

Maida's Secret.....

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

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS—Guy Hartleigh leaves England to find his long lost cousin in San Francisco. Maida Carrington, an actress in that city, is pestered by genteel loafers amongst whom is Caryl Wilton who proposes and is rejected. She learns the story of her mother's betrayal.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

She let her head fall upon her breast, and for a while there was no word spoken between them. The mother was thinking of the man who had moved her with false promises, and the daughter, with a shudder, was thinking of the man who had stood in that very room, saying to her much the same words that other false man had said to her broken-hearted mother. And as she thought, a detestation of all men came over her. She had been half inclined to let her heart soften to the man who had pleaded his cause so nobly and tenderly. She could see now that it was only a trap he was setting for her, just as long ago her father—she winced at the thought—had set a trap for the loving heart of her mother.

"Mother," she cried, with a new ring in her voice, "I will not falter. I will carry out your behest with a heart as cold as his own was when he ruined your young life."

"Will you, Maida?—will you?" was the glad, eager cry. "Hear me. Your father is known to the world as Sir Richard Hartleigh. He married a Constance Faulkner. She was a beautiful girl, and she loved him with a passionate devotion, only equalled by his for her. Heaven helped me when I seemed powerless to help myself. He was of a madly jealous temper, and he suspected his young wife, after five years of happiness, of unfaithfulness with a friend of his. He killed the man, and the wife fled from him, fearing him, even though she was innocent. He was too angry at first to try and find her, but afterward he learned in some way that she had been true to him, and he tried to find her. I had been waiting for this time, and I watched over the fugitive woman, and in one way and another I made her believe that he was seeking her to take from her her little daughter. He put detectives on her track, but each time that they found her I would send her away and they would lose her. The wife he loved has lived the same outcast life as the woman he betrayed, and the husband and betrayer has suffered agonies of remorse all these years. I have educated you so that—Oh, oh, Maida, brandy! There, there; I cannot last long. I—must—tell—you. Nearer, Maida! I—have educated—you—More brandy! I cannot—swal—Oh!—remember—promise—remember—oath!"

The wrecked and ruined life was gone, leaving a legacy of woe to the bright young life, hardly yet out on its journey.

Ah! well, you may weep, Maida Carrington, for the twin brothers of discord have entered your heart—hated and distrust. And only by purification in the crucible of love shall peace enter your soul.

CHAPTER IV.

A week after the events of the last chapter the people of San Francisco had something to talk about. Already they had learned that, in consequence of the death of her mother, Maida Carrington would not return to the stage for a few days; and then, just as the time set by her manager for her return came, there was an additional sensation that she had disappeared. With this, by some singular chance, was whispered the fact that Caryl Wilton, the handsome young Englishman, had disappeared also. He had paid his bet without a word of explanation, and had not been seen afterward. It was learned, however, that it was he who had taken the part of Romeo on the last night of Maida Carrington's appearance, and the good people of San Francisco, with all the acumen which distinguishes the public in its relation to the stage, saw at once that the young lady had broken her mother's heart by running away with the profligate young nobleman. You see, they recognized his nobility by his conduct.

For once at least, however, the public was wrong; for, whereas Caryl was in the northern part of California hunting grizzlies, the young lady was on her way across the plains in a stage, having preferred that route to the one by water, which was accounted dangerous then, by reason of the fever raging at Panama.

The great transcontinental railway was not then finished, though it extended some distance out of San Francisco. As far as it went Maida rode on it, and then exchanged it for the swaying, lumbering stage, with its eight horses.

The stage was crowded, although there was but one other of her own sex in the company. This lady was young and beautiful, but the charm of her face was not in its beauty,

but in its sweet, gentle expression, that told of a mind at peace with itself and all the world. And yet it was not a weak face. It was full of self-reliance and cheery courage; and Maida, with her wretchedness fresh upon her, was attracted by it. She sat at the farther end of the stage, and could not talk with her, but she exchanged smiles and glances occasionally and finally, at supper-time, when they all alighted to eat at the little station, the two came together with such a smile of recognition, as only those who have travelled the weary miles of the stage route can comprehend.

"Do you ride all night?" asked Maida, as they sat down to the rude meal together.

"Yes, I am anxious to have the journey over. Do you?"

"Yes; like you, I do not enjoy the journey enough to wish to prolong it."

"It is a hard ride," said the stranger, doubtfully. "I have been over the route once before, and know what it is. I hope you have plenty of wraps, for we shall get into colder parts before the night is spent."

"I, too," answered Maida with a smile, "have been over the stage route before, and am prepared. I was about to warn you. I wonder if we could not sit together in the stage. It will be less lonely if we have each other to say a word to once in a while."

