

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 by Sir Richard Hartleigh. Sir Richard's child, Constance, whom Guy is to see and is taken to Hartleigh Hall by Guy.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Are the ponies ready, Guy?"
"Yes, sir. Shall I send for Constance?"

"Not on any account. She is dressing, and I will not have her hurried. She has a little need of the aid of the toilet as anybody well could have, but I like to see her come in with that composed, queenly air of hers, looking as if dress were the last thing she had thought of. And it is only because she is always so faultlessly dressed that she can look so."

She came down this morning dressed, as her father had said, faultlessly; but it was not because, as he thought, she gave any great care to her toilet, but rather because she had the instinct of good taste, which enabled her to subordinate her clothes and give them a character instead of taking one from them as many women do, at the expense of seeming overdressed.

She smiled brightly at her father, and courteously at Guy, and the latter turned away with a sigh, while the former advanced and took her hand, with the words:

"If I did not know better, I should think you had the Graces for hand-maidens."

They were going to a garden party at Vyner Castle. For two weeks, as Sir Richard had foreseen, the Hall had been besieged by all the aristocracy of the county, who had come to see the suddenly recovered daughter of Sir Richard Hartleigh. And now the first of a series of festivities in her honor had been prepared by Lord and Randolph Vyner, and the whole county, headed by the Duke and Duchess of Beldeira, was to be there.

The garden party was the result of a conversation between the little Lady Gladys Vyner and her mother. They had been to see the fair daughter of Hartleigh, and had come away with fixed emotions. Neither spoke until the carriage was well away from the Hall. Then said Lady Gladys:

"What do you think of her, mamma?"

"She is very beautiful, and a true Hartleigh."

"Yes; and there seems to be no reason for the talk that she has not been brought up as a lady."

"No; her manners are absolutely perfect. Blood alone could not do it. She has had the education necessary to a woman of fashion."

"Have you heard it said that she and Guy are to be married?"

"His Grace of Beldeira had it from Sir Richard himself."

"Why did you not tell me before?" and the little lady with the angel face and heavenly blue eyes flashed a glance at her mother that told a story of some temper hidden away somewhere under all that sweet prettiness.

"Now, Gladys dear, don't be unreasonable. What was the use of telling you?"

"It would have saved me the mortification of discovering for myself that Guy had no eyes except for her."

"I would not give another thought to Guy, my dear."

"I did not say I would. Did you notice that she evaded any question that had any reference to her past life?"

"I cannot say that I did."

"There will be no end of fetes, receptions, balls, and parties given in her honor, no doubt."

"Sure to be; Sir Richard is too important to be neglected. Besides, the Duke is so very fond of him. They were companions in their youth."

"What are you going to do, mamma?"

"I had not given it any thought, dear."

"Why not give a garden party?"

"A very good idea. I will."

"Issue the invitations at once, so that we will be the first to show our good-will."

"Certainly, dear, if you wish it," answered Lady Vyner, fondly. "Nothing could be in better keeping. We are the nearest neighbors and it will fall naturally to us to be the first."

And so they were the first to draw Constance from the Hall. It was a glorious summer day on which the garden party was to be held, and the sight that greeted the eyes of Constance as she drove her spirited little ponies to the Castle was a very pretty one. Lady Gladys, with lawn-tennis racket in her hand, ran to greet the guest of the day.

"I am so glad to see you, dear. You must take my play at tennis, and you must play, too, Mr. Guy. Oh, I can't take any excuse, for I

know you are getting one ready, Miss Constance. You really must play."

"But, unfortunately, I don't know how."

"They were walking across the lawn now, and Lady Gladys had her arm affectionately around her companion's waist.

"Don't know how?" and there was a singular inflection in the girl's tone.

"No; I have never learned the game, though I do not doubt I shall like it when I do learn."

"Of course you will. Why don't you get Guy to teach you? He is a splendid player—the best we have."

