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.—Maida Carringford the illegitimate child of Sir Richard Hartleigh, meets her half-sister Constance on a stage-coach in America. The stage is attacked and Constance is wounded. Maida leaves her for dead and goes to impersonate her in England. Caryl Wilton, who knew Maida as a famous actress, meets her at some amateur theatricals in her new home and visits the portrait gallery at Hartleigh Hall.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"We will show you what we have," he said.

They passed out into the hall, the old man gently patting the white hand upon his arm, and looking at the beautiful face as if he had already forgotten the presence of a third person. At the first stair she drew Sir Richard's arm under instead of over hers, so that he should lean on her, with a sidelong glance of loving devotion. Nothing escaped the keen eyes behind them. Having reached the gallery, Sir Richard turned to the visitor:

"But a poor collection, I fear, Mr. Wilton."

They paced slowly along the polished floor, Caryl making a remark now and then which showed his thorough appreciation of the paintings which Sir Richard had gathered. Sir Richard was delighted.

"You are a connoisseur, Mr. Wilton," he said. "That Kneller is a favorite of mine. There are two better specimens in the portrait gallery, but we won't trouble you with family portraits."

"On the contrary, please do. I should especially enjoy looking at your family portraits," and he glanced at Maida with a searching look. "I am fond of physiognomy; there is much to be learned from the study of faces."

Maida's eye? encountered his at this remark with the first touch of defiance which she had exhibited during the morning.

"True, true," murmured Sir Richard.

"Yes," went on Caryl Wilton; "one time, and not so long ago, I used to pride myself on the possession of a retentive memory for faces, and I think that even now I do not easily forget a face."

"Just so, just so," assented the old man. "Yes," he rambled on, pleased with the subject, "and yet identification is a ticklish thing. I have met with some strange cases in my time. I remember one at this moment, a successful attempt at impersonation. I forget the exact details, but the impostor enjoyed the fruits of his fraud, a large estate, until the day of his death. He would have been buried under his assumed title, but remorse compelled him to confess at his last hour. The rogue confessed also that he had never enjoyed a happy moment during all his years of wrongful possession."

"Fear of detection or the return of the right man, I suppose," said Caryl, with apparently placid curiosity.

"N—o: for if I remember rightly, he had murdered the right man, and had, apparently proved his identity so clearly that—— Yes, my dear?" he broke off, for Maida had drawn her arm away, and had emitted a low murmur.

"Is it not very warm up here?" she asked, with a smile so ghastly that even Sir Richard could not help noticing it.

"Yes, yes. How thoughtless of me! And I have startled you with my foolish stories!" broke in Sir Richard, anxiously. "The window Mr. Wilton. Thank you."

For though his own face was no less ghastly than hers and showed evidence of a terrible shock, Caryl Wilton had not delayed to open the window and to return to Maida with a chair. She was going to sink pitifully into it, when she caught sight of his white, distorted face.

A look of startled inquiry shot into her eyes, and was instantly displaced by one of indignant horror. She realized in an instant that her weakness at that moment must have roused the suspicion in his mind that she had committed the awful crime of murder in order to gain the place she held in Hartleigh Hall. She straightened herself, without having touched the chair, and put them both aside, with an air of queenly pride.

"Thank you," she said; "it was only a momentary weakness. I suppose murder is hardly a subject to discuss before a woman. Indeed, I could suppose that a gentleman might find it difficult to even think of it in the company of a lady."

She cast a glance full of scorn and defiance at Caryl, who was too quick to comprehend her moods to misunderstand her meaning, as he answered apologetically:

"It is possible to dread for a moment what it would be impossible ever to believe, even in the face of seeming certain evidence."

"My darling!" exclaimed Sir Richard in a shocked whisper, for it was he and not Caryl who had been guilty of the offence so scathingly rebuked by Maida.

