

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 seeking, dies, and Maida impersonates her and is taken to Hartleigh Hall, where she becomes the idol of the household. A fete is given in her honor at Vyner Castle during which it is suggested that she take part in some amateur theatricals. Mildred Thorpe, an unemployed American girl in London is exhausted by her fruitless efforts to obtain work. After securing engagement as country church organist she is about to faint when she is assisted by Carl Wilton who is struck by her likeness to Maida Carrington.

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

Mrs. Parker had not been gone long when Francois, followed by Dawkins, returned. As an indication of the extreme respect in which the latter bore Mr. Wilton, he carried with his own hands a tray on which was arranged a dainty little dinner.

"I told Monsieur Parterre that it was for you," he said "and he took especial pains. I hope it will be to your satisfaction."

"Thank you, Dawkins. And now, if you will renew your promise not to reveal the fact of my presence, I shall eat and sleep in happiness."

Dawkins promised and went his way, while Caryl sat down and began to enjoy his dinner with an easy mind. His horror of private theatricals was not at all feigned, though his expression of his feeling was somewhat exaggerated. Still he was really overjoyed at the thought of having escaped the boredom of having to sit through a dreary performance such as his experience had taught him was likely to be given.

He ate his meal with a languid satisfaction, thinking dreamily the while of the adventure he had had in the park that morning, and from that passing to the far West of the American continent, and going over again the details of his meeting with that fair creature who had spurned his suit so scornfully, and whose image he could not drive from his mind. He could not bear any sort of human companionship when he was in the midst of such thoughts, and he now turned to his valet and told him he might go down and look at the performance, taking care that no one who knew him should see him and so betray the presence of his master there.

As soon as Francois was gone Caryl turned again to his dinner, but with a distaste for it now; for when he consciously set himself to think of Maida Carrington, he felt himself bound to check the tendency and to do that put him out of tune with himself and everything else.

He threw himself back in his chair, pushed the table from him and lighted a cigar. A hurried rap fell upon the door.

"Come in," he called, with a sort of irritation at being disturbed again.

Lord Algy, panting from his unusual exertion, hastened across the room to his side, holding out his hand and crying:

"Is it really you, Caryl?"

"Hello, Algy, old man! How are you? Who the deuce betrayed me?"

"Simmons told me you were here. I never was so glad in my life to see you. You are coming down, of course."

"Nothing of the sort. I had no business to come without giving you warning, and so I am going to do penance by going to bed as soon as I finish this cigar. Now, don't say a word. I am determined to deny myself the pleasure. As a matter of fact, I am not here at all; I am on my way and shall not arrive until tomorrow morning."

"What nonsense!" answered Algy, laughing. "What does it matter? I say, Caryl, are you very tired?"

"Tired? Algy, you don't know the meaning of the word. I am so tired that if you were to offer me a handful of diamonds for every step toward the door, I wouldn't be able to stir a step. Go, Algy—leave me to my fate. You are very kind, but it must not be. Farewell! Do not let me detain you. You must be needed down stairs."

"But, Caryl, I want you awfully; you must come down, and—"

"Never!" answered Caryl, with a mock tragic air. "I am not here, and I cannot come down."

"But you must, Caryl. You won't refuse to help an old friend out of a scrape, now, will you?"

"Don't talk in that pathetic way, Algy, or you will make me weep. I cannot go down, and it will only rend my heart to persist in refusing you. If I were here it would be different, you know; but being away, I must refuse to do anything so utterly impossible."

"But Caryl—"

"But, Algy, think of what you are doing. Why don't you consider that

I am not here in the first place, and if I were here I would be too tired, too weary to move. Now, Algy be a nice boy, and go away."

"I can't go away without you, Caryl."

"Well, if you must spend the night with me, sit down and have the appearance of being comfortable. Take a cigar. No? Oh, I forgot; you don't smoke. Glad of it, Algy, for it is a bad habit."

"Now, see here Caryl; I am in real distress, and only you can help me. It is positively unkind of you to chaff me like this when I want your serious attention."

"Well, go ahead," sighed Caryl. "Now, don't say it like that. Do be a good fellow, Caryl. You see I am in a bad way about my play. One of my men has sprained his ankle and can't play."

"Please don't."

"An act of Providence," murmured Caryl.

"Pleas? don't."

"I will try not to."

"You know Manville—Handsome Manville. He was to have been the Romeo, and now that he is laid up, there is nobody to take the part."

"The audience, in their gratitude, ought to present him with a silver cup as a token of their joy at the deliverance."

