

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. He is passionately fond of her and to be often in her presence asks leave to paint her portrait. Guy, a nephew of Sir Richard, to avoid seeing Wilton's admiration for the girl he thinks he loves, rides off and calls on his old nurse. He meets Mildred Thorpe. Lady Gladys a rival for Guy's affections takes steps to uncover Maida's past.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Hartleigh Hall was filled with guests. Dinner was over, and there had been music, and many of the guests had seated themselves at the card tables. Maida had wandered out on the verandah where she thought to be alone, but she had not been there many seconds when she heard a step behind her, and, looking around, saw Caryl Wilton.

"Pardon me for disturbing you," he said, "but I have a word to say to you which I had hoped you would forgive. To make it clear to you, let me suppose a case. Let us take the case of a woman who is in danger. She has an acquaintance—say Lady Gladys for example—who is jealous of her, and wishes her harm. Then there comes a man from America, who tries to appear very simple, but who has a secret understanding with Lady Gladys. I don't know what harm the man can do, but I am convinced he seeks to do harm. What I would like to say to my dear friend is, that if she has any papers or other valuables which could possibly betray her, she had better destroy them that is all."

He had not looked directly at Maida as he said this, or he would have seen that she was growing ashy pale. Perhaps he knew the probable effect of his words, and preferred not to look at her until he had finished. "How can I help you in the matter?" she asked in a low tone.

Then he turned and looked her full in the face.

"If nothing suggests itself to you, then there is nothing you can say to help me," he gently said.

"No," she answered, almost coldly, "nothing suggests itself to me. I do not understand you. I hope you will excuse me if I leave you. I wish to walk."

Maida stepped swiftly across the terrace, holding her shawl closely to her, the moonlight falling on her face, which showed no trace of nervousness or fear—nothing but a sort of vexation at having been spoken to about a matter which she had been trying to forget. To-night, save for a few moments of terror, as Caryl Wilton revived memories of the past, she was at peace with herself and with the past. He was fanciful. What could there be in any secret between Lady Gladys and the American—any secret which could hurt her. Even Caryl Wilton could not be sure that she was not the rightful daughter of Sir Richard, for, after all, she was the only daughter he had living, and she would not let him think he could move her at will.

"How exquisite," she murmured, looking up at the sky. "I shall surely have time to take a look at the church. How can they find any pleasure in sitting in those warm rooms, while all this calls to them in vain?"

Communing thus, she opened the wicket gate, and stood among the tombs, gleaming white in the moonlight. And, as she looked around, a smile played about her lips.

"Certainly I am not nervous," she said. "Are there many women with a taste like mine who would stand here without a shudder? How quiet it all is. I wonder how the church looks inside?"

She was passing the porch to look in at one of the windows, when she saw, to her astonishment, that the door was half open. With a smile at the thought of the extent to which Sir Richard's anger and amazement would have gone had he but known it, she pushed the door open and entered.

She stood in the nave, admiring the weird beauty of the moonlit pillars and carving, and then walked slowly around the aisles. A vivid ray of moonlight fell upon a large white marble tablet, and attracted her attention to it. The tablet was no curiosity to her, but she always looked at it whenever she entered the church. She knew the lines by heart, but she read them again:

Sacred to the Memory of
AGATHA,
Wife of Sir Richard Hartleigh, Bart.,
Born June 6, 18—
Died December 11, 18—

"To Lady Hartleigh" she murmured. "Yes, that is the world's way. A huge, glaring tablet of stone is offered as an atonement for a life of wrong-doing, as a compensation for years of suffering. Such atonement and

compensation as it is, she has had paid to her; but what atonement has been made to that other suffering woman, betrayed and deserted? And yet, do I ask what atonement? I forget. An atonement has been made and it is I who have snatched it—I, the daughter of the betrayed, wronged, deserted woman. Atonement, do I say? What atonement could be more complete? I, the child of the deserted woman, and in the place of the rightful heiress, bear the proud Hartleigh name, wear the family diamonds, can marry, if I choose, the heir to the title. Mother," and she stretched out her arms, with a passionate sob; "have I not already kept my oath? What more can you demand? What more? It is enough? Mother, be satisfied!"

With a gesture almost of appeal, she let her arms fall to her sides, and with bent head moved from before the tablet.

As she passed into the deep shadow cast by one of the pillars, a sudden thrill ran through her—one of those strange sensations by which we are convinced that, hitherto unsuspected by us, we feel that some other human being is near us.

She heard nothing, saw nothing, yet she felt that something strange and mysterious was near her. For the first moment since leaving the terrace, fear seized her. An intangible horror reached out a hand from the unknown and touched her.

White as death, not trembling, but with every limb as rigid as the stone figures on the tombs, she leaned against the pillar and stared before her.

A minute—it might have been an age—passed and she was about to make a great effort to recover her presence of mind, when, with a horror no tongue can describe, she saw a white figure gliding from the chancel.

