

The Red Man

By Catherine Gore

A certain popular French tradition would lead us to believe that the palace of the Tuileries has been for centuries past the resort of a demon, familiarly known by the name of '*L'Homme Rouge*,' or the Red Man; who is seen wandering in all parts of the Château whenever some great misfortune menaces its regal inhabitants; but who retreats at other periods to a small niche in the *Tour de l'Horloge*, the central tower built by Catherine de Medicis, and especially devoted to the use of her royal astrologers.

Beranger has described the royal Red Man as

'Un diable habillé d'écarlate,
Bossu, louche, et roux,
Un serpent lui sert de cravate;
Il a le nez crochu,—
Il a le pied fourchu.'—

But, as it happens, other red men are to be met with in Paris besides the celebrated scarlet devil of the Tuileries; who, after all, is but a sort of metropolitan Zamiel, and little better than the *Feuergeist* of a high Dutch melodrama. Whoever, for instance, has chanced to visit the Quai Desaix with the intention of finding the *Marché aux Fleurs*, or Flower-Market, on any other day than the official Wednesdays and Saturdays when it presents so charming an aspect, may have been startled by the sight of half a hundred reddish men and women, the old iron-vendors who on ordinary occasions ply their unattractive trade beneath the dwarf acacia-trees of La Vallée. Even these, however, are the mere half-castes of the calling; but should some courteous reader be smitten, like ourselves, with a taste for the by-ways rather than the highways of a great city, let him dive into one of those tortuous, fetid, narrow, ten-storied streets of the ancient cite of Paris, where Nôtre Dame uplifts its Gothic towers, and the hospital of the Hotel Dieu bathes its leprous feet in the polluted waters of the Seine, which ought to have been devoted to the exclusive purpose of dispensing salubrity and purification to the capital,—there, either in the Rue de la Boucherie or Rue de la Huchette,—it matters not to give the exact locality,—he will discover a retreat, something between the modern shop and ancient *échoppe*, the front open to the narrow street in order to display to view its rust-bitten contents,—viz., heaps, bunches, and trays full of old iron, of every form and mould,—old locks, old keys, old implements and instruments of every trade and calling,—exhibited to the admiration of the public with as dainty a spirit of arrangement as in the curiosity and *virtù* shops of the Quai Voltaire, and presided in proper person by the proprietor,—the identical and especial RED MAN.

Fifty years has Balthazar followed the business. Fifty years have done their work in imparting to his face that copper-coloured complexion,—to his hair, beard, whiskers, habiliments, even down to his leathern apron, a hue of dingy red, which now appears to be engrained into his very nature. The walls, the floors, the ceiling of his dusky habitation, are red; nay, the very atmosphere he breathes is impregnated and coloured by the particles of rust thrown off from the ever-shifting materials of his trade. Between his buyings and sellings, the timeworn rods and bars, hooks and nails, blades and staples, are in perpetual motion. He has always some wornout

pot or cauldron to examine,—some lock, or hinge, or bolt, or bar, to dislocate; some jack-chain or fetter to unrivet,— some trap or springe to pull to pieces. For Balthazar is an amateur, as well as a man of business. Custom has rendered his rusty occupation second nature to him. He can breathe no other than the ferruginated atmosphere of his shop; and the lilacs of the Bois de Romainville, or the thorns of the Près St Gervais, stink, by comparison, in his nostrils. He would rather behold some piece of complicated machinery, oxidized here and there into the rusty hue, marking it out as likely to become his property, than cast his eyes on all the Raphaels of the Louvre,—all the Rubenses of the Luxembourg. He has not yet travelled northward from his shop so far as to view that chef-d'œuvre of modern architecture, the *Bourse*; nor westward, to behold the Corinthian portico of the Madelaine with its matchless frieze. Of the Arc de l'Etoile he has heard rumours, and the Suspension Bridge has been duly reported to him. But till their iron stanchions become rusty, they will acquire no interest in the sight of Balthazar; whose cares and enjoyments are alike bounded within the narrow sphere compassed between his den behind the Hotel Dieu, and his sleeping room in the most ancient house of the most ancient Rue St Jacques, where stand the Sorbonne, the Val de Grace, with other and numberless monuments of the olden time. He is unluckily too much a man of business, and finding his pleasure therein, to be much of a gossip; nevertheless, take the old man at the right moment, when he has achieved a lucky bargain, and is making the stifling red particles fly around him in clouds, while handling some worn-out piece of machinery before consigning it to his treasury, or appending it to a stall-hook of the *échoppe*, and you may cajole a world of information out of the RED MAN.