"The audience will be deeply disappointed if the play doesn't come off. And that is why I have come to you. I want you to take the part."

"What! I take the part? Algy, my child, you are losing your head. Oh, how sleepy I am! Good-night, old man."

Caryl yawned behind his hand, and stretched with every indication of extreme drowsiness.

"You must play Romeo," repeated Algy, eagerly and coaxingly. "I know you can do it. I've seen you act. Do you remember you did it at Lady Mainwaring's two years ago? You played Romeo there, don't you remember?"

"I was not as conscientious two years ago. I would not do murder, even on a Romeo now. Good-night."

"And I know you have not forgotten the lines. I know what a memory you have. Come, Caryl."

"No, Algy; I will be more merciful than you. I will not do this thing. Away, away! I would sleep. Ask me anything in the morning."

His bantering words and evident determination not to be moved, drove poor Algy to despair. He would not try any more, but, with a really sorrowful air, turned and walked toward the door. His grief was so real that even Caryl, who was very fond of the invalid boy, was moved by it.

"I say, Algy," he cried, "don't go away looking like that. You'll make me feel as though I had done a heinous thing."

"If you only knew the fix I was in."

"Don't I know? As if I had never seen the projector of amateur theatricals before. I tell you, Algy, it is the usual retribution. I'll tell you what to do—turn the whole thing into a ball."

"You know, I can't do that."

"Then make a comedy of it, and let it go on without Romeo. Tell the audience he was offered an engagement by a rival manager. That is a grand idea. Do it, Algy."

"Please don't, Caryl. It is nothing to you, but it is everything to me. My life is not quite as full of events as yours. I suppose I am childish."

"By Jove, Algy, I am a brute! I'll not say another word. I'll do it. Take me down. Forgive me, old fellow."

"I knew you would. You can't be mean even if you try. Thanks. I'll have the make-up sent with Winkleman. You won't have a thing to do. He will do everything. And she will be so glad! Or, anyhow, I shall be glad for her sake. You'll hurry, won't you?"

"Good gracious, Algy! Who is she and what relation does she bear to this dreadful matter?"

"She is the Juliet. And a lovelier Juliet never walked the boards. You will be inspired only to look at her. I say, you do know the lines, don't you?"

"You said I did yourself, only four minutes ago by the watch, and now you ask me to commit myself."

"Well, but you do, now don't you?"

"Ye-es, I guess so. But, really, I think I ought in common humanity to say that I forget."

"What a stroke of luck it was that you came here so opportunely. Now, we will have a Romeo—a Romeo fit for the Juliet. I am crazy to see you two together."

"For goodness' sake, Algy, who is this Juliet?"

"Miss Hartleigh, Sir Richard's daughter."

"Didn't know he had such a thing."

"Oh, it's a long story; but she's beautiful, and I am certain she can act."

He opened the door, and as he did so a burst of applause came floating up the hall. He turned eagerly to Caryl:

"That's it exactly—being done. And we will do poor Romeo."

"Oh, I know what you want. You are fishing for compliments. Well, you deserve them. You are the best Romeo on the amateur stage I know. The audience will go wild over you."

"Good-by. That will do. You may go now. Send up your man with his paints to beautify me. I will try to keep in the same mind while you are away."

Algy hastened down stairs and burst into the green-room. All was bustle and stir; the last act but one had just been finished. Lady Gladys stood in the centre of the room with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes. She had overcome her nervousness and played her best, and had been applauded to the seventh heaven of delight.

Close beside her, arranging the flowers in her hair, stood Maida, a placid smile of admiration on her lovely face.

"Did I really do it passably?" inquired Lady Gladys, eager for more and yet more compliments.

"Beautifully! Admirably!" murmured the group, like a chorus, from which Maida's clear, bell-like voice rose low and distinct.

"You played remarkably well," she said, with genuine admiration. "I have never seen an amateur play it better. Rest a while. Go away from her please. Remember this is the trying act."

In her readiness to serve Lord Algy, who, she knew, was feeling desperately about the mishap to Romeo, Maida had involuntarily undertaken the role of stage manager, and had worked with such intelligence that every one had readily obeyed her. And for the nonce Lady Gladys forgot all about her paltry envy, and was really grateful for the advice and help which were so freely given her.

"Tell me," she said, hurriedly. "You seem to know all about it, though I don't know why. Is there nothing I can alter—nothing? Do tell me if there is."

Maida smiled at the eager tone, and answered:

"There is one thing," she said. "You should not turn so much toward the audience when you are speaking to the other characters. Forget all about them when before the footlights."