"Oh, papa," she cried, as she realized that the shaft intended for Caryl Wilton had in fact wounded him, "I did not mean you; I was thinking of—of——"

"In fact," broke in Caryl, with a ready invention, "Miss Hartleigh was only rebuking me, and very properly for some views I held on the subject, which had unexpectedly come to her knowledge. The rebuke was really not deserved Miss Hartleigh, for what I said was rather an expression of horror than of belief. The woman I referred to in my mind is the loftiest and purest of women. I hope you will not hold this against me"

"Certainly not," answered Maida, turning from him with an expression of relief, and saying to her father, who was looking from one to the other with a puzzled look. "Forgive me, papa; I took up the cause of one of my sex, against whom I thought Mr. Wilton had been harsh, and I did not intend— indeed, I did not connect—what I said with anything you had been saying."

She put her hand on his arm so sweetly and humbly that Sir Richard forgot everything in the contemplation of her lovely face.

"Let us go back," he said with a fond smile. "Mr. Wilton can see the portraits some other time."

A quick gleam of relief flitted over her face, but, as Caryl noticed, it faded away when the old man went on to say:

"And yet this is the shortest way to your room—for you ought to rest dear. Your exertions of last night have been too much for you."

"Well, I will go, to please you," she murmured, and they passed on.

In a few minutes they came to the entrance of the small gallery at the end of the corridor where the family portraits hung. Here a small corridor led to Maida's room. With a bow to Caryl Wilton, she was turning away on her father's arm, when suddenly, as if obeying an impulse, she stopped, and turning back, said, quickly but quietly:

"No, it is too warm in my room, and I am quite well now. I would rather go on with you, papa, for it is cool here."

"Come, then, Miss Wilful," said Sir Richard, fondly, and they entered the gallery.

Caryl Wilton half closed his eyes in the style of a connoisseur and looked up at the first portrait—a belted knight in armor, with his charger by his side and his squire in the background—and Sir Richard began the catalogue. Caryl seemed deeply interested, gazed, criticised, and admired; shading his eyes and stepping this way and that to get the best light, and appearing to have forgotten the fair presence by his side.

And she seemed as unconscious of him. But both were like a pair of wary antagonists in the arena, waiting for the decisive moment which each knew was coming, and which each was preparing to turn to his advantage.

Little by little they were approaching the pictures of the later Hartleighs, and presently, by all rules, they would come to the portrait of Lady Hartleigh. This Caryl said to himself. That portrait would be the likeness of the old lady he had seen in San Francisco if—if Waida Carringford were in truth the rightful Constance Hartleigh. In a few moments, he told himself that part of the mystery would be solved. For, though the portrait of Lady Hartleigh would have been made many years ago, it would, nevertheless, be sufficiently like the same person in old age to enable him to recognize her.

He longed to turn and look for the portrait at once, but he repressed the impatient desire, and followed the old man's words with every appearance of deep interest. He forced back every sign of impatience from his face, and furtively glanced at the face of Maida. She was pale, but there was an utter absence of emotion on her features; and to him, who by this time had learned to know her moods, this indicated the exercise of her greatest will power. He knew that she was prepared for the impending contest. He felt that he was being cruel, but he told himself that he must conquer or give up the prize.

Sir Richard, in his absorption, noticed nothing wrong with his companions, and rambled blandly on:

"Here we come to the men and women of a later date, Mr. Wilton. A difference, but not of face. The Hartleigh features remain all through. Here, for example, is my great-grandfather—he has the eye of the knight whose picture hangs first. And this lady, my grandmother—well, look on her living presentment!" and he touched the white arm next his heart.

Caryl Wilton turned and looked—looked straight and scrutinizingly at the fair face which, with a distinct touch of bravado, returned his gaze.

"Yes," he murmured, more as if in answer to a criticism of his own than to Sir Richard, "there is the likeness, undeniably."

"You see it," cried Sir Richard, with a tone of triumph in his voice. "I saw it the first night—I—I mean I have always noted it. Constance has the eye of my mother, and my father's mouth and chin. There he stands, as in the flesh, Mr. Wilton; and here, around the corner, my unworthy self."