"I shall watch you play, and sometime I will get you to show me how."

"I will do that now. Come. Gentlemen, Miss Hartleigh will take my play, and I will show her the game."

Constance, with the readiness of one who has made a study of posturing, knew how to learn without awkwardness. Indeed it was not long before there was an expression of incredulity that she had never played before. Lady Gladys herself said:

"Oh, you must have played before. Why, to say nothing of your play, which is quite as good as my own, one must have lived entirely out of the world not to have learned lawn-tennis."

Constance turned her dark, searching eyes down on the little creature and studied her face with its innocent blue eyes and guileless manner.

"I have an enemy here?" she asked herself. "I am not deceived by the child's simplicity; but why should she dislike me? I will watch her. A man I may deceive, but a woman, even such as this, is more to be dreaded than ten men."

"I have lived out of the world, you know," she said aloud, without betraying a particle of annoyance.

"Oh, I thought you had spent your time in travelling," and the blue eyes sought the brown ones with a very pretty assumption of innocence.

"And so I have, and that is, no doubt, the reason why I have not learned to play tennis."

The brown eyes were inscrutable, and the blue ones turned away with just the ghost of a flash in them. They had learned nothing, and Lady Gladys did not dare to carry her inquiry any further.

"Oh, here is his grace!" she exclaimed. Have you come to admire Miss Hartleigh's playing, your grace?"

"I am prepared to admire anything Miss Hartleigh does," answered the duke, gallantly.

"In that case," said Constance, laughingly, "I shall take care not to try anything in the presence of your grace that I am not sure of doing well. And as the game is finished I will take your grace's arm and listen to you for I can always listen well when I have eloquence at my ear."

"What flattery! It deserves a punishment. I shall refuse you my arm and turn you over to a younger man. Here is my nephew, Lord Algernon Lintel. Algy, come here."

Constance glanced up and became conscious of one of the most exquisite faces she had ever seen. It had in it nothing of manly strength, but it was full of a sweetness and refinement seldom met even in a woman. It had lines in it that told of pain suffered, but there was nothing to indicate anything but submission and resignation. There was an infinite pathos in the large violet-blue eyes and in the delicate, sensitive lip, but there was cheerfulness, too, and Constance was won by the face, even before her womanly pity was aroused by the sight of the frail body and crippled limb which went with the rare face.

"Algy, this is Miss Hartleigh. I turn her over to you as a punishment for using a man's weapons. She flattered me, Algy."

Algy looked into the beautiful face which then was in its sweetest phase, for it was filled with soft pity, and his large eyes lighted up eagerly.

"If Miss Hartleigh will permit herself to be disposed of so summarily, I shall be happy as well as flattered."

It was not said with an air of gallantry, and Constance did not receive it as such. She answered with her rare smile:

"I have just received my first lesson in lawn-tennis, and I shall be glad to sit down somewhere and watch the others."

"If you would rather walk about, it will not tire me," he said, with frank simplicity. "I am not strong, but I am not as frail as I look. Besides, this is one of my best days. Shall we walk?"

"Not now, please. I want to become acquainted with you, and we can talk better if we sit."

"Does that mean that you think you will like me?"

She turned her eyes on his face, so full of an eager sincerity, and answered, with a faint smile:

"You are quick in demanding a declaration of intentions."

"But I liked you at once, and it seemed to me that you liked me as

quickly. I am not dangerous, you know," he glanced at his crippled limb, "and you may like me as much as you can. I am sure that you and I can understand each other. We are in sympathy. I don't need pity for my misfortunes; everybody who is strong and well pities me; but there are not so many who can comprehend that the soul has longings independent of the body. Perhaps I tire you. I am not morbid, though I may seem so. I think I am happier than many who think they have more to be happy for."

They were sitting now, and she laid her hand on his and said, earnestly:

"I know just what you mean. I did like you at once, and I hope we shall be friends."

