

## EVA HEAD.

A NAUGHTICAL ROMANCE OF BEAUTY, BLOOD, AND BOOTY.

(Concluded.)

## CHAP. XXIII.

The ordinary reading public has no idea of the disadvantages and difficulties under which an author labors. If he were to give heed to all the barks from "asses' souls in lions' skin," which assail him at every point, his task would indeed be a hard one, and it is therefore with a due fear of the criticisms of the *Witness*, and a grateful appreciation of the forbearance shewn the fair Eva by the numerous readers of *DIOGENES*, that I now, in bidding adieu to a *negress*, make my exit.

To return, therefore, to New Orleans—mouthpiece of the muddy Mississippi, and birthplace of A Head,—where, several chapters ago, (I really forget how many),—we parted from Henrico's better half, the sable Eva. She looks, at first sight, somewhat paler than usual, though this, perhaps, is on account of her being disabled from work by a sad accident which befel her, shortly after arriving at the home of her childhood.

It seems that, three or four weeks after her return, she was watching the gay promenaders in the Strada di Lazzaroni, from a third-floor window, in company with two of her younger sisters, when, after some high words, they all fell out! As might naturally be imagined, some time elapsed before she was entirely convalescent, and while confined to the house, (how sad for one so young!) she commenced a course of literature with a view to improving her mind, and fitting her for the duties of Editor, or Editress of an Orleans *Daily News*, whenever the *Womans' Rights'* question should be finally and satisfactorily settled.

A "blue-stocking" is, of course, all *soul*, and it, therefore, cannot be wondered at, that Eva wore her slippers down at the heel, and paid such little attention to her personal appearance. After a course of Tupper, interspersed with one or two of Miss Braddon's most soul-squelching novels, she was indeed a lamentable sight!—If ever hearts were made of stone she would have moved one of them, as she walked about the house doing the duties required of her, in a mechanical kind of way, altogether oblivious of the commonest rules of housewifery, and deaf to the self-evident fact that cayenne pepper and pickles are not two of the component parts of plum-pudding or *Charlotte Russe*. Her hair unkempt, untidy, and disordered, (her *locks*, by the bye, affording a good *key* to her character), marks of grief, or of printers' ink—(I know not which—) around her lovely eyes, and furrows of care, (or carelessness), down her ebony cheeks, she was a sight well calculated to move "a nation to tears," or bring briny torrents from the eyes of the most stony-hearted vendor of indigestible ice-creams.

But soon her sorrow was turned into exultation, and her weeping into tears of gladness, for on the morning of the 31st of September, (old style), whilst reading the *Star*, her eye caught the following advertisement:—

"If this should meet the eye of M<sup>rs</sup>. Henrico, she will hear of something to her advantage, by applying to Messrs. Doo & Cheatem, Montreal, Canada. Her husband is no more!"

Eva's joy was so intense that it evinced itself in hysteria, which did no small benefit to the business of the adjacent jewellers, who declared that they couldn't supply the demand which arose for ear-rings, owing to the fact that, far and near, peoples' ears had

BEEN PIERCED BY MADAME HENRICO'S SHRIEKS!!!

## CHAP. XXIV.

A dark night, and a doleful one! Clouds of tempestuous blackness scouring across the midnight sky, and blurring the fair face of Luna, with fearful murkiness! On the heights of Mount Royal, the pines sobbing and wailing as if a fiend from the nethermost world was dragging the life-sap from their very hearts,—while, far beneath, in the silent and almost depopulated city, not a soul can be seen save the rowdy reveller, as he reels down St. James' Street, and shudders as he passes the office of the *Witness*,—or the solitary (and strychnine-fearing canine, for whom no appreciative master has evolved the inevitable but sorely-grudged two dollars. All quiet at Montenegro, as though the household were wrapped in their last sleep, and Henrico himself, sleeping, not the lightest of them all!

But hark! hush! what is it that causes the sleeper to turn so restlessly on his bed, and exorcise with vehement snore the foul-fiend of fancy that has possession of his sleeping thoughts? Is there no cause then, in reality? Is there nothing of mortal mould, more tangible than dreams, more fearful than fantasy, disturbing the slumbers of the Chief?