"Oh, but that is not so easy. You wait until you go on and you will see. The sight of all those faces looking at one is enough to take anybody's wits away. They fascinate me, and I must look at them."

It was at this point that Lord Algy burst into the room, crying:

"It's all right. Such a chance. A Romeo almost worthy of our Juliet." He smiled at Maida, who had turned to him with a look of inquiry the moment he entered the room.

"He will be down in time for the play. Are you disturbed at the idea of having to go on with a new Romeo, Constance?"

She sat down on a bench and he took a seat by her side. He was so flushed with excitement that she looked anxiously at him and fanned him gently with her fan.

"No," she answered, composedly; "I fancy we shall manage somehow. He has played the part, you say?"

"Yes, he plays it well. I don't know but he is as good as any professional."

"Then it won't make any difference. I know his lines anyhow, so that if he should be a little rusty I can prompt him."

"How good you are about it, Constance? Most women would have had a tantrum, and refused to play at all. But you don't seem to have any self-consciousness about the matter."

"Oh, fie!" she answered, laughing. "Do you think there is but one way to flatter a woman, and that by abusing the rest of her sex?"

"But you are different."

"And you are tired out. Do you sit here and let me go superintend the last act. I fancy you can trust me. I have carried the thing through so far, and it won't come to much harm if I do the rest."

Lord Algy watched her as she gave directions in her composed way, and admitted that he could only spoil things by interfering.

"By Jove!" he muttered; "she goes about it as if she knew the whole play as well as her own. But I must go back to Caryl, or he may play me a trick yet."

He had already sent the famous Winkleman up with the costume and the cosmetics and paints, and when he entered the room he still found Caryl still keeping up his whimsical complaints, but submitting to the operations of the make-up man with a good grace.

Algy waited until the toilet was complete, and then, looking at his watch, declared there was no time to lose.

"Then let us to the breach, dear friend," said Caryl, with a suitable misquotation. "If the slaughter is ready for the lamb, the lamb is ready for the slaughter."

Down the stairs they went together, and Algy did not know whether to be offended or to laugh at the despairing remarks of his new-found Romeo on the subject of amateur theatricals in general and of this one in particular. As it was easier to laugh, he did that; and so they went toward the green-room, the one full of gibes and the other laughing.

Was there no premonition on either side of the green-room door of what was going to happen?

CHAPTER XIII.

It was time for the curtain to rise, and the actors were only waiting for the return of Lord Algy. The scene on which Lord Algy had spent so

THE GORDON COLLEGE AT KHARTOUM.

The work of civilizing the Sudan continues steadily, since the natives, freed from the necessity of self-defence, are beginning to engage in the nobler arts of peace. The Sirdar, in view of the better sanitary conditions obtainable at Khartoum, is encouraging its trade rather than that of Omdurman, and it is probable that Khartoum will gradually become the more important city of the two. Our picture represents a group of men engaged in the ancient art of brick-making. Men undertake the actual manufacture, but women, as is usual in the East, perform the humbler duty, carrying the bricks



Native Helpers in the Work of Building the Gordon Memorial at Khartoum.

much of his time and of his uncle's money was set, and the audience, having refreshed itself at the lunch bars which Lord Algy had set up for its benefit, was eagerly waiting for the next play, for which they had been prepared to expect great things from the encomiums of the duke upon the new Juliet.

Maida, who had retired to her dressing room after the close of the other play, had come out again, and was now the centre of attraction.

"Don't you feel nervous?" asked Lady Gladys, eying her with a smile of mingled admiration and envy. "I feel as though I had been through a fiery ordeal."

"I don't think I am nervous," answered Maida with a faint smile, as it came over her what a small thing it was to her to have to face an audience. She bent her head over her bracelet, which had come undone. Half a dozen eager hands flew to her assistance, and she was surrounded by tall figures in Florentine costumes of the finest materials; not cotton velvet and machine lace, such as would be found on the real stage, but silk pile and antique point; not paste jewels, but costly gems, diamonds and rubies and emeralds, flashing on fingers and sword belts.

It was a strange scene, full of richness and color; and its centre-piece the observed of all observers, the tall, graceful figure in white satin, her lovely face full of high-born dignity, and yet supremely girlish and innocent.

Those who stood looking at her, enjoying the beauty of the picture, marvelled at the intense calm of the girl, who, while the hearts of the rest beat against their satin and velvet covered sides, stood waiting for the call-boy's summons.

