

# Maida's Secret.....

By the Author of....  
"A Gipsy's Daughter,"  
"Another Man's Wife,"  
"A Heart's Bitterness,"  
Etc., Etc.

## CHAPTER I.

For fifteen long years Hartleigh Hall had held its doors shut to friends and strangers alike; for fifteen long years a shadow had hovered over it, and the gloom of a dead past had filled it. The silence of a buried life had brooded there, and the people had learned to shun it.

And now, of a sudden, the doors had been thrown open, and life and gaiety, beauty and fashion thronged its erstwhile gloomy chambers. Every window gleamed joyously with the warm blaze of light, and soft, melting strains of music, mingled with the hum of sweet voices and the rustle of silks and satins; and white shoulders gleamed, and bright eyes flashed with Cupid's artillery, and hearts were lost and won. And the lawns and drives were gay with many colored lamps, and alive with liveried servants; and the pebbled drive-way crunched under spurring hoofs and grinding wheels. And the gloom and silence of Hartleigh Hall were driven away.

Some there were there who had known the Mad Dick Hartleigh of twenty years ago, and these were curious to see the changes time and sorrow had wrought in the man whose wild exploits had set the sober world agog. And others there were to whom he was only a name, and they looked to see what manner of man this was who had started life with almost unlimited wealth and a title that went back near a thousand years; who had in his youth startled England with his mad caprices, and who had lived a miser recluse for fifteen years, only to end by opening his magnificent mansion to feasting and mirth.

And when they entered the drawing room, what did they see? They saw a tall, thin man, of perhaps fifty-five years of age, with a clean-cut patrician face, distinguished by the Hartleigh gray-blue eyes and well-formed mouth—a thorough specimen of old English nobility, who greeted his guests and welcomed them with a courtliness which smacked of the manners of the old world that had known him as Mad Dick Hartleigh. He was not a whit embarrassed; he did not explain why the Hall had been closed to them for so many years, but bore himself with the well bred ease of the man who is aware of nothing extraordinary in what he is doing; and with polished ease leaned one white, thin hand upon the arm of his nephew, Guy Hartleigh, as he went about introducing the young man and doing the honors of the evening.

Heir as he was to the title and estates, Guy was even less known than Sir Richard, though his boyhood, too, had been spent near the Hall; but since his boyhood he had visited the Hall only at stated intervals, and for a brief period at these times. His relations to the old man had been of the coldest and most formal kind, never reaching the length of affection, and always constrained. To him the Hall had ever been an awesome place, and no one of the gay throng was more surprised than he to see the old place radiant with light and joyous with mirth and music.

Guy was a Hartleigh. Everybody saw that at a glance. He had in full measure all the qualities for which his race had been famous. Tall, stalwart, erect, and bold of bearing as one of the ancient Vikings, he was yet a patrician from the tawny hair of his head to the well-shaped feet which he used so gracefully in the mazy windings of the waltz. And, for all the strangeness of the gathering, he did not fail to enter into the enjoyment of it with all the zest and ardor of youth.

The ball was a success, so everybody agreed. It was threatened to be still; but, as the little Lady Gladys Vyner said, who could resist the infectious gaiety of Guy Hartleigh? Nobody, apparently, for after the first feeling of wonderment at finding themselves in a house which most of them had come to look upon as a tomb, they one and all abandoned themselves to the enjoyment of the occasion, and made the old walls ring again with their joyous mirth.

It was three o'clock before the last guest left the Hall; and then the tired servants hurried to extinguish the lights on the lawn and in the house, so that before Guy had returned after putting pretty Lady Gladys into her carriage, he found himself, with something of the old boyish shudder, in the same gloomy Hall of the past. His uncle, too, had disappeared; and Guy, with a shrug of his broad shoulders, told himself that, after the one gladdening glimpse of joyous life, the old cheerless life was to be taken up again. And if that were so, what was to become of him? He would not consent to bury himself there, as his uncle had done. He would return to the Continent rather than that; and with this thought in his mind, he turned from the drawing-room and made his way to the library, where he could have a last smoke before retiring. A lamp was still burning in the library, and he was about to light his cigar when a

ed his attention, and he turned his head to listen.