It was at some such auspicious conjunction of the planets, that it was in the first instance our fortune to accost him. We were returning with sickened soul and bewildered eyes, from the Barrière St Jacques—a spot appointed (since the Place de la Grève underwent consecration by a libation of the blood of heroes¹) as the place of public execution; and whither, enclosed in a machine resembling a colossal baker's basket, condemned criminals are now trundled from the Conciergerie through the frequented streets of the Pays Latin, that the guillotine may do its hasty work under the awful auspices of 'Monsieur de Paris,' the celebrated Samson of the bloody hand.²

The grand spectacle of the heavy day in question was the judicial assassination of the supposed murderer of Madame Dupuytren's cook, of whose innocence sufficient evidence has since been adduced. But innocent or guilty, we had seen blood—human blood—poured forth like water,—had looked upon the horror-struck aspect of a man before whom death stood face to face arrayed,—had witnessed the cunning artifices of the priest of a new sect, who sought to render the martyrdom of the victim an evidence of the sanctity of his own charlatanic professions. All this we had seen: the shuddering of the crowd; the deadly swoon of the inquisitive female whose spirit was intrepid, but whose flesh was weak; and the almost instantaneous relaxation of that intense feeling of excitement which, until the great moment, had suspended the very breath of the populace, as by a spell irresistible. For the throng was already dispersed from the spot; the executioner and his two assistants, protected in their loathsome operations by a few municipal guards, had withdrawn the bolts and screws from the murderous framework; the headless trunk and gasping head were on their way to the dissecting room; and the blood-gorged spectators, consisting chiefly of artizans out of work, 'ambitious students,' and the lowest *gamins* of Paris, were off in various directions in search of breakfast; some wrangling, some singing, some

¹ The principal site of executions in Paris since the 14th Century.

² The customary title of a Parisian executioner.

preaching, some yawning; some declaring that the supposed assassin had died like a heathen,—others that he had died like a hero.

For ourselves, who had been witnessing for the first time the operation of the knife, we must plead guilty to a certain perturbation of the senses leaving every sensation indistinct; a whizzing in the ears,—a mistiness of vision,—a parchedness of tongue,—a throbbing of heart, rendering the very way before us hard to follow. We had a mind to visit Nôtre Dame for early mass. Our spirit hungered after the pealing of the organ and the music of those pure young voices which speak the promises of peace in heavenliest diapason. We had been present at the passing of a human soul, (guilty or guiltless, God alone could determine,) from time to eternity. We longed for the murmurs of a requiem; the tranquillity of a holy place; for the security of the sanctuary; for the groined roof, the echoing aisle, the word of God, the promises of salvation. In such a mood of mind, it was our destiny to stumble into the stall of the RED MAN!

For a moment, indeed, we fancied that our eyes deceived us; that the hue of the blood we had seen spilled had attached itself to the whole external creation. And probably the horror of the impression depicted itself in our countenance; for the old man, having gazed for a moment in silence, laid down the rusty chain he was shaking into form, and having humanely demanded if we were not indisposed, tendered the Evangelic offering of a glass of water; which was gratefully accepted and swallowed, before we became accurately cognizant of our whereabouts. Under all the circumstances, Balthazar's wooden chair seemed a luxurious refuge. We were glad to sit there, and pour into sympathizing ears the confession of our blood-hatred. The old man happened to have religious scruples of his own anent prison discipline and the penitentiary system; *he* too was an eschewer of the punishment of death; and as an inhabitant for sixty years of the Quartier St Jacques, resented with much bitterness the indignity inflicted upon his parish by the transposition of the guillotine.

Our minds were mutually attuned for horrors; we could talk of nothing but killing,—nothing but death. Balthazar had witnessed the execution of the monomaniac Papavoine; and we, after tossing off another glass of *eau filtre*, had our own anecdotes to relate of Tyburn, of Newgate, of Jack Ketch, of the condemning cap of the judge, the condemned sermon of the felon, the cart, the toll of the bell, the ordinary, the sheriff, the coffin,—even unto the seething of the strangled corse, and the admonitory glass-case in Surgeons'-hall!³

Balthazar was perhaps jealous of our adeptitude in these tales of terror; for, at the close of our narrative of the fearful tragedy of Gill's Hill and fate of Thurtell, he suddenly disappeared towards the back of his *échoppe*, and having penetrated into one of the subterranean recesses containing the choicer specimens of his trade, hobbled back to place in our hands a rusty complication of iron machinery, one portion of which seemed to be formed of pieces of bone or ivory. After turning it over and over without much enlightenment of our ignorance as to its nature and destination, we ventured to cast an upward glance of inquiry towards the old iron-dealer's face.

What a study for Rembrandt! The otter-skin cap of Balthazar, foxy as his own iron-dyed hair and whiskers, was pulled close upon one eye, while the other peered out, bleared and fiery from the excitement of its habitual atmosphere, with the leathern cheek around puckered into a peculiar expression of cunning and exultation. His thin lips were compressed, as if waiting the irrepressible interrogations of our curiosity; and while he stood leaning against a fascis of jarring rods, he rolled unconsciously within his red hands a corner of his rusty leathern apron, from which the ferruginous particles flew off in volleys.

³ Where bodies of recently executed criminals were dissected and exhibited. In central London.

‘Well, Sir?’ said he, at last, tired of our perversity of silence: and—

‘Well, my good friend?’ was all the question we chose to vouchsafe in reply.