Maida did not ask the name of her companion, because she did not care to tell who she was, lest her name should betray her as the actress of whom all San Francisco was talking. And the other young lady, feeling as if by instinct that Maida did not wish the question asked, proved her delicacy by not volunteering her name. They became none the less good friends, and fell asleep in the swaying coach with shoulders touching and hands clasped.

How long they slept neither could have told, but the night was far advanced when they were awakened by that sound so dreaded by every overland traveler before the great railway spanned the continent—a man's voice speaking from the roadside. There was no mistaking the sound. It was a gruff, pre-emptory voice, and it said:

"Throw down that box!"

"Road agents!" whispered Maida, and she and her new-found friend drew closer together.

"No box here," growled the driver. Let go them horses. Let 'em have it, boys!"

The last was evidently addressed to the guards, who had mounted the stage as soon as darkness came on. There was a click of the hammers, and then a jeering laugh from the road.

"Doctored!" was the exclamation from the roof. "Duck, and go it!"

Although the words were in the slang of the road, the people in the stage had no difficulty in comprehending what it meant. Indeed, the actions of the men on the stage and of those in the road explained themselves without the help of any words. The words seemed rather involuntary, for they were simultaneous with their actions. The whole dialogue was sharp and quick, and the startled passengers were hardly awake to the situation when they realized that the guns of the guards having been tampered with, they had determined to lash the horses beyond the control of the detaining hands at their heads, and make the attempt to run the ambush. Every head was bent to shelter at the words of the guards. There was a furious rocking of the coach, cries, oaths, and reports of guns, and the coach came to a dead stop.

"Fight for your lives!" shouted one of the guards, and on the instant all the men in the stage rushed out pell-mell.

"Let us fly!" whispered Maida.

The other merely pressed her hand and rose from her seat. Under the cover of the darkness, and crouching low to avoid the bullets which were whistling through the air, the two slipped out of the stage and made for the thicket bordering the road. They had scarcely reached a place of safety when Maida felt the hand in hers relax its hold.

"A little farther," she whispered. "I am wounded. Leave me and save yourself," came the gasping answer.

"Where are you wounded?"

In the side. A bullet struck me as I stepped out of the stage. Leave me. I am afraid I am mortally hurt. I am getting so weak. Go, go! I—cannot move."

She sank almost fainting from loss of blood. Maida knelt by her side and tried to coax her to try to walk a little farther where they would be more likely to escape the sight of the ruffians, capture by whom would be far worse than death. The poor girl made an effort to rise to her feet, more to please Maida than from any hope of saving her own life. Maida put her arm about her, and, with wonderful perseverance and courage, helped her through the

thicket until she felt they were far enough from the road. There she made a couch with her own heavy shawl, and covered the fainting girl with the one she had worn over her shoulders.

"How good you are," whispered the suffering girl, taking Maida's hand in hers and softly caressing it. "I knew you were good when I first looked at you in the stage."

"Does your wound pain you now?"

"It burns as if there was a coal of fire on it."

"I hear water running near us. Will you mind if I leave you to find it so that I can bathe your wound?"

"How good you are. I am not afraid."

By the sense of hearing Maida groped through the underbrush, and, finding the stream, wet her handkerchief and returned to the sufferer. The dawn was beginning to break by this time, and Maida could see sufficiently well to lay aside the girl's clothing and see the wound. It was an ugly looking sight, and the blood, which had saturated all the under part of the gown, was still flowing. It seemed a hopeless task, and the girl realized it, for she said, in her patient way:

"It is useless. I know I am dying. I can hardly speak, and my breath comes hard."

And then, as Maida tenderly washed and bound up the wound as well as she could with the means at her command, she drew her nearer to her and whispered with her failing breath:

"Will you tell me your name now? I would like to know it. You have been so kind to me."

"Maida Carrington."

"The great actress?" with a smile of pleased surprise.

"Yes. And what is your name? Have you no word to send to your friends?"

"I have no friends in all the world. Would you like to know my story?"

"You are not strong enough to talk. I can hardly hear you now."

The dying girl smiled feebly in acquiescence, and whispered in the ear bent low to her lips:

"You will find a book—book in my pocket. It—will—tell—you—about—me. Name—Constance Faulkner."

She smiled, shut her eyes, and Maida, looking at her in that dim light, saw her grow unconscious. But she did not move from the presence of death she saw hovering there. She sat and gazed with a sort of horror, and at last covered her face with her hands and wailed:

"My sister! my sister! I could not have hated you, and I had sworn to wrong you; for, oh! I know it, it was what my mother meant."

The face before her was cold and white now, and as she placed her hand on the heart, she found its beating stilled. She raised her eyes to heaven with an agonized look, and then threw herself over the inanimate body, sobbing like a soul wrecked. But by and by she calmed herself and dried her eyes. She looked for a few sad moments at the fair young girl, so lately full of loving life, and then with a harder look upon her beautiful face, leaned over her and took from her pocket the book spoken of.