"Is that you, Guy?" demanded a voice.

"Yes, sir."

It was his uncle who had spoken. The room was dark, and Guy wondered what the old man was doing there at such a time. It was a sort of disconnected picture-gallery, and was used for the portraits of the later generations of the Hartleighs.

"Come in here, Guy; I would like to say a few words to you if you are not too tired to talk with me."

"Not at all. I was going to sit up and smoke a cigar before going to bed."

"Bring your cigar in here; and if there is a candle there, bring that, too."

Guy lit his cigar, and, lifting the lamp, carried it into the gallery. His uncle sat in a great arm-chair, with a weary, wistful expression in his usually stern, impassive face. He motioned Guy to a chair, and, after a pause, which Guy occupied in idly puffing the cigar smoke in circles from him, Sir Richard asked, abruptly, but not unkindly:

"Do you know why I gave this ball tonight, Guy?"

"I understood it was to introduce me."

"But you are three years past your majority. Why should I wish to introduce you now, more than three years ago, at the age when such things are commonly done—can you guess?"

"No, sir; though I have tried to do so."

"You are heir to the title and estate, but except as my will you could never enjoy a penny of your inheritance until my death."

"I know that, sir, and I am grateful—"

"It is not for that that I speak now. Listen. The estate is a good one, and, by my will or not, you will at my death be in possession of a fair income; but there is an immense fortune, part of which I inherited and more of which I have accumulated, which can be disposed of according to my own wish. I have had you educated, and I have always provided for you with the one idea of leaving to you this wealth, which has never done me any good."

Guy murmured something in the nature of thanks for this promised munificence; his uncle, however, took no notice of his words, but, as if he had not heard them, went on:

"I have watched you carefully, and I have so much confidence in you that I do not now hesitate to ask of you what, with another, I would make a condition of the bestowal of this wealth."

"I am glad it is a request rather than a condition," said Guy, with quick pride.

"You would have resented the condition, perhaps even refused it?" queried Sir Richard, with an anxiety he made no effort to conceal.

"I am a Hartleigh," was the proud answer.

"But the request?"

"I acceded to without hesitation. I make no reservation, for I know it is as little likely that you would ask, as that I would grant, anything that could not be done with honor."

"It is true; but you must know the request before you grant it."

Sir Richard let his head fall upon his hand as he said this, and for several minutes did not open his lips. There was so little of the old familiar firmness, and there was so much of the depressed sorrow in his uncle's tone and manner, that Guy felt a new sentiment coming to life in his generous young heart. It seemed to him that in the place of the hard, repellent old man he had accustomed himself to see in his uncle, there was one who needed his affection and support. He put his hand out with a frank, generous gesture, characteristic of him, and would have spoken; but the older man seemed to comprehend, for he looked up with a smile as sad as it was rare on his face, and taking the hand in both of his for a moment, gave it a gentle pressure, which seemed to say, "I know what you would say, and I thank you." Then he dropped it, and rising painfully to his feet, said, brokenly:

"Guy, you have known me as a silent, unloving man. A miser, some have called me; a misanthrope others. I have been neither, but a suffering, self-condemned wretch. The cause you shall know."

He drew a tiny key from his pocket, and approaching what looked like a large cabinet resting against the wall, inserted the key and unlocked it. Two doors swung open, and there was revealed to Guy's astonished eyes the portrait of a surpassingly beautiful woman. Many times had Guy stopped wonderingly before this seeming cabinet, but never had he suspected what it really was. He turned to Sir Richard with a look of inquiry.

"My wife," were the only words he spoke, and then turned away with such a look of agony on his face that Guy's kind heart went out to him.