‘Why, what I have to say,’ was his somewhat more explicit rejoinder, ‘is, that the Armada-armoury of the Tower of London which you have been describing, contains no choicer instrument of torture than the one you regard so carelessly.’

‘Instrument of torture! Is this piece of rusty iron, then, a relique of the Inquisition?’ was our involuntary exclamation.

‘Not exactly. But you have not examined it. You have not observed the artist-like manner in which the springs close upon the bones—You do not perceive that it is one of the cleverest gins ever formed by the cunning of man—Try to extricate the skeleton hand! Try!’

‘The skeleton hand?—the *bones*?’

‘Ay! attempt to liberate them from the trap!’

And the effort, when made, was, as he had announced, unaccomplishable.

‘But do you really mean,’ was our next inquiry, ‘that these pieces of bleached bone are, in truth, a portion of some human skeleton?’

‘What else?’ cried the old man, chuckling. ‘It needs no Cuvier to decide the point. Any student of anatomy between this and the Jardin des Plantes shall teach you as much.’

The skeleton of a human hand, and inclosed in an intricate fetherlock of rusty iron!

‘The bones are diminutive; the hand must surely have been that of a female?’ was the fruit of our cogitations upon this ugly instrument of barbarity;—‘of a female,—probably young,—perhaps beautiful;—one who must have lived, or rather died, a captive. But where? Not, surely, in France;—not in gallant, refined, chivalrous Paris? This curious specimen may have been imported from the East,—from Tunis, or Tripoli, or Fez?’

‘No such thing!’ interrupted Balthazar. ‘The ironwork does honour to a trusty workman, who must have served his time to a master-mechanic of the *cite*; the hand is that of a woman French-born,—Parisian-bred. The victim was, in short, one who lived and died almost within sight and sound of the very spot where we are standing.’

‘Centuries ago, of course. The times of the Fredegondes and Brunéhauts have probably legends of domestic horror to match with the crimes of their historical archives.’

‘Bah, bah!’ cried the old man petulantly. ‘Human nature is the same in all ages and countries. Every day—every city—produces some monstrous wickedness, secret or discovered, arising from the triumphs of ungoverned passion;—from hatred,—lust,—revenge,—or mere blood-thirstiness. The crime in which this piece of ruthless machinery had its rise, was done in my own lifetime, in a place which I weekly and calmly traverse. The perpetrator went down to the grave, I will not say unpunished, but undiscovered. No one pitied the victim,—no one cursed the assassin. The whole story is, and is better, buried in oblivion.’

‘Impossible, impossible!’ we exclaimed, again carefully examining the whitened bones and their fiendish inclosure. ‘Since you profess yourself acquainted with the origin and destination of this mysterious instrument, you must not tantalize our curiosity.’

‘What avails it to rake up memoirs of the frailties of our fellow-creatures?’ said the Red Man, dropping the corner of his leathern apron, replacing his cap horizontally over his brows, and turning towards a tray of screws and hinges, as if provokingly bent on devoting his attention to indifferent objects. ‘Let the dead bury their dead! To-morrow it were cruelty to speak of the last throes of the unhappy wretch whom this morning you saw precipitated into eternity. Yet his life was given for a life, according to the decree of the Almighty, according to the laws of the land.’

‘Nevertheless, the lesson to be imparted by such examples were lost,’ we remonstrated, ‘were the deed hidden behind a curtain. It is for the good of mankind, not to gratify an individual craving for retribution, that the penalty is paid. No man has a right to connive in the concealment of crime.’

‘Unless when, as in the present instance, Time, the universal avenger, has swallowed up the offender and the offence,’ rejoined Balthazar. ‘All that could be done now in atonement were to curse with bell and book the place where the crime was perpetrated. And to what avail? You would affix an eternal stigma upon a spot of earth, the work of the Almighty’s hands, fast by his holy house, and sanctified by the daily echoes of his holy word.’

‘The *Parvis de Nôtre Dame!*’ we exclaimed, certain of having now attained the heart of the matter.

‘The *Parvis de Nôtre Dame!*’ reiterated the Red Man, in an affirmative tone. ‘And since you appear so obstinately interested in the subject, it may save my time and your own to enter at once into explanation. Know, then, that this relique came not into my hands in the way of traffic. At the epoch of the first revolution, when the very name of priest had become abomination in the ears of the people, and so many venerable servants of the church were arrested and sacrificed in every part of the kingdom, the greater number of the canons of Nôtre Dame were wise enough to seek safety in flight or in concealment. One, however, there was—an aged man, familiarly and favourably known to the poor of the island by the name of Père Anselme, who disdained to follow the example of the fashionable abbés or beneficed nobles; and attached beyond all power of separation to the old towers and aisles of the cathedral, or, as some thought, to the little, gloomy, official habitation wherein, for thirty years, he had abided, refused to stir,—surrendered himself, as it were, to his destinies,—and was eventually numbered among the victims of the massacre at the prison of L’Abbaye. It was on the evening following his arrest that a decrepit mulatto serving-man, attired in shabby mourning, entered my *échoppe*, entreating my assistance in opening the springs of the fetterlock in question, one end of which was still attached to a chain and staple, which had evidently been wrenched by force from a stone wall. Vain, however, were the utmost endeavours of my skill; the cunning of the springs effectually defied my artificership; and having rendered it back to the old man to be re-enveloped in the cloth in which he had transported it to my dwelling, I could not forbear an inquisitive remark or two concerning the mysterious task he had sought to impose upon me, and the inexplicable nature of the instrument.