"If you hope so, we are friends. Now that we are friends, let us know more about each other. You know me, I fancy. I am Algernon Lintel, Marquis of Beldeira, and heir to the Dukedom of Beldeira; a great deal for such a poor wretch as I, is it not?"

He laughed pleasantly as he spoke, and she smiled as if she could comprehend his feeling. He recognized her sympathy, and, in the same merry way asked:

"How came you to be Miss Hartleigh? They say you are Sir Richard's daughter. Oh, I ask your pardon. I have said something wrong."

"Not so. I have been separated from my father for many years, and now I am returned home again."

She felt his honest, searching eyes fixed on her, and she felt uneasy, though not in the least resentful. He listened to her, and, when she ceased to speak, said, earnestly:

"We can help each other, I am sure now. You have suffered; I am afraid you suffer now. Who can tell? I may be as much service to you as you to me. I do not like self-appointed prophets, but I have a feeling that some day I can help you. If ever I can, will you let me. And will you forgive me for having spoken as I have?"

Maida listened to him with a kind of terror. It was to her as if he was reading the story of her misery, past and future. She pressed her hands over her eyes, as if she would shut out the picture he had conjured up. Then she withdrew her hands and with a sad smile, answered softly:

"Yes, I have suffered, and I suppose I must still suffer some; but it is mostly a thing of the past, and I do not think of it if I can help it."

"Forgive me for what I have done."

Maida answered absently, and would have changed the conversation had she not been relieved of the necessity by seeing Guy approaching with Lady Gladys on his arm. She instantly assumed command of herself, for she had a strange feeling that she was to be out to the test. She had begun to look upon Lady Gladys as an enemy.

CHAPTER IX.
The face of Lady Gladys was a picture of contentment and happiness as she approached Maida leaning on the arm of Guy, and talking to him in her pretty child-like way. When they were near enough, Maida could hear her saying:

"We must ask Algy if it is true."

"What are you going to ask me," demanded Algy.

"There is a rumor floating about that you are thinking of theatricals."

Algy laughed in his pleasant way, and answered:

"Why, Guy, they might accuse either you or me of that at almost any time and not be far wrong, now might they not?"

"I believe they might, Algy," returned Guy, placing his strong but shapely hand with a look full of affection, on the shoulder of the other; "but perhaps there is more in this than a mere rumor. You don't deny the impeachment."

"Soft impeachment is what you should have said," interjected the voice of the duke, who had come up unobserved, "for if Algy is soft about one thing, that is theatricals."

"Abuse Guy, too, uncle; he is as bad as I am," laughed Algy.

"You might not believe me," went on the duke, turning to Maida, "but Algy has made himself popular with these theatricals, for which he gets all the credit, and for which I pay, and get no credit at all."

"Why not?" demanded Algy, with a glance full of affection at the old nobleman, whose greatest pleasure he knew it was to see him enjoy himself; "you have the money."

"And I suppose you mean to imply that you have the taste?"

"And so he has, and nobody is better aware of it than you," interposed Lady Gladys. "What we want to know is, if we are really to have the theatricals. Are we, your grace?"

"If you wish it, and Algy has made up his mind, no answer is needed," answered the duke, bowing quizzically.

"Are we to have them, Algy?" persisted Lady Gladys.

"If you will give us the benefit of your talent, Lady Gladys."

"You know I shall be only too glad, if you will select something I can play."

"How would Juliet suit you?"

"You know I can't play that. I want a comedy part, and Mr. Guy will play too, won't you?"

"Not I. My part is stage carpenter, isn't it Algy?"

"Always. Guy is a carpenter, and general factotum to my stage manager and scene painter."

"And I am treasurer," said the duke, with a grimace which only made them laugh.

"A most honorable post," retorted Algy.

"Honorable enough, but not lucrative. But what part is Miss Hartleigh to take in the theatricals?"

