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The Dentistry in Literature series: *Les Misérables*

For the cover series of this volume (223) of the BDJ, we have chosen to illustrate various instances where dentistry or teeth feature in literature. A wide range of sources have been considered – from well-known ‘great works’ to more obscure authors, older texts to modern novels and from mentions of dentists to descriptions of some very unusual teeth!

In this first cover of the series we highlight Babet the ‘dental practitioner’ from Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*. Babet is an unqualified dental practitioner who preys on the wretched poor of the city.

‘…he… (Babet) was thin and learned – transparent but impenetrable: you could see the light through his bones but not through his eyes. He called himself a chemist, and had played in the Vaudeville at St Mihiel. His trade was to sell open air plaster busts and portraits of the “chief of state,” and in addition, he pulled teeth.’

Credit: Illustration by Matthew Laznicka
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