‘He shook his head mournfully in reply; but at length admitted that the trap was connected with certain family secrets, which he was desirous of screening from the scrutiny of the National officers in a house to which, that morning, the seals of office had been affixed.

‘“It required some exertion of strength, as you may perceive,” said the poor old mulatto, opening his shrivelled hands and displaying the mangled palms, “to wrench the staple from the wall. Thank Heaven, however, I succeeded: and all that now remains for me to accomplish is to unclosethe the springs,—consign these wretched bones to consecrated earth, and this wicked instrument to the furnace;—that so may finish all memory of one of the cruellest deeds darkening the history of human kind.”

‘Smitten with an interest in the business, almost equal to that you now evince, I instantly proffered a renewal of my efforts in so pious a cause; and promised, if the lock could be left in my possession, to apply the whole of my leisure to the task. Christophe’s first impulse was a decided negative to this proposal; but, on consideration, he admitted that the trap would be safer from observation in my hands than in his own, and having extorted from me a promise of secrecy, he departed with the intention of returning in the course of a week. Many weeks

elapsed, however, before I saw the mulatto again; and when he once more entered the shop, I could scarcely bring to remembrance my former visiter. He was so worn, so wasted, so tremulous, so fearful, that I had scarcely courage to refer to the painful secret by which we had been originally brought into collision. But Christophe was the first to recur to the fetter-lock; and after a vehement burst of almost childish tears, admitted that the great motive for secrecy was now at an end. "God has avenged all—God, in his own good time, has poured down retribution!" was his reiterated exclamation. "My poor old master was butchered in the massacre of the 2nd of September. All is over!—I have nothing now to care for!—let those come and see who list! My own days are numbered:—to others lie the accomplishment of my tasks—to you, Sir, if it be the will of Heaven, the expiatory deed of opening this fatal springe, and consigning the bones of Lucile to hallowed ground!"

'Touched by the helplessness of his grief, no less than by the fidelity of his attachment, I undertook to fulfil, as far as my powers might avail, the task proposed; and in the process of another week's acquaintance with old Christophe (the last week of his mortal existence), derived from his lips the particulars of a family history of unequalled interest and horror connected with the lock. You seem at leisure to listen;—hear, and moralize upon the tale.

'Anselme Lanoue, Sir, was the only son of respectable parents, occupying a small property in the neighbourhood of St Etienne; destined from his infancy to follow in their footsteps as the unambitious cultivator of his paternal estate. Having, however, at a very early age, distinguished himself among his fellow-students at the Lycée of St Etienne by a remarkable proficiency in mathematics, and, at his leisure hours, by a singular tendency to mechanical pursuits, the proprietor of one of the chief engine-foundries in the country, a distant kinsman of Madame Lanoue, persuaded his father and mother to bind the boy in apprenticeship to a calling for which he evinced so marked a vocation, and which afforded such auspicious prospects of future fortune. Anselme accordingly became an engineer, and soon confirmed the prognostications of his new master by striking out various improvements and inventions of high account. At three and twenty he had achieved the post of chief engineer in the establishment, and at eight and twenty was not only a partner but the affianced husband of his master's daughter. His parents did not survive to witness the consummation of his prosperity—both were already in the grave, and Anselme's patrimony disposed of to augment the capital of his thriving trade.

'Nothing now remained for him to desire. Lucile Moronval was a lovely girl of eighteen, whom he had fondly watched from childhood, with a gradually increasing hope of being enabled, at some future time, to aspire to her hand; and although it was whispered among the commercial coteries, that she had for some time testified considerable repugnance to the marriage arranged for her by her parents, on the grounds that Anselme, in spite of his enlightenment and high moral principles, was of a silent, stern, jealous, and even at times morose disposition, mistrustful in his temper and sullen in his deportment,—all was finally reconciled; and ere the bride had attained her nineteenth year, they were settled as man and wife in a pleasant house in the suburbs of St Etienne, the dwelling attached to the foundry being supposed disadvantageously situated for the health of the young matron. Lanoue seemed indeed to derive double happiness when established in his cheerful home at the close of his labours of the day, from the circumstance of their temporary separation. Lucile had household cares to occupy her time during the interim, and at the close of the first year of their marriage, had a pretty little Lucile of her own to display to her husband and father on their return from the foundry.

