats?"

"We don't know where we are to sleep," replied the elder.

"Is that all?" said Gavroche. "A great matter, truly. The idea of bawl-



ing about that. They must be greenies! "

And adopting, in addition to his superiority, which was rather bantering, an accent of tender authority and gentle patronage:—

"Come along with me, young 'uns! "

"Yes, sir," said the elder.

And the two children followed him as they would have followed an archbishop. They had stopped crying.

Gavroche led them up the Rue Saint-Antoine in the direction of the Bastille.

As Gavroche walked along, he cast an indignant backward glance at the barber's shop.

"That fellow has no heart, the whiting," * he muttered.

"He's an Englishman."

* *Merlan: a sobriquet given to hairdressers because they are white with powder.*

A woman who caught sight of these three marching in a file, with Gavroche at their head, burst into noisy laughter. This laugh was wanting in respect towards the group.

"Good day, Mamselle Omnibus," said Gavroche to her.

An instant later, the wig-maker occurred to his mind once more, and he added:—

"I am making a mistake in the beast; he's not a whiting, he's a serpent. Barber, I'll go and fetch a locksmith, and I'll have a bell hung to your tail."

This wig-maker had rendered him aggressive. As he strode over a gutter, he apostrophized a bearded portress who was worthy to meet Faust on the Brocken, and who had a broom in her hand.


"Madam," said he, "so you are going out with your horse?"

And thereupon, he spattered the polished boots of a pedestrian.

"You scamp! " shouted the furious pedestrian.

Gavroche elevated his nose above his shawl.

"Is Monsieur complaining?"



"Of you! " ejaculated the man.

"The office is closed," said Gavroche, "I do not receive any more complaints."

In the meanwhile, as he went on up the street, he perceived a beggar-girl, thirteen or fourteen years old, and clad in so short a gown that her knees were visible, lying thoroughly chilled under a porte-cochere. The little girl was getting to be too old for such a thing. Growth does play these tricks. The petticoat becomes short at the moment when nudity becomes indecent.

"Poor girl! " said Gavroche. "She hasn't even trousers. Hold on, take this."

And unwinding all the comfortable woollen which he had around his neck, he flung it on the thin and purple shoulders of the beggar-girl, where the scarf became a shawl once more.

The child stared at him in astonishment, and received the shawl in silence. When a certain stage of distress has been reached in his misery, the poor man no longer groans over evil, no longer returns thanks for good.

That done: "Brrr! " said Gavroche, who was shivering more than Saint Martin, for the latter retained one-half of his cloak.

At this brrr! the downpour of rain, redoubled in its spite, became furious. The wicked skies punish good deeds.

"Ah, come now! " exclaimed Gavroche, "what's the meaning of this? It's re-raining! Good Heavens, if it goes on like this, I shall stop my subscription."

And he set out on the march once more.

"It's all right," he resumed, casting a glance at the beggar-girl, as she coiled up under the shawl, "she's got a famous peel."

And looking up at the clouds he exclaimed:--

"Caught! "

The two children followed close on his heels.

As they were passing one of these heavy grated lattices, which indicate a baker's shop, for bread is put behind bars like gold, Gavroche



turned round:—

"Ah, by the way, brats, have we dined?"

"Monsieur," replied the elder, "we have had nothing to eat since this morning."

"So you have neither father nor mother?" resumed Gavroche majestically.

"Excuse us, sir, we have a papa and a mamma, but we don't know where they are."

"Sometimes that's better than knowing where they are," said Gavroche, who was a thinker.

"We have been wandering about these two hours," continued the elder, "we have hunted for things at the corners of the streets, but we have found nothing."

"I know," ejaculated Gavroche, "it's the dogs who eat everything."

He went on, after a pause:—

"Ah! we have lost our authors. We don't know what we have done with them. This should not be, gamins. It's stupid to let old people stray off like that. Come now! we must have a snooze all the same."

However, he asked them no questions. What was more simple than that they should have no dwelling place!

The elder of the two children, who had almost entirely recovered the prompt heedlessness of childhood, uttered this exclamation:—


"It's queer, all the same. Mamma told us that she would take us to get a blessed spray on Palm Sunday."

"Bosh," said Gavroche.

"Mamma," resumed the elder, "is a lady who lives with Mamselle Miss."

"Tanflute! " retorted Gavroche.