With noiseless, regular movements it seemed to float down the aisle, now lost in the shadows, now white and distinct in the moonlight.

Cold beads of sweat stood on Maida's face. With startling eyes, she watched, powerless to move a limb or utter a cry; one thought alone possessing her, in the shape of a vague prayer that the Something might not approach her or turn its face.

Slowly the white figure reached the nave, and was gliding toward the door, when all at once, when it came opposite the tablet to the memory of Lady Hartleigh, it threw up its arms and turning full toward Maida wailed mournfully:

"Mother! mother!"

With an awful horror Maida saw that the face was that which she had last seen lying cold and rigid in a far-away land.

For one moment she stared in speechless horror, and then started forward with a wild cry.

The face turned from the tablet with an expression of horror, not less than Maida's own, stared an instant, and then, with a wail, cried:

"You? Is it you, then?"

The cry rang in Maida's ears like a call from the dead, and, with a piercing scream, she sank senseless on the cold stones.

CHAPTER XXV.

It seemed to Maida that an age had passed when she recovered consciousness, and slowly, fearfully, raised her head, and looked at the spot where she had seen the accusing face. She gave a great gasp of relief when she realized that she was alone. She looked about her with half-fearful scrutiny, and seeing nothing ghostly or human, went to the gate. As she put her hand upon it she heard something move, and looking up saw a figure advancing swiftly toward her. It was no vision, however, but Caryl Wilton. He peered at her uncertainly for a moment, and then, with a gesture of relief, advanced to her side.

"Is it you?" she said forcing a smile. "Why are you here—why do you stare so? Do I look like a ghost?"

"Forgive me," he said, in a low voice; "I could not remain in the house while you were out here alone."

"How long have you been here?" she asked.

"Not more than a few minutes."

"Are they still singing and card-playing?"

"Most of them are gone," he replied; "and I am supposed to have gone. Sir Richard thinks you are in your rooms."

"And Guy?" she asked.

"Guy!" he said, with a frown. "Guy! I passed on the terrace. He looked—well, to put it mildly, tired, and was splashed with mud, as if he had been riding hard. Poor Guy!"

"Why do you pity him?" she asked.

"Because I have a fellow feeling for him—we are in the same boat."

"You do not look tired," she said, with forced lightness.

"Do I not look tired—tired of playing a part, of eating my heart out in silence and dissimulation. Constance—do not take your hand away—I am a changed being. You know what has worked that change; yet I will tell you if I may. Great Heaven! why do you not trust me?"

"Why should I?"

"Because," he said, almost sternly in his earnestness, "because I love you."

She attempted to draw her arm away from his, but he prevented it.

"No, do not take your arm away, do not affect surprise. My love is no new thing to you. Constance—Maida—which name shall I call you?—I love you by either name. My darling!" he murmured, stretching out his hand appealingly, "did you think such love as mine would be blind? I knew you the moment I saw you in England. And I would have saved even you the trouble of knowing that your secret was known, but I was mad with love for you and I could not do that. But if I let you know, I have kept others from the forbidden knowledge. Have I not stepped between you and the prying eyes of envy and malice? And I have not even sought to penetrate that past which you have kept so closely hidden; why I do not know."

"You do not know?" she murmured, as if that was all of his passionate speech she had heard, though in truth she had been thrilled by the eager words.

"As Heaven is my witness I do not know—I do not care to guess. I love you too dearly to care to pry into your secret—if you have one; but still I ask—why do you not trust me?"

"Trust you?" she murmured.

"Yes," he went on earnestly, "why should you not? Do your fear that I would betray you?"

"No," she murmured. "What is it you suspect?"

"I suspect nothing," he responded, almost passionately. "I will not even conjecture, why you, once Maida Carringford, are now Constance Hartleigh. I love you, and at times I have a presentiment that you are in danger; that is enough for me, I am your slave, and would be your protector. Give me the right to protect you. I love you! I love you; be you Maida Carringford or Constance Hartleigh, it matters not to me. It is you yourself, who stand here. Let there be no barrier of mysterious reserve between us. Constance—Maida—what have you to say to me? Do you distrust me?"

And as he stood before her in his passionate entreaty, he clasped her in his arms with nervous energy.

She had stood and listened, the color coming and going in the beautiful face, the light rising and falling in her dark, eloquent eyes.

"No," she said, with an infinite pathos, "but there is none whom I can trust—none!"

"There is some strange mystery which stands as an intangible barrier between us," he said, almost fiercely.

"Yes, I will ask you one question," he broke out, as if with a sudden resolution. "I know that you are Maida Carringford; I will ask you if you are Sir Richard's daughter?"

A spasm seemed to pass over her face, her lips quivered, and her eyes contracted; but these signs of an intense emotion passed in a moment, and, looking him steadily in the face, she sadly said:

"I am Sir Richard's daughter!"

"Thank