'Still it was remarked by the same prying gossips who had been the first to notice her disinclination to become the wife of Anselme, that after the first few months of her motherly

triumph, Madame Lanoue appeared to take little pleasure in her child. She grew dispirited, indifferent, negligent in her person and household; and the more her husband evinced his discontent at these changes in her deportment, the more her spirits were depressed. Some of her neighbours were prompt to attribute the mischief to the arrival of a young cousin, a certain Clement Manoury, who had been the companion of Lucile's early years, and for some time past detained by the arrangement of his family affairs in the island of Martinique. It was even said that her kinsman had returned with the intention of claiming her hand; and that Lanoue, on discovering his abortive pretensions, had forbidden Clement the house, insisting on an absolute rupture of the family connexion.

'Certain it was that the door of Anselme was closed upon his supposed rival; and certain also it was said to be, that Lanoue, who had hitherto contented himself with returning home at the close of his day's labours to his evening meal, was now frequently seen traversing the town, from his foundry at the river-side to his cheerful habitation in the suburbs, with hurried step and gloomy countenance, at various unaccustomed periods of the day. Those who were busiest on the watch managed to ascertain that he had, at different times, broken in suddenly on the solitude of Lucile—but, happily, only to find it solitude. Nothing transpired to justify his suspicions, but nothing seemed to pacify the disturbance of his mind.

'For often does a husband or a wife possess confirmation strong of fickleness or infidelity, which less interested persons account as nothing—symptoms of coldness, of estrangement, of loathing in moments once devoted to endearment—tears where smiles should be, or smiles of scorn instead of the playful self-abandonment sanctioned by reciprocal tenderness. And Anselme had good reason to see that he was no longer beloved. Had he not, therefore, reason to suspect that another had already superseded him in the affections of his wife?

'He *did* at least suspect it, and the suspicion maddened him. He read it in the averted eye, the quivering lip, the hand withdrawn from his own; and when at length he gathered from his wife that he was about again to become a father, the admission, instead of filling his heart with the rapture which had preceded the birth of little Lucile, struck him with disgust. Perplexed in the extreme by the agonizing misgivings which had taken possession of his mind, he soon became brutal, wild, ungovernable in his exasperations against his unhappy victim. Yet strange enough it was that Lucile never resented his violence—never appealed to her neighbours' compassion or her father's protection. She suffered all in silence—too mild to murmur, too gentle to resist. It was even hinted that harsh words had been followed by hard blows; yet still the humbled creature uttered not a syllable of complaint!

'At length the time was accomplished, and Madame Lanoue brought forth a son. Her father eagerly desired that it might be named "Anselme," after her husband, and Lanoue stood eagerly waiting in the hope that Lucile would second the request. But amid all her exhaustion and debility, the young mother found strength to implore that her father, who was to be its Christian sponsor, would bestow his own name on the infant; and that name happened, unluckily, to be no other than "Clement!" From that moment it was a fearful sight to watch the glances cast by Lanoue upon his unwelcome offspring.

'Not long, however, did Lucile find courage to encounter the concentrated wrath of the now desperate man; and exactly five weeks after her confinement, she disappeared from St Etienne. One evening, on returning from the foundry, Anselme found his little home abandoned—the cradle empty—the nurse dismissed—while a few lines, in the hand-writing of Lucile, acquainted him that he would see her face no more, and that his little daughter was deposited with her former nurse, at a village two leagues distance from Lyons;—for *that* child, at least, was his own.

‘By this fatal announcement the miserable truth became manifest to all the world. Anselme was pardoned his former mistrust, his previous jealousy, when it was seen that Madame Lanoue had eloped with the object of her early attachment, and embarked for Martinique—that her father’s name and her husband’s roof were dishonoured—that Lucile was an adultress!

‘Poor old Moronval!—he had not long to support his load of obloquy, or the consciousness that his daughter’s former declarations of attachment to another ought to have prevented him from interposing his parental authority to complete her union with Anselme Lanoue. He died repentant and self-accusing, driven to despair by the accusations of his indignant son-in-law. And thus, freed from all engagements, and bereft of almost every tie to life, Anselme grew weary of his former haunts, his former avocations, and resolved at once to dispose of the foundry, and seek happiness in some province where his name and misfortunes did not serve to point him out to public notice. It was expected that his child would bear him company, but having visited the little girl shortly after the disappearance of his wife, the unhappy man discerned or fancied he discerned some resemblance to her kinsman Manoury in the countenance of the infant Lucile, and thenceforward resolved to exclude it from his home. A liberal annuity was accordingly settled upon the nurse;—it was arranged that Lucile should be reared as her own; and Lanoue became a Cain and a wanderer!

‘From that period all trace of the once thriving engineer was lost at St Etienne. Rumours prevailed that he had entered into the ecclesiastical state, that he was even a member of the confraternity of La Trappe; and one fellow-townsmen, who happened to have business in the West Indies, protested that he had seen Anselme Lanoue fulfilling the duties of a missionary in the island of Martinique. The lapse of a dozen years, however, tended to obliterate all curiosity respecting him or his movements—his very name came to be forgotten at St Etienne; and little Lucile, reared in all the simplicity of a Lyonnese farmer’s daughter began to think of her unknown father as numbered with the dead.