She took nothing else, but rose with averted eyes, and with a shudder turned away, and fled like a guilty creature. Which way she went, or how long she had no defined notion. There was but one thought in her mind, and that was to get away from the dead girl whom, even in death, she was bent on wronging. She kept repeating to herself that it could not matter to her now, since she was no longer living, and that the vacant place in the far-away English home was as much hers as it had ever been Constance's.

Was she not the elder daughter? Had the law any right to deprive her of the place she was determined to take? And she argued with herself and thought of her mother, dead so far away from her native country, her heart hardened, and she became indifferent to everything but the success of her plan.

She sat down in the desolate forests of the Sierras; she read the little book she had taken from her sister. And as she read the tears flowed, for it was the mirror of a gentle, lovely life, made only sweeter by the hardships it had undergone, and at each recital of some new and unexpected trial, coming at a time when peace seemed at last to have settled on them, Maida sobbed harder and harder, for she knew that which the dead girl had never suspected—that the wronged woman, lying in her grave in San Francisco, had been the cause of it all; that the mother of the girl now living had wrecked the life of the girl just dead.

But the gentle, unrepining spirit of the dead girl had not moved Maida's mother to any softer feeling for the man who through it all had been living in ease, luxury, and, as she thought, indifference. If she pitied the woes of the fugitive wife and the innocent child, she was all the more confirmed in her hatred of the cause of those woes, for she saw in her mother only the instrument in the hands of fate, and visited on the man the whole of the indignation and bitterness she felt.

She read the little record of Constance's life as a sister might and should, and then she read it as an avenging woman, conning its dates and occurrences with all that wonderful capacity for remembrance which her training as an actress endowed her, and entering into the life of the dead girl so that she might fittingly play the part when the time came.

And she did it then and there, in that strange spot, far from any human eye, because from that moment she buried Maida Carrington and resurrected Constance Faulkner. It was henceforth the child of shame who was dead, and the child of wedlock who lived.

She rose from her study, for it was study, and hard study, too, and dragged herself, weary and fainting with hunger, through the silent forest. How long she went thus she never knew, for she rested and walked alternately until night came on again. And then she still walked. She was footsore and famished, but her wonderful spirit and will power kept her up, even after she had lost all sense of pain in the very excess of suffering.

When darkness came on she would have dropped and rested her weary limbs on the soft leaves, but the call of the puma and the wild-cat could be heard waking the echoes of the vast solitude, and with a shudder she kept on. At last she came upon the stage road, and that put new courage in her heart, and enabled her to drag herself on with more hope.

She could but go on and on now, and she did so. By and by she thought she saw a glimmer of light. What it was or whence it came, she did not stop to ask herself. It was a light, and though it were to lead her to the very scoundrels who had robbed the stage, she would go on. Indeed, it came to her, even in the state she then was in, that there was really something in common between herself and those men, for had they not killed her sister, and so put her in the way of avenging the wrongs of her mother and herself?

She drew nearer to the light, and saw or understood in some way that it came from a window. She stumbled more than once, and as she lay on the earth she tried to cry out for help, but her throat was too dry, and her strength was too spent, to enable her to emit more than an indistinct murmur, and she was forced to rise to her feet again and stagger onward.

But the light was nearer at every step, and at length she could make out the dark outlines of a cabin. A few more steps and she would be saved. She lifted her hands thankfully, and rushed forward with what strength she had left. It was the last effort of exhausted nature. She was not yet on the threshold of the door when her head began to swim. She uttered a faint cry for help, and fell headlong to the earth.

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But faint as the cry was it had been heard; and a moment later the door of the hut opened and a young man, with a pistol in his hand, stepped out on the threshold. He looked around for an instant with a puzzled look, and then his eyes fell on the prostrate form on the ground. He stooped and lifted her as tenderly as if she had been a child; and Maida Carrington lay in the arms of Guy Hartleigh, who had come this far in hot pursuit of his cousin, whom he had traced to the ill-fated stage.

To be Continued.

A STARTLING CONFESSION.

Almost Incredible Story of Murder Told in a French Court.

A strange and almost incredible story of murder has been told to a French army court-martial in Algeria. For the last year or so there has been much agitation in Germany over the murder in Koenitz of a student named Worsler. It was attributed at the time to the Jews and was seized on by the anti-Semites as additional proof of the existence of ritualistic murders. But, as might be expected, nothing came of the case except the prosecution and conviction of some of the witnesses against the Jews for perjury. The murder itself was not explained. Recently a German soldier in the French Foreign Legion, serving in Algeria, was put on trial for making away with his equipment. He excused himself by saying that he had been about to desert, as he was afraid he was going to be arrested for the murder of Worsler, whom he had killed. His story was that at the time of the crime he was in Koenitz and in great want. On the day of the murder a man offered him money to go to the synagogue. There he found some masked men who ordered him under pain of death to kill a young man who was asleep in the place, evidently under the influence of drugs. He did as he was bid, and cut up the body, the blood from which was drained into a silver vessel. Then the money was given to him, also a sealed letter which if in need, he was to show to any Jew he might meet. He used the letter in Breslau and Frankfurt-am-Main, and then, fearing arrest, entered French territory, ultimately enlisting in the French Legion.