He would have gone to his side and

given him that silent sympathy which men like, but felt that it would be wiser not; so he stood looking up at the lovely face, which seemed to be smiling down at him, in a trustful, tender way that bespoke his confidence, in spite of the story he vaguely remembered to have heard of her. By and by his uncle returned to his side, and asked him softly:

"Could you believe her to be false?"

"No," answered Guy, in his fearless way.

"Sit down. Twenty years ago today I married Constance Faulkner. She was young, and, as you see, rarely beautiful. I loved her, and I believed she loved me. And when I say 'love,' I mean all the word can mean. Adoration, worship, devotion. I had been, as you have no doubt heard, wild as few men are. Mad Dick Hartleigh!" he said, with a sigh. "The name tells the story. But after my marriage I was as faithful and true as I had been unstable and wild before. Two years after our marriage a child was born to us—a girl. We were very happy. So happy that for five years we shut ourselves out from the world, content with each other; but then I one day met an old friend, one I had loved as Damon loved Pythias. I invited him to the Hall, to renew the friendship of the old days. One day I returned unexpectedly to find him at the feet of my wife, speaking words of love to her. He slept not again in this house." The old man lowered his voice. "He went with me to France, and there I left him dead. When I returned to my home, my wife was gone—my wife and my child."

The prematurely gray head dropped on the thin white hand, and the silence of anguish and despair fell upon him.

Guy said not a word, but his broad chest rose and fell, and his eyes filled with a sympathetic moisture that did him honor. All the reserve and the coldness of the past melted away, and the young heart and the old throbbed together.

Presently the old man looked up with a pathetic smile and continued:

"I did not seek to bring her back. I doubted even that the child was mine. I asked no questions; I would not even look upon the things that were hers. I shut up the Hall and went abroad. Five years later I came back here, my heart hardened and full of scorn for myself. I went through the rooms, scoffing at myself, to see them just as she had left them. I went even to her chamber, and tossed over the dust-covered articles on her toilet-table, trying to make myself believe I did not care. And my heart was crying out all the time! 'Guy,' and his voice sank to a low whisper, 'as I turned over the laces and jewels that lay there I came upon a yellow, time-stained envelope addressed to me. It was in her writing. I tore it open; I know not what I thought to find in it; but, oh, great Heaven! it showed her to me as white and spotless as the angels themselves. She, who had gone away in her innocence, knowing my furious anger and unreasoning passion, had left that letter, hoping I would read it and follow her for her forgiveness. I sought her then, but, alas! it was too late. I hired three detectives to search for her, and for years they searched in vain; but at last they were successful, and came upon her and her child in America. But just as they were about to communicate with her, she unaccountably disappeared. Then again they searched, and again found her, only to be baffled in the same way. Time and again the same thing happened, until it seemed to me she must be trying to elude me. I did not dare go seek her myself, fearing, I know not why, that if I did some dire misfortune would befall her and the child. Now, she is dead."

He arose and paced the floor, not with the assured step Guy had been so accustomed to see, but feebly and almost tottering. But it calmed him, and in a few minutes he resumed his seat and took up the story again:

"The child is found, a young woman now and it only remains to bring her home. Home, Guy! I dare not go, and every day I look for a telegram saying that she, too, has disappeared again."

Guy's handsome face lighted up, and he spoke eagerly.

"You will let me go for her? If she disappears again I will trace her. I will find her and bring her to you. It is what you would ask, is it not? It is what I would do. Tell me what you know of her whereabouts. Where is she now?"

"In San Francisco. But it is much to ask of you."

"It is nothing. I shall be ready tomorrow. We will not delay a moment more than is necessary. I am not only willing, I am eager to go."

"But, Guy, there is more to be said."

"More? What is it?" asked Guy, uneasily, for there was a strange expression in Sir Richard's face.

"Can you picture what my child must be, having led the life she has?"

"But what does it matter? She is your daughter and my cousin. You doubt how I will receive one who is perchance, ignorant and uncouth? Doubt no longer. She is the victim of an injustice, and I, as well as you, will do what lies in me to rectify it."