‘Scarcely, however, had she attained her fifteenth year, when there arrived at the village a priest of severe but venerable aspect, who proceeded to exhibit to Nanette and her husband the necessary proofs empowering him to claim the guardianship of Lucile Lanoue. For many hours was the stranger closetted with the afflicted couple; who, at the close of the conference, announced him to their charge as her uncle and future protector. Lucile, who had been hitherto taught to consider her father an only son, and her mother an only daughter, could by no means reconcile herself to this unlooked-for tie of consanguinity. But Nanette soon satisfied her beloved nursing that so it was and was to be;—that her only chance of happiness lay in unlimited submission to the will of her new uncle, with whom she was to reside in Paris, where he enjoyed a small benefice under the metropolitan see; and who, although a stern man and reserved, regarded her with the tenderest affection. Nothing remained but to submit; and Lucile, still bewildered by the sudden transition in her destinies, bade adieu to her native province, and accompanied her uncle to his gloomy abode in the *Parvis Nôtre Dame*.

‘For many months the gay-hearted and bright-eyed girl found little in her new home to replace the simple occupations and affectionate tending of her childhood. Waited upon by a decrepit mulatto servant, who seemed to regard her as an intruder, immured from the sunshine and the free range of nature, she became weary of life, even unto the utmost heart-sickness of weariness. But in course of time, the studies to which her uncle began to claim her attention acquired interest in her eyes; she was taught new languages,—sciences hitherto undreamed of;—the page of history unrolled its wonders to her eyes,—the mysteries of nature unfolded their miracles to her comprehension. The gentle mind of Lucile became fascinated by her uncle’s lessons of

wisdom; she had long listened with reverence to his exhortations from the pulpit; she now began to admit the extent of his attractions as a companion, the value of his regard as a friend and monitor.

‘There was but one point on which his lessons were distasteful. It struck her that the stern ascetic insisted too often and too strongly on the virtue of chastity, and the pure mind of Lucile revolted from the frequency of a charge she deemed superfluous. Père Anselme persisted in warning her against unclean thoughts, when her soul was spotless as that of a nun; and inveighed against the attraction of temptations, which to *her* were foul and offensive. He seemed, in fact, to invest the whole force of female excellence in a virtue which to Lucile appeared a necessary and spontaneous obligation; for the white rose in its first expansion of purity, was not more spotless than Lucile Lanoue!

‘At length she revolted against these iterations of his daily sermon.—“You talk to me, dear uncle,” said she, “of crimes that enter not into my apprehension. What pleasure can you suppose me to find in seeking after books, images, ideas, expressions of an immodest nature? What sense of enjoyment can possibly attach itself to things which bring a blush to the cheek, and confusion to the heart?”

‘ “Nevertheless, beware!” rejoined the stern pastor; “circumstances may arise to invest with unknown charms these very accessories of evil. And remember, Lucile,—remember, my niece,—remember, my beloved child, that sooner than see thee yield to the backslidings by which so many of thy sex sink into the gulf of perdition, I would tear thee limb from limb,—behold thee perish inch by inch, and minute by minute. The soul of woman is the brightest emanation of the eternal fountain of light and life; but the smallest blemish upon its spotlessness, and corruption and utter darkness ensue. Either thou must be as the angels of Heaven, secure from the influence of every grosser passion, or fall under the domination of the worst, and become a thing for men to trample on and fiends to scoff at. Half the mischiefs, half the crimes of this world of woe, are produced by the levity of woman. And though I love thee, Lucile,—love thee with a yearning spirit of tenderness, greater than can be dreamed of by the imagining of thy young experience,—know, that should a day of contamination come, thou must look to find in me a ruthless judge,—a stone-hearted executioner. There would be no mercy in my soul for an offence of thine.”

‘Harsh as were these denunciations, they sounded more like the ravings of fanaticism, than the remonstrances of a spiritual teacher, in the ears of Lucile. She had no power to attach them to a foregone conclusion, or to the shadowing forth of ideal evil. Even when, about a year after the first outpouring of the strenuous exhortations of Père Anselme, she became acquainted with the brilliant aide-de-camp of the King of France, who was charged to command a solemn service of *Te Deum* at the metropolitan cathedral, on occasion of the birth of a Dauphin, and the young and handsome Count de Valencay contrived shortly afterwards to entangle her in a secret correspondence and clandestine meetings, Lucile saw no occasion to connect the honourable expressions of attachment of her impassioned admirer with the prohibitions of her uncle! Valencay beheld in the bright cynosure of the Parvis *Nôtre Dame* the nominal niece of a hypocritical abbé, and far too fair a creature to be consigned to so ignoble and degrading a destiny; while Lucile beheld in Valencay her future husband, and the noblest and most captivating of mankind. They stood relatively in a false position. Mademoiselle Lanoue was too much afraid of the harsh interpretation of her uncle to infringe her lover’s injunctions by acquainting the old man with the secret of their engagement. She dared not even involve in her

confidence the old mulatto servant, Christophe, lest at any time he might be induced to betray them to the animadversions of Père Anselme.