Slowly, stealthily—a *fell* purpose written on his face—with knife in hand and determination in his soul,—up the stairs which lead to Henrico's room creeps his butler Maraschino. Stealthily, slowly, down the stairs—a *yellow* purpose written on her face—with a bottle in hand on which are inscribed the cabalistic letters, "G, 1860, B," crawls the Housekeeper whom the ill-fated master of Montenegro had chosen but the day before. With dire intent they draw nearer, and nearer still, to the door which opens into the Chief's room. As Maraschino's hand seizes the handle, the grasp of the Housekeeper is laid upon the same protuberance. Simultaneously, a muffled start upon the part of the Butler, a smothered

cry from his female co-conspirator, and, as a flash of lightning throws a glimmer on the spot, a cry of

SCHWARTZ!!!

and

SARA JANE!!!

and they are in each others' arms!

Twenty-five seconds serve to explain to each other, satisfactorily, the mode in which they escaped from the frightful death which Henrico had destined for them; and now they agree to make common cause against their mutual enemy.

Ah! Henrico! well may'st thou turn uneasily on thy pillow, and groan with futile agony; for, stooping over thy couch, could'st thou but know it, are thy two mortal foes! With hand uplifted, Schwartz is about to deal the fatal blow, when, a brighter flash than usual illuminating the room, Henrico awakes and beholds his would-be victims glowering down upon his couch, their features radiant with anticipative revenge.

"Take thy choice, vile dog," exclaimed Schwartz: "here is the blade and there is the bowl!"

It was very evident to Henrico that his last hour had come, and, as they had improved on the *Daily News* idea of "Cord and Creese," 'twere well that he should die as became a man and a Flei Hunter.

"Show me the bottle," he replied. One glance was sufficient. "G, 1860, B," said he,—"I think I would prefer the knife."

Suddenly, a brilliant idea took possession of Schwartz's mind. It was the suggestion of fiends incarnate, and was no sooner suggested than acted upon.

Taking a small penknife and a copy of Mark Twain's "Pilgrim's Progress," with frightful ferocity he calmly and deliberately opened the Chief's

VEIN OF HUMOR!!!

## CHAP. XXV., AND LAST.

"Thank Heaven!" says the Editor.

"Thanks be, indeed," say I; and, though only a literary cobbler, believe me, I shan't long stick to my *last*!

After succeeding in their murderous designs, Schwartz and Sara Jane immediately set about concealing the body, but this was a difficult matter. Sara Jane, with a woman's wit, suggested presenting it to Prince Arthur, but this idea was scouted by Schwartz, who, finally, resolved to send it to Cacouna, observing that "Every *body* goes there." After doing this, he inserted in the *Star* the advertisement which caused Eva such varied feelings of joy and embarrassment.

As soon as she had recovered from her hysterical attack, she immediately set out for Montreal, and, in the course of a few years, arrived there by the Grand Trunk Railway. Reaching Bonaventure Depot, she made the best of her way to Montenegro, where she was received with open arms by her faithful retainers, who briefly expressed their joy at the re-union.

I am happy to inform my readers that all the characters now left alive lived to a green old age, though Schwartz suffered severely at the time the roof of the St. Patrick's Hall gave way by getting "a beam in his eye," but he speedily recovered, and lived for many years after, an inveterate joker, a faithful butler, and a regular contributor to the columns of *DIOGENES*.

A. Head and all the little Heads are doing nicely, thank you, and the youngest boy, though a little *headstrong*, gives promise of being something or other some day.

Amongst other articles belonging to Henrico, and found in the house, was a box of "Favoritas"—McConkey's best. These Eva, as she has to wear weeds, uses on the score of economy, and she may be seen blowing a cloud, on any fine day, by any one smart enough to find out where she lives or who she is.

And now, kind readers, farewell! ("a word which makes us linger—yet, farewell!") If I have raised a laugh by my story, believe me, I have also "raised the wind;" and if you are satisfied—I am!

Stop a minute, I hear you saying—you have forgotten Sara Jane!

So I have!

Well, she grew old and twaddling, and one fine day disappeared mysteriously. There are to be found, however, malicious people who declare that she has found congenial employment as Editress of a noted *Daily*.

*C'est tout.* And, with my hand on my heart, the author thanks you for your indulgence, and trusts you will not say he has brought his story to

A LAME CONCLUSION!!!

NOTE.—*DIOGENES* is happy to announce that there is every probability of the author writing a sequel to this veracious history, at an early date.

## "PRODIGIOUS!"

A correspondent, who must be verging on lunacy, writes to enquire whether, in view of the immense number of lynxes shot this summer in Quebec, the inhabitants of that city may be set down as lynx-eyed?

Also, whether it is not extremely probable that the "missing links" will turn up some day in the vicinity of the "ancient capital."