Meanwhile he had halted, and for the last two minutes he had been feeling and fumbling in all sorts of nooks which his rags contained. At last he tossed his head with an air intended to be merely satisfied, but which was triumphant, in reality.



"Let us be calm, young 'uns. Here's supper for three."

And from one of his pockets he drew forth a sou.

Without allowing the two urchins time for amazement, he pushed both of them before him into the baker's shop, and flung his sou on the counter, crying:--

"Boy! five centimes' worth of bread."

The baker, who was the proprietor in person, took up a loaf and a knife.

"In three pieces, my boy! " went on Gavroche.

And he added with dignity:--

"There are three of us."

And seeing that the baker, after scrutinizing the three customers, had taken down a black loaf, he thrust his finger far up his nose with an inhalation as imperious as though he had had a pinch of the great Frederick's snuff on the tip of his thumb, and hurled this indignant apostrophe full in the baker's face:--

"Keksekca?"

Those of our readers who might be tempted to espy in this interpellation of Gavroche's to the baker a Russian or a Polish word, or one of those savage cries which the Yoways and the Botocudos hurl at each other from bank to bank of a river, athwart the solitudes, are warned that it is a word which they [our readers] utter every day, and which takes the place of the phrase: "Qu'est-ce que c'est que cela?" The baker understood perfectly, and replied:--

"Well! It's bread, and very good bread of the second quality."

"You mean larton brutal [black bread]!" retorted Gavroche, calmly and coldly disdainful. "White bread, boy! white bread [larton savonne]! I'm standing treat."

The baker could not repress a smile, and as he cut the white bread he surveyed them in a compassionate way which shocked Gavroche.

"Come, now, baker's boy!" said he, "what are you taking our measure like that for?"

All three of them placed end to end would have hardly made a measure.

When the bread was cut, the baker threw the sou into his drawer, and Gavroche said to the two children:--

"Grub away."

The little boys stared at him in surprise.

Gavroche began to laugh.

"Ah! hullo, that's so! they don't understand yet, they're too small."

And he repeated:--

"Eat away."

At the same time, he held out a piece of bread to each of them.

And thinking that the elder, who seemed to him the more worthy of his conversation, deserved some special encouragement and ought to be relieved from all hesitation to satisfy his appetite, he added, as he handed him the largest share:--

"Ram that into your muzzle."

One piece was smaller than the others; he kept this for himself.

The poor children, including Gavroche, were famished.

As they tore their bread apart in big mouthfuls, they blocked up the shop of the baker, who, now that they had paid their money, looked angrily at them.

"Let's go into the street again," said Gavroche.

They set off once more in the direction of the Bastille.

From time to time, as they passed the lighted shop-windows, the smallest halted to look at the time on a leaden watch which was suspended from his neck by a cord.

"Well, he is a very green'un," said Gavroche.

Then, becoming thoughtful, he muttered between his teeth:--

"All the same, if I had charge of the babes I'd lock 'em up better than that."

Just as they were finishing their morsel of bread, and had reached the

angle of that gloomy Rue des Ballets, at the other end of which the low and threatening wicket of La Force was visible:—

"Hullo, is that you, Gavroche?" said some one.

"Hullo, is that you, Montparnasse?" said Gavroche.

A man had just accosted the street urchin, and the man was no other than Montparnasse in disguise, with blue spectacles, but recognizable to Gavroche.

"The bow-wows! " went on Gavroche, "you've got a hide the color of a linseed plaster, and blue specs like a doctor. You're putting on style, 'pon my word! "

"Hush! " ejaculated Montparnasse, "not so loud."

And he drew Gavroche hastily out of range of the lighted shops.

The two little ones followed mechanically, holding each other by the hand.

When they were ensconced under the arch of a portecochere, sheltered from the rain and from all eyes:—

"Do you know where I'm going?" demanded Montparnasse.

"To the Abbey of Ascend-with-Regret," * replied Gavroche.

* *The scaffold.*

"Joker! "

And Montparnasse went on:—

"I'm going to find Babet."

"Ah! " exclaimed Gavroche, "so her name is Babet."

Montparnasse lowered his voice:—

"Not she, he."

"Ah! Babet."

"Yes, Babet."

"I thought he was buckled."

"He has undone the buckle," replied Montparnasse.

And he rapidly related to the gamin how, on the morning of that very day, Babet, having been transferred to La Conciergerie, had made his escape, by turning to the left instead of to the right in "the police office."