‘Time passed. It is needless, and would be painful to relate how often, during her uncle’s discharge of his official duties, Lucile managed to escape from her gloomy home, and accompany her noble admirer on expeditions to the heights of Romainville, or the unfrequented banks of the Maine; to evening promenades in the Royal Gardens, to obscure spots and secret resorts, even *she* scarcely knew where. It was in vain she implored Valencay’s permission to acquaint her legal guardian with their engagements, and at length with the union they had secretly contracted. The Count pleaded the opposition of his family—the resentment of the King;—and Lucile felt too happy in the homage, the tender affection of the man she deemed her husband, to examine with caution into his arguments, or investigate the motives of his evasions.

‘It chanced that, while these mysteries were proceeding unsuspected in the quiet household of the canon of Nôtre Dame, Père Anselme was requested by one of the ministrants of the church of St Sulpice to undertake for a few days the clerical charge for which he was incapacitated by sudden and severe indisposition. The active priest, rejoicing in an opportunity of augmenting the sum of those duties which he had adopted as a sort of expiation—a species of mysterious atonement—readily complied: and thus, for several days, Lucile was left more than ever at liberty to pursue her favourite avocations, and cement her rash connections, little apprehending the consequences of her uncle’s ex-official occupation. Nay, little indeed did Père Anselme himself anticipate, when he entered the confessional of his unaccustomed church, to how painful an exercise of his priestly functions he was about to be submitted.

‘For behold! there came to his judgment seat a young noble of the court of the Trianon, the associate of the Lauzuns and Polignacs, who, engaged in a duel of deadly provocation, had chosen to address himself to a strange confessor for a remission of his mortal sins. Count Valencay admitted himself to be every way an offender;—intemperate, debauched, a gambler, a seducer of innocence; and among other crimes which he charged against himself, was a pretended marriage with a pretended niece of a canon of Nôtre Dame; for whom he admitted the utmost violence of a criminal attachment.—“Lucile is about to become a mother,” said he, in the unreservedness of confession; “and her child will become fatherless, and herself a castaway, should I fall to-morrow. *Am I to be forgiven?*”

‘Père Anselme wrung his hands and sobbed aloud at this declaration; while Valencay, attributing the good man’s despair to the unction of his zeal, implored his intercessions with Heaven for the more than widow who was about to be left to the evil-dealing of a cruel world. He demanded also absolution, and Père Anselme trembled while he pronounced the words of grace; he had not, indeed, *so* trembled since the day when he first learned the elopement of his wife with Clement Manoury, of Martinique!

‘That night, on his return home, Christophe the mulatto received orders from his master to light the fire of a small furnace erected at one end of the little garden attached to the Canon’s house, where, during the winter days, he was wont to amuse himself by the exercise of his skill in smithery, such as the manufacture of curious locks and safety-bolts, which he often caused to be sold for the benefit of the poor. During the summer, he usually devoted his leisure to other pursuits; and what might be the cause of his selecting a fine midsummer night for the renewal of his occupation no one could guess. Till morning, however, the bellows of the forge were heard in operation, and then, instead of retiring to rest after his unaccountable exertions, Père Anselme went forth to his daily duties, having charged his servants with certain household services to be performed during his absence, and taken with him the key of the house-door, in order to enforce

the commands he had already issued, that none should pass the threshold during his absence. He desired also that the morning and evening meal of Lucile might be served to her as usual; nor did he return at night till his daughter had retired to rest. But there was nothing in all this to occasion surprise to Lucile; her thoughts indeed were otherwise engrossed, and had they been free for cogitation, she knew that the time of the Canon was just then doubly engaged with the duties of his brother Curé.

‘She was wrapt in sleep when, at midnight, he re-entered the house, and a sleep so heavy, that she observed not an unusual sound in an uninhabited chamber on the opposite side of the corridor from her own, the walls of which abutted against those of a public hospital. Heavy, ay, heavy indeed must those slumbers have been, that heard not stones displaced and replaced—the blows of the heavy mallet—the smart strokes of the sledge hammer, which so strangely disturbed the rest of the old mulatto.

‘On the morrow, at an early hour, a hired *berline*⁴ stood at the Canon’s door; and when the lovely but pale and wan Lucile made her appearance at the breakfast-table, the Canon bid her with a grim smile prepare for a holiday. Together they ascended the carriage, but her eager inquiries could obtain no clue to their destination. “Be satisfied,” replied Anselme in a hoarse voice; “you will discover anon. I have secured to you a day of pleasure.”

‘At length she perceived that they had passed the barriers of the city, and were ascending the heights of Charonne. In another minute’s space they were following a splendid funeral procession, that took its way towards the cemetery of Mont Louis. The hearse was covered with gorgeous escutcheons—the noblest armorial bearings of ancient France graced the long train of carriages following the dead—and as the cortege stopped at the gates of the cemetery, Lucile perceived that a sword and belt, a coronet and cushion, were placed upon the coffin.