His story, extraordinary and horrible as it is, is very circumstantial and correct as to dates and place. He has been condemned to six months' imprisonment, and the authorities are to make a thorough investigation.

My dear, said young Mrs. Jellus, I thought you ought to know—there's a married man who is violently in love with me. What? he cried. Who is he? If I tell you will you give me those ear-rings I wanted? Yes, Who is it? You.

DOCTORS BAFFLED

BY THE CASE OF MRS. HARRISON, OF ORANGEVILLE.

She Was Completely Run Down—Racked With Pains in the Back, Head and Limbs—Again Rejoicing in Good Health.

From the Sun, Orangeville, Ont.
Many cases are constantly being brought to light of persons being cured by that wonderful remedy—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills—after doctors have failed to be of benefit. Among them may be noted the case of Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, a well known lady who resides in the near vicinity of Orangeville, Ont. A reporter of the Sun hearing of Mrs. Harrison's wonderful cure called at her home to inquire into the facts of the case. Mrs. Harrison said she was pleased to be able to testify to the great curative powers of these pills. She said: "For some years I have been a constant sufferer. Just what to call my disease I do not know; even the doctors were unable to diagnose it. I was completely run down. I had racking pains in my head, back and limbs. I was unable to secure sound sleep, and on arising in the morning would feel as tired as before going to bed. My stomach was in a bad condition and the least movement caused my heart to palpitate violently. Doctors' treatment failed to be of benefit to me and I was in a very discouraged state when a friend advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Thinking that they might relieve me a little I procured a supply and began taking them according to directions. From the first I could see that they were helping me, and by the time I had taken half a dozen boxes I was free from the ailments that had made my life miserable. It is now several years since I took the pills and not the least sign of my old trouble has since shown itself. I would strongly urge the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for any person who has a weak or run down system and I am sure they will not fail to be beneficial."

To those who are weak, easily tired, nervous, or whose blood is out of condition, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills come as a blessing, curing when all other medicines fail and restoring those who give them a fair trial to a full measure of health and strength. Sold by all dealers in medicine or sent by mail, post paid, at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

CONTROLLING KITCHEN ODORS.

Odors are subtle, withal searching. In dealing with these in the kitchen an ounce of prevention is worth at least a ton of cure. The heavy smell of stale grease, most clinging and most offensive of all, comes more than anything else from slopping or sputtering over, which a very little care in range management prevents. The acrid smell of burnt or scorched things is positively painful—so much so that a cook's first lesson ought to be that the fire was given for cooking, not burning. Leaving unwashed pots and stewpans to dry and simmer on the range is a fruitful source of ill-odors, easily remedied. Dissolve two pounds of washing soda in a gallon of boiling water and keep a bottle of it handy. As you empty cooking-vessels pour in soda water an inch deep, shake it well all around the sides and leave until washing time. If the pots and pans keep warm, so much the better—the soda will do its work more perfectly. Onions, turnips, and all the cabbage tribe may have their scent somewhat abated by a little care in the boiling. The odor comes from their essential oils, which volatilize. If the vegetables are prepared some hours before they are wanted and left to soak in weak, salt water, rinsed, and put over the fire in fresh cold water, they throw up this essential oil largely in the form of steam. Let them come to a boil before putting in the salt and skim very clean. After the salt is in, add a dash of cold water—it will throw up a second scum, which must be removed at once. Cook all such vegetables uncovered, a lid strengthens the odor tenfold and makes it more offensive.

Another preventative is a bread crust, very hard, and very stale. Drop it into the water just as it strikes a boil and let it stay ten minutes, then skim out. Most of the oil will come with it—there: the spongy crust will have kept it from vaporizing. Cauliflower not quite fresh, always smells tremendously. The best thing for it is a scald in weak, salt water, before the cold soaking. If the heads are big, cut them into pieces, so as to make sure of removing every bit of discolored rind.

Now, sir, said the cross-examining counsel, be careful! Do you swear that this is not your handwriting? I'm quite sure it ain't! was the reply. Does it resemble your writing? I can't say it does. Do you take your oath that this writing does not resemble yours? Yes, sir. Now, sir, will you kindly let me see a specimen of your handwriting? No, sir, I won't! Oh, you won't, eh? And why won't you? 'Cakse I can't write.

England has, on an average, 66 gales a year.