"I will be one of the noble army of appreciative spectators," answered Maida quickly, for she had seen whether the conversation was tending, and was determined to avoid playing if she could.

"Oh, no. Don't say that," cried Algy. "I have been thinking ever since we sat down here together, that I would have you for Juliet."

"Oh, I couldn't," she answered hastily, the memory of the last time she played the part flashing through her mind.

"Please don't refuse," urged Algy, with so much feeling that she was turned from her purpose of refusing peremptorily, and only answered:

"But how can I? I know how difficult a part it is, and it is little short of presumption to think of attempting it."

"There, Miss Hartleigh," cried the duke, laughingly. "It is quite evident you are new to private theatricals, or you would never refuse a part because of its difficulties. The usual plan is to seek the most difficult part, and go at it with all the confidence of genius or ignorance—both are equally bold."

"Don't pay any attention to him," said Algy. "I would not permit him to stay around at all if it were not that he is occasionally useful. Please play Juliet for me, I have set my heart on it, and when I set my heart on anything I am always humored, am I not, uncle?"

"Always. Let me add my entreaties to his, Miss Hartleigh, for I really would like to see a good Juliet on the amateur stage for once, and I know you would make a good one."

"There!" cried Algy, triumphantly. "That is the first nice thing I ever heard uncle say about private theatricals, past or to come. Now you will surely play the part, won't you?"

"I think it is only another reason for refusing more urgently," answered Maida, with the vain hope of evading the issue by a little badinage. "If I don't play he will always think I could have done so; but if I do I shall disappoint him, and then I shall have lost all prestige with his grace."

"Ah!" exclaimed Algy, here comes Sir Richard. Sir Richard, we are trying to coax your daughter to take the part of Juliet in the theatricals we are getting up. Lend us the aid of your persuasion, won't you?"

"Perhaps there are reasons," suggested Lady Gladys, softly, "why Miss Hartleigh would rather not play."

TO be Continued.

A HARD LIFE

Mental and Physical Life of Mail Car Clerks Unremitting.

The life of a railway mail clerk or route agent at the best is not easy. He travels under a constant strain and is subject to unremitting mental and physical hardship. He is not always overworked, but he must be ever alert, expert and accurate. The business of a continent depends on the correctness of his instantaneous mental processes and his rapid manipulations—a letter "mishriven" may break a heart or burst a bank or ruin a railway corporation.

The lurching of cars going at tremendous speed around sharp curves; the continued succession of efforts to maintain equilibrium; the monotonous vibrations terribly destructive to nerve tissue, to spinal column and to brain texture, are the daily and hourly concomitants of his ordinary work. Probationers often relent and go back to their former duties. One aspirant for employment in this field was assigned to a notably vigorous route. He never finished his first trip; he went half way, bought a ticket for home, and returned as a passenger. Replying afterward to some questions as to the labor involved, he replied: "Lifting and unloading 200-pound pouches, shaking out contents, arranging same, removing pouches, locking same, carrying on mail matter, re-arranging sacks, then going over same work continuing same 17 hours, without rest, with trains flying round curves and slinging you against everything that is not slung against you."

Vigor, vitality and resolution are essential in a beginner as well as keenest intelligence and unwearied spirit of application. But the physical qualities are slowly sapped and undermined by such steady exertions of duty and the mental qualities are proportionately deteriorated.

Hence the railway mail system is a huge Gorgon, incessantly, cruelly, devouring specimens of the best manhood of the nation. Under present conditions it must continue to demand and devour, in order that the currents of trade and the tides of civilization may continue to flow. Suspend the man-wrecking process a single week for needed universal rest and social chaos would ensue.

Bridget, I am tired of your carelessness. Only look at all that dust lying about on the furniture; it is six months old at the very least. Bridget (very dignified): Then it is no fault of mine. You know very well, mum, that I have been with you only three months.

A Child's Suffering.

HER MOTHER FEARED SHE WOULD NOT REGAIN HER HEALTH.