Suddenly, as the orchestra began playing that vague, never-ending kind of music which they are able to leave off at a moment's notice, the door opened and Lord Algy came in. All turned toward him except Maida, who was talking to the Mercutio.

"We are only waiting for you, Lord Algy," said some one, as the group swayed to and fro.

"And here I am just in time and here is my Romeo."

To be Continued.

THINGS YOU CAN'T DO.

You can't stand for five minutes without moving if you are blindfolded.

You can't stand at the side of a room with both of your feet touching the wainscoting lengthwise.

You can't get out of a chair without bending your body forward or putting your feet under it—that is, if you are sitting squarely on the chair and not on the edge of it.

You can't crush an egg when placed lengthwise between your hands—that is, if the egg is sound and has the ordinary shell of a hen's egg.

You can't break a match if the match is laid across the nail of the middle finger of your hand and pressed upon by the first and third fingers of the same hand, though it may seem easy at first sight.

CURIOUS COTTAGES.

Near Wakefield, in Yorkshire, England, a most comfortable cottage has been made, so far as the walls are concerned, of a number of great drain-pipes left by a contractor for years, whilst the roof consists of the refuse of an oilcloth factory. There are in England alone half a dozen cottages, not to speak of many summer houses, made wholly out of old preserved provision-cans. The house of a foreman "winder" of a huge colliery near Barnsley contains five rooms, yet the whole of the outer walls and roof are made of meat and other tins.

when made to the bricklayers. It is of special interest to know that the group we illustrate are engaged in building the Gordon Memorial College. It will be remembered that when Lord Kitchener overcame the dervishes a solemn memorial service was held in the city where Gordon fell, and it was then resolved that Khartoum should have a permanent memento of the man who gave his life in its service. At Lord Kitchener's suggestion it was agreed that a college for the education of the people to whom Gordon devoted himself would be the most appropriate monument; the building is approaching completion, and should soon be the means of accomplishing much beneficent work.

STRANGE RAILWAYS.

The world's strangest railways are to be found principally in India, America, Switzerland and Ireland. The Loup at "Agony Point," on the Darjeeling Railway, India, is thought to be the sharpest curve in the world; while Mount Rigi, in Switzerland, has no fewer than three railways to its summit. When the Jungfrau Railway is completed it will be the most remarkable one in the world. Its highest station will be 13,668 feet above sea-level, and the cost of this line will be about \$2,000,000. Of the American railways the strangest is the Cripple Creek, where the great timber trestle over which the train has to pass in crossing a chasm, is so curved that the line is made to tip inwardly, and the sensation is terrible to the traveller on a fast train; while in Ireland there is a curious single line railway at Listowel.

ONE ADMIRING CONSTITUENT.

That no man is a hero to his valet is a truism that has come down through a long line of French cynics; but Lord Ripon, ex-Viceroy of India, had occasion to demonstrate that he at least was appreciated by a faithful retainer.

Soon after his return from Calcutta, and when the criticisms of his administration were particularly fierce, Lord Ripon was met by a member of the Liberal party, who said to him, enthusiastically:

I congratulate you on your courage and public spirit in pursuing so large minded and liberal a policy in the East.

Lord Ripon smiled, as he replied: It is good of you to say such kind things of me; but to tell you the truth, I don't believe there was any one in India who really approved of my policy except my old Scotch gardener.

FOR CHINESE SOLDIERS.

Rewards are seldom given for prowess on the battle-field in China, but when they are the most acceptable of them all, from the private soldier's point of view, is a sack of commanding officer of each regiment has power to give as many sacks as rice, valued at three taels. The are deserved, and at the conclusion of every campaign he sends in a formidable bill to the Government for rice. No inquiries are made, nor are the names of the recipients asked for so in nine cases out of ten the officer sells the grain and puts the money into his own pocket, while the deserving soldier, to whom the rice would have meant a good deal, has to go without.

SUPPLY OF GLASS EYES.

Germany and Switzerland produce over 2,000,000 glass eyes in a year; and a Paris manufacturer, with a reputation for finer work, some 300,000. They are made in the shape of a hollow hemisphere, and the utmost skill is required in forming the pupil out of the colored glass. The great majority of artificial eyes are used by workmen, especially those in iron foundries, where many eyes are put out by sparks. It is seldom that a woman has a glass eye.

NOT LOOKING FOR A STAR-GAZER.

Dealer—Here, madam, is a horse, I can recommend—sound, kind—
Old Lady—Oh, I don't want that sort of a horse. He holds his head high.
Dealer—Eh?
Old Lady—I like a horse that holds his nose close to the ground, so he can see where he's going.