"Ah, Guy; as noble as a Hartleigh! It applies to you as it never did to me. But have you considered—have you thought—do you—"

"You hesitate. Tell me without reserve, what is in your mind."

"Guy, there is but one way to place my daughter right before the world."

"And that is?"

"By marriage with one who is her social equal."

Guy looked down as if studying the full meaning of the words, and then looked up with a frank smile, and putting both hands out to his uncle said:

"I understand you. This is the request, that I marry your daughter?"

"I noticed your attentions to the Lady Gladys tonight."

"She is pretty, and I was attracted. It might never have gone any farther. At least, it shall not. I will find your daughter, and, if she will have me, I will make her my wife. And, uncle, I do it with a cheerful heart and without one misgiving."

"Heaven bless you, Guy! I do not deserve this from you."

To be continued.

## DEGENERATION OF THE FRENCH.

### Rapid Decline in the Vitality of the Republic Alarms Frenchmen.

A few years ago that volatile and patriotic French statistician Jules Bertillon (author of a system of identifying criminals and expert witness in the Dreyfus case) emitted a doleful cry which should have startled his countrymen. He exclaimed that the French people and the French language were doomed to early extinction; that in 1859 the long declining birth rate had fallen below the death rate, and that there had been an actual loss of population. From the beginning of the past century the birth rate of France had been steadily falling, while there had been no appreciable decline in that of the other European nations. The French tongue had ceased to be the language of diplomacy and of polite society in other lands. Although at the beginning of the war of 1870 France and Germany had the same number of soldiers, in 1895 Germany was able to put in the field twice as many men as France could command. M. Bertillon also noted that there had been a corresponding failure to increase the value of French exports because there was no growth of workers.

That there are Frenchmen who realize this declining tendency is apparent from the occasional efforts to reverse the tide, as when the Government has been urged to give a bonus to persons who marry, to place a prohibitory tax on bachelorhood, to bestow prizes on the mothers of twins, etc. To promote marriage (and especially the union of men and women of superior physique), the late Count de Pierrecourt has left to his native city of Rouen his entire fortune of ten million francs, on condition that every year a bonus of \$20,000 shall be given to the tallest man and woman who shall marry each other.

## TORONTO'S BIG CLOCK.

### Facts About One of the Largest Time Pieces in the World.

The four dials are 20 feet in diameter and are made of half-inch ground glass set in iron frames. In the centre of each dial is a circle, containing four hinged sashes, through which it is possible for a man to crawl, if it is necessary to work on the outside of the dial. The dials weigh about fifteen tons, and the steel braces that provide against the enormous wind pressure on the glass weigh six tons.

The hands are of copper. They are hollow and counterbalanced on the inside. The large hands are nine feet six inches long and the small hands five feet six inches.

The three bells weigh, roughly, six tons, a ton and a half, and one ton respectively. The motive power for the clock and bells is furnished by three weights, wound up by electricity once a week.

The pendulum of the clock is 14 feet 8 inches long, and weighs 500 pounds. Once started, it would swing for ten hours without any other power than its own momentum. If the length of the pendulum shaft should alter, through contraction or expansion by cold or heat, the clock would run fast or slow accordingly. To overcome this the shaft is made of iron and zinc, the expansion of one being compensated by the contraction of the other.

The clock is 280 feet above the ground.

## DANGER AHEAD!

A knavish-looking fellow was once charged before a magistrate with stealing a pair of trousers. The evidence against him not being strong enough to convict him, he was acquitted, after a patient investigation of the case. The accused, however, to the surprise of everybody, remained in the dock.

Thinking he could not hear, or did not understand the magistrate's decision, the lawyer who had been defending him told him he was at liberty to go about his business, if he had any. The man, however, shook his head slightly, but did not move.

"You are discharged. Why don't you go?" asked the lawyer.

By this time the court was nearly empty, and the accused, leaning forward, whispered to his defender:

"I can't leave the dock till all the witnesses against me are gone."

Why? asked the man of law.

Because of the trousers, answered the other. Don't you understand? Most certainly I do not! said the solicitor. What about the trousers?