‘Involuntarily she gave vent to expressions of interest, as with a pale face she gazed upon the solemn scene—involuntarily evinced her curiosity as to the name of the hero about to be consigned to the dust. She addressed herself to her “uncle,” but Père Anselme was reciting aloud his prayers for the dead, whom the priests, with their crosses and banners, had come forth to welcome to the grave. Their driver now prepared to let down the steps, having received previous orders from the canon.

‘ “Whose obsequies are these?” inquired Lucile with faltering accents, as she prepared to place her foot on the step.

‘ “’Tis the burial of the young Count Valencay, Aide-de-Camp to his Majesty, who fell yesterday in a duel at Montrouge,” replied the man in a careless tone; “he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; yet ’tis said that he hazarded his life in a drunken quarrel, for a worthless actress.”

‘But he spoke to unheeded ears; Lucile lay senseless at the bottom of the carriage, and when the miserable girl recovered her powers of recollection, she found herself in a strange room, chained by her right hand to a bare wall, a loaf of bread, a vessel of water, and a missal, lying by her side. Even then, she neither heard, nor saw, nor felt distinctly; strange words sounded in her ears—a figure which she deemed to be that of her uncle stalked before her, proclaiming himself her father, and addressing her in opprobrious terms and with fearful denunciations that fell meaningless upon her heart. Yet the accusations were full, *too* full of truth; and the invectives with which he accosted the dying girl were such as defile the ears of the lowest of her fallen sex.

‘ “True child of an abandoned mother,” cried he—“of a mother who deserted thy cradle for the arms of a paramour—of a mother whom I abandoned all ties of nature and country to punish as

⁴ A four-wheeled covered carriage.

she deserved—thy doom is decreed! I forewarned *her*, yet she fell! I told her that so surely as she dared to outrage her vows of matron chastity, the hand of my vengeance should be heavy on her—that her blood should flow drop by drop in atonement for her sin; and so it did, and I beheld it, and was content. Then returned I to Europe, in the hope that the sorrows of my youth might be compensated by a tranquil old age, passed in the bosom of my child. And thou, too, Lucile, did I forewarn! I ventured not to assume over thee a father's authority, lest peradventure the babbling of those who surrounded thy childhood should have described him to thee as harsh and intemperate; but as a near kinsman—as a spiritual teacher—my voice was loud in thine ears, with exhortations against the evil promptings of the salt blood of thy mother flowing in thy veins; yet thou hast fallen, and the ruin of my house is accomplished—my last hope withered—my last joy defiled! Out on thee, castaway, out on thee! For thee, even for thee, shall there be no mercy—no ear of pity for thy bewailing—no heart of flesh for thine anguish. My own hand, a father's hand, forged the snares that hold thee fast; and now will I feast mine eyes on the sufferings of thy penance. *Despair and die!*”

‘To all these outrages Lucile had no other reply than the name of him whom she believed to have been her husband. To die was all indeed that she desired; but despair she could not, for she trusted that death would reunite her to the object of her soul's affections. Her mind was at times perturbed, at times lucid; but of her peculiar jeopardy she knew and could comprehend nothing. It was all a miserable confusion of suffering—of terror—of darkness—of desperation!

‘At length came the appointed hour—the hour of a mother's agony; and all night the lonely creature writhed and struggled with her pain, her miserable right hand still fettered within the master-bolt; but towards morning her moans grew fainter, and the feeble wail of a new-born child was added to the sound. Lucile was still alive when her father entered the room, and her dying eyes re-opened in fearful dilation only to witness the paroxysm of disgust with which he crushed into nothingness the tender frame of that offspring of shame. It was well perhaps the miserable babe should die, for already it was an orphan.

‘That night, Anselme Lanoue watched beside the dead—the young mother with her little infant laid upon her arm, and a bloody cloth enveloping the right hand of the corpse! When placed in her coffin, and the bier brought forth from that hateful chamber, the Canon of Nôtre Dame closed its door for ever, that no one might look upon the mangled hand still fixed within the manacle left hanging to the wall; and it was Christophe the mulatto who, on the apprehension of the old priest, nearly twenty years after the fatal catastrophe, bethought him of the mysteries to be revealed in that deserted room, and found strength to wrench the staple from the stones.

‘Look upon it again,’ said Balthazar, replacing the terrible relique in my hand at the close of his narrative, ‘and tell me, Sir, whether your country contains a more fearful testimonial of the ascendancy of ungovernable passion?’

The gathering tears in our eyes prevented our discerning so clearly as we could wish the delicacy of those blanched and fragile bones; but it was clear that the hand had been divided above the wrist by some sharp instrument; it was clear that two fingers had been previously broken in a desperate struggle for self-extrication. That hand which the hand of love alone had pressed—which had been from infancy uplifted to Heaven in the fervent supplications of innocence—had been crushed and tortured by the vengeance of a father!

Our hearts revolted against the spectacle; and right glad were we to behold the instrument of torture finally consigned to the dark and rusty treasury of—THE RED MAN.