Caryl turned, not quickly, but with graceful leisureliness; his eyes rested for a moment on Sir Richard's portrait, and then flew to the next. It was there Lady Hartleigh should be. There he should look upon the face of the woman he had seen dying in the little cottage in San Francisco—there he should see the face of that mother by whose side Maida Carringford had stood but a few months ago. And as he looked, a low murmur of surprise broke from his lips, and he turned with undisguised questioning to Sir Richard. Right across the face of Maida he glanced, and looked full at Sir Richard.

And there was something imperative in the look which was rather felt than recognized by the old man. He felt called upon to explain the reason of the closed doors over the face of her who should be looking down on them there.

"This—this portrait is—is closed, Mr. Wilton. It—it is my wife's portrait—Lady Hartleigh. I—I had it closed some time ago—I—I hardly know why, save that it is connected with a great sorrow. You look curious——"

"Pray pardon," murmured Caryl, bowing apologetically, but with no abatement of his air of curiosity.

Sir Richard's face was pale and troubled.

"Yes," he said, after a pause, "you shall see it—why should you not? I—the key"—and a trembling hand went to the waistcoat pocket.

He fumbled for a moment, and then, as if suddenly remembering, turned to Maida, and said:

"The key, my darling, you——"

She raised her eyes, slowly, and looked into Caryl Wilton's with an obstinate defiance, and she did not remove her gaze as she answered her father, in measured tones, as if she had weighed the meaning of each word, and was ready to abide by the result of what she said.

"The key? It is lost. Have you forgotten, papa?"

Sir Richard looked at her with an almost meaningless stare, as if struggling to grasp her idea. Then he said, with marked agitation:

"No, no, Constance, my darling. But it shall be as you wish. The picture, Mr. Wilton, is—is closed—forever."

"Pardon me; I have roused unpleasant memories," said Caryl, addressing the old man, but looking at Maida.

"No, no," went on Sir Richard as if in response to reflections of his own. "I—that is, the picture is closed, hidden—the key is lost. Come, look at Guy. Here is—where is Guy's picture? Oh, here. Is it not good?"

"Excellent," answered Caryl, as calmly as if nothing unusual had occurred. "Very good, indeed. But if I may ask, where is Miss Hartleigh's portrait? I do not see it."

"Not yet, not yet," replied the old man, recovering his composure the moment his daughter became the topic of conversation. "That shall be the crowning point of the gallery Mr. Wilton. I have not forgotten it. It shall be done, and soon. It shall hang next Guy."

Caryl bowed and turned to Maida, with a smile which she had learned to dread.

"I would like to ask a great favor of Miss Hartleigh."

"A favor? And what is it?" demanded Sir Richard.

Maida looked at Caryl with parting lips. She had defeated him once but the victory had been a sore one to her, and she felt as if she had after all, accomplished but little, so imperturbable was he. She felt that a snare lurked behind the request he was about to make, and she would have been glad to refuse at once any and all things he might ask. She felt herself wishing that Guy would come. Perhaps he would help her. She thought she would like to have the support of his true heart at this time. But he was not there, and she must fight it out alone with this terrible man, who seemed bent on having her in his power. So ruthless he seemed too, and yet she could not doubt that he loved her with a madness that only made him the more to be dreaded.

"It is presumptuous, I fear," said Caryl, "but I should deem it a great—a very great favor—if Miss Hartleigh will allow me to try my very mean skill in an attempt—a very poor attempt, I know—to transfer her face to canvas."

"Eh, Constance? What do you say, Constance?" said the old man, turning with a gratified expression to his daughter.

"Pray do not think me presumptuous enough to imagine that I can paint anything fit to hang beside these masterpieces," broke in Caryl before Maida could answer. "I leave that as a worthy task for the greatest artist of the day; but if you would grant——"

"Too modest, you are too modest, sir," said Sir Richard, interrupting him. "This is not the only place in which I would have my daughter's face. I want a portrait in my room—one I can claim as my own. What do you say, Constance?"

A faint flush passed over her face as she found herself obliged to decide a matter which she had no doubt was in some way a trap for her; but she recovered herself, and with a return of her defiant glance looked straight into Caryl's eyes, and answered:

"If you think it worth the trouble."