She Was First Attacked With Rheumatism and Then With St. Vitus' Dance—She Was Unable to Help Herself and Had to be Cared for Almost Like an Infant.

(From the Orangeville Sun.)

Among the much respected residents of Orangeville is Mrs. Marshall, who lives in a pretty little cottage on First street. For some years her twelve-year-old daughter, Mamie, has been a sufferer from rheumatism combined with that other terrible affliction—St. Vitus' dance. In conversation recently with a reporter of the Sun Mrs. Marshall told the following story of her daughter's suffering and subsequent restoration to health.

"At the age of eight," says Mrs. Marshall, "Mamie was attacked with rheumatism from which she suffered very much, and although she was treated by a clever doctor her health did not improve. To make her condition worse she was attacked with St. Vitus' dance, and I really gave up hope of ever seeing her enjoy good health again. Her arms and limbs would twitch and jerk spasmodically and she could scarcely hold a dish in her hand, and had to be looked after almost like an infant. While Mamie was in this condition a neighbor who had used Dr. Williams' Pink Pills with beneficial results in her own family advised me to try them in Mamie's case. I had myself often heard these pills highly spoken of, but it had not occurred to me before that they might cure my little girl, but now I decided to give them to her. Before she had completed the second box I could see a marked change for the better, and by the time she had taken five boxes all trace of both the rheumatism and St. Vitus' dance had vanished, and she is now as bright, active and healthy as any child of her age. Some time has elapsed since she discontinued the use of the pills, but not the slightest trace of the trouble has since made itself manifest. I think therefore, that I am safe in saying that I believe Dr. Williams' Pink Pills not only restored my child to health, but have worked a permanent cure."

Rheumatism, St. Vitus' dance and all kindred diseases of the blood and nerves, speedily yield to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and the cures thus effected are permanent, because this medicine makes rich, red blood, strengthens the nerves, and thus reaches the root of the trouble. These pills are sold by all dealers in medicine or will be sent post paid at \$2.50 a box or six boxes for \$12.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

HE DIDN'T GET EVEN.

Some people are philosophers enough to accept defeat gracefully; others nurse their wrath and spend much time trying to get even.

A man came to a Chicago hotel for one day, and he took dinner outside with a friend. When he went to pay his bill he found that he had been charged for the meal. He protested strongly.

The clerk tried to explain that the American plan was based entirely upon time, and, if he chose to eat elsewhere, it was his look-out; but the man would not be pacified. He asked whether dinner was still on, and was informed that it lasted until 9 p.m.

"Then I'll go and tackle it," he exclaimed. "I've eaten one dinner already, but I'm going to get my money's worth out of this old house, or bust!"

He rushed into the dining-room, grabbed a bill of fare, and ordered everything he could think of, his sole idea being to get even. What he couldn't eat he messed up so that it would be of no use to anybody else. When he got through the waiter handed him a bill for \$3.75.

"What's that for?" he asked in surprise.

"Your dinner, sir," said the waiter.

"But I've already paid for it in my bill," he protested. "I'm staying here on the American plan."

"Then you should have gone to the other dining-room," said the waiter; "this is the European plan case."

The man paid the bill and walked out, farther away than ever from getting even.

DIGGING FOR TIMBER.

In Tonkin, Indo-China, there is a timber mine in good working order. In a sand formation at a depth of from fourteen to twenty feet, a deposit of trunks of trees has been found, and from this deposit the people dig timber. It is procured in good condition, and is used for making coffins and troughs, and for carving. The trunks are many of them three feet in diameter and forty-five feet long, being apparently the remains of fir trees which were buried thousands of years ago by an earthquake. There is an extensive forest in this sand formation, and the timber, although it has been buried so long, is not in the form of coal. This somewhat strange fact is accounted for by the peculiarly resinous character of the wood and the sandiness of the soil. Access to the mines is obtained by gangways.