Only, this, sir—I've got them on!

## Perils of the Deep.

### GREAT HARDSHIP AND EXPOSURE ENDURED.

Capt. Adnah Burns, of Dayspring, N. S., Tells an Interesting Story From His Own Experience.

From the Progress, Lunenburg, N.S.

Capt. Adnah Burns, of Dayspring, Lunenburg, Co., N.S., is a prominent representative of a large class of men, in Nova Scotia, who, during much of the year, follow the dangerous occupation of deep sea fishing. When not at sea Capt. Burns' avocation is that of ship-carpenter. He is 43 years of age, and is to-day a healthy, vigorous representative of his class. Capt. Burns, however, has not always enjoyed this vigorous health, and while chatting recently with a representative of the Lunenburg Press, he said he believed that but for the timely use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills he would have been a chronic invalid. "From 1895 to 1898," said Capt. Burns, "I was the victim of a complication of troubles, I suppose they had their origin in the hardship and exposure I so frequently had to undergo. My illness took the form of dyspepsia and kidney trouble. The foods which I ate did not agree with me, and frequently gave me a feeling of nausea and at other times distressful pains in the stomach. Then I was much troubled with pains in the back due to the kidney trouble. Finally I took a severe cold which not only seemed to aggravate these troubles but which seemed to affect my spine as well, and I became partially rigid in the arms and legs. I was forced to quit work, and doctored for a time with little or no benefit. Then I dropped the doctor and began taking other medicines, but with no better result. By this time I was run down very much, had no appetite, and was depressed both in mind and body. While in this condition I chanced to read in a newspaper the testimonial of a cure made by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which in some respects presented symptoms like my own. The straightforward manner in which the story was told gave me new hope and I determined to try these pills. I sent for three boxes. Of course I did not expect that this quantity would cure me, but I thought it would probably decide whether they were suited to my case. I must say they seemed to act like magic, and before the pills were gone there was a decided improvement in my condition. I then got a half dozen boxes more and before they were gone I was back again at work in the shipyard, and enjoying once more the blessing of vigorous health. This was in the spring of 1898, and since that time up to the present I have not been laid up with illness. Occasionally when suffering from the effects of exposure or overwork I take a box or two of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and they always put me right. Since my own marvellous rescue from premature usefulness and suffering I have recommended these pills to many persons variously afflicted and have yet to hear of the first instance where they have failed to give good results where they were fairly tried."

It is such endorsements as these that give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills their great popularity throughout the world. Neighbors tell each other of the benefits they have derived from the use of these pills and where a fair trial is given the results are rarely disappointing. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills go directly to the root of the trouble, they create new, rich red blood, stimulate the nerves to healthy action, thus bringing health and strength to all who use them. Sold by all dealers in medicine or sent post paid on receipt of 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

TOLD OF THE MARINES.

A marine captain, desiring to reprimand some chronic growlers in his corps, arranged for complaints to be made after morning parade. During parade, having previously noted the grumblers, he ordered them to tighten their helmet chin-straps by four links. Of course they obeyed. When complaint time came the men could not open their mouths!

Faith, the cap'n's an aisy man intirely, said one, whose sense of fun was proof against tightened straps, givin' us iv'rything we ast for the mornin'!

An orderly officer, on a day when chin-straps were loose, asked the stereotyped question:

Any complaints?

Yes, sir, the spuds ain't done, answered the marine.

What? said the subaltern.

The spuds, sir, repeated the man.

What does he mean, sergeant? asked the puzzled young officer.

Oh, he be ignorant, sir, returned the sergeant. He means taters.

## HE THOUGHT IT WAS A TROM-BONE.

A parish beadle was lately much exercised at the appearance of a strange old gentleman, who, when the sermon was about to begin, took an ear-trumpet, in two parts, out of his pocket, and began screwing them together.

The beadle watched him until the process was completed, and then, stealthily going up, he whispered:

Ye mauna play that here, if ye dae, I'll turn ye out!