And his reply was, with an eager light in his dark eyes:

"And my first sitting—when?"

"Oh, we'll discuss that at luncheon, Mr. Wilton," said the old man. "I wonder where Guy is."

"I hear his step now," said Maida.

And, in fact, Guy came bounding into the room, as if unaware anybody was in it. He stopped short at sight of the group, and his frank face darkened when he saw Caryl Wilton standing by Maida, looking down into her eyes with a smile of conscious strength.

Then Caryl looked up, and it seemed to Maida, glancing from one face to the other, that she could see the two men measuring each other, for an impending contest.

And she thought she saw—and she shuddered as she saw it—that Caryl Wilton turned from Guy to her with a look of certainty in his whole manner.

To be Continued.

NEW FOOD FOR CATTLE.

Molasses Is Said To Be Beneficial For Them.

Many agriculturalists in Europe have long been convinced that molasses is an admirable food for horses and cattle, and their conviction is now stronger than ever, owing to certain experiments which have been recently tried, and which have proved eminently successful. Unfortunately, in some countries farmers have practically been debarred from using molasses in this way, owing to the fact that there is a duty on all saccharine material; but now, in France at least, steps have been taken to remove this obstacle, and, furthermore, the French Government has publicly notified agriculturalists that it will do all in its power to aid them in popularizing the new food.

The most notable experiments with molasses have been made by M. Decrombecque, a chemist, and M. Mannechez, a veterinary surgeon at Arras. They assert that chopped hay or grass mixed with molasses is an excellent cure for asthma, and furthermore, that food of this kind neither loads the stomach nor impedes respiration. They also think it likely that during digestion the sugar in the food produces alcohol and they say that, if so, the animal's health is bound to be benefited thereby.

Two other experts, MM. Dickson and Malpeaux, have also made experiments in regard to the effect of molasses on the general health, weight and milk of animals, and they have arrived at the following conclusions :—

First—That ordinary food mixed with molasses quickly increases the weight of sheep, pigs and cows ; second, that animals which are fed in this way give more and richer milk than they did before ; third, that molasses is an excellent food for horses, since they quickly acquire a liking for it, and apparently do not lose any of their strength, the only noticeable change being a slight tendency to stoutness ; and, fourth, that molasses can effectively be used with food of an inferior quality since the animals will then readily eat it, whereas they would not care for it in its natural condition.

M. Albert Vilcoq, a French Professor of Agriculture, says that the French Government is acting very wisely in encouraging farmers to use molasses, but he points out that care should be taken not to give animals too much of it, as, owing to its heating qualities it may produce a deleterious effect if given too often or too abundantly. He says that those animals which are required to do much work or which are constantly in motion should receive a much smaller allowance of molasses than those animals which lead a lazy and sedentary life.

NOT GOING FISHING.

A citizen with a fishing rod over his shoulder was going up the street yesterday when a stranger called out :

Have any luck ?

Fifty feet further on a second inquired :

Are they biting now ?

At the next corner a third stopped him and asked :

I say, what'll you take for a ton of 'em ?

A fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh had their say, and the eighth bore down upon him with :

Look here, old chap, you may laugh at the idea of crossing your bait, but it brings luck and I can prove it.

Speaking to me ? queried the man with the rod.

Certainly.

What do you take me for ?

Why, you are going fishing.

Who said so ?

Haven't you got a fishing rod ?

Suppose I have ? If I saw you carrying a bar of soap home, would I argue that you were going to do the family washing ?

But aren't you going fishing ?

No, sir ! This rod is to knock the sparrows' nests out of the eaves of my house. Funny how many people there are in this world who are interested in other folks' business.

TIRESOME WORK.

May—Mr. Huggard called on you last evening, didn't he ?

Fay—Yes, and he made me very tired.

May—I suppose he tried to kiss you.

Fay—Yes, and every time he kissed me I had to slap him.

WHY BABIES CRY.

Some Useful Hints to Mothers on the Care of Little Ones.

Babies cry because they are sick or in pain, and in almost every case the sickness or pain is caused by some disorder of the stomach or bowels. Fermentation and decomposition of the food produce a host of infantile troubles, such as griping, colic, constipation, diarrhoea, simple fever, indigestion, etc. Proper digestion of the food is necessary to the maintenance of life, and evacuation of used up products and refuse of digestion is necessary to health. The lesson to mothers is, therefore, that the stomach and bowels should be carefully watched, and if baby cries or is fretful or cross, some simple vegetable remedy should be given. Mothers should never resort to the so-called "soothing" preparations to quiet baby, as they invariably contain stupefying opiates. Baby's Own Tablets will be found an ideal medicine. They gently move the bowels, aid digestion, and promote sound, healthy sleep, thus bringing happiness to both mother and child. They are guaranteed to contain no poisonous "soothing" stuff, and may be given with absolute safety (dissolved in water if necessary) to children of all ages from earliest infancy, with an assurance that they will promptly cure all their minor ailments.

For the benefit of other mothers, Mrs. Alex. Lafave, Copper Cliff, Ont., says :—"I would advise all mothers to keep Baby's Own Tablets in the house at all times. When I began giving them to my baby he was badly constipated, and always cross. He is now four months old, has not been troubled with constipation since I gave him the Tablets, and he is now always happy and good natured. Mothers with cross children will easily appreciate such a change. I enclose 50 cents for two more boxes of the Tablets, and will never be without them in the house while I have children."

Baby's Own Tablets are sold by druggists or will be sent by mail, post paid, at 50 cents a box, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Dept. T., Brockville, Ont.

THE MODERN MACHINE SHOP.

A Far Less Noisy Place Than Its Old-Time Predecessor.

"As compared with the old-time shop, with its incessant clatter and din," says a shop superintendent, "the modern machine shop might almost be described as noiseless.

"You used to hear in such places a constant rattling of wheels and a more or less continuous pounding. Now you might go through a big shop from top to bottom and never hear a hammer stroke ; and instead of a general jangle of sounds you would only hear a smooth, uniform hum ; a noise, to be sure, but not half so much in volume as that heard in the old-time shop, and actually musical as compared with it. All this is due to vastly improved modern methods of work and enormously improved modern machines.

"In old times they used to chip and file all flat surfaces. You can imagine what sort of racket such work as that must have made. Then we got the metal planer, which did the work better and, of course, at far less cost, and which gradually did away with most of the chipping and filing. The planer can screech some now ; but that doesn't begin to make the noise it used to, and the noise it does make is not to be compared with that of the chippers and filers.

"The old-time gear wheels were far more rattly and noisy than those of to-day. Extensively used in machine shops in one way and another, such wheels were formerly all cast. Nowadays gear wheels for use where such accuracy is desirable, are made by automatic gear-cutting machines, which cut the teeth on them with mathematical accuracy. Such wheels as these are themselves beautiful productions of machine tool work ; and when they come to be brought to use they make, of course, with their perfect form and their nice adjustment, one to another, far less noise than the old-time ordinary cogged wheels.

"Another common source of noise in the old-time shop was found in the pounding of work of any sort that was to be turned on arbors in the lathes. There is nothing of that sort, or next to nothing, done in machine shops nowadays, that is, in the shops with modern equipment. Such work is pressed on the arbor, noiselessly, with a compound screw ; or by hydraulic power ; or by steam power ; the work being pressed off the arbor, when finished, in like manner.

"In old times when they wanted to cut off a bar of steel they used to send for the blacksmith and his helper, who would come in with sledges and chisel and pound away at it. Now they would send such a bar to the cutting-off machine and have it sawed off, with no noise at all.

"In short, the work in machine shops is nowadays more and more of it being done by wonderful labor and time-saving automatic machine tools that are comparatively noiseless in operation ; and, in handling the work, power is brought more and more into use, and used more and more noiselessly ; and so, with these improved methods and appliances, the modern machine shop is far less noisy than its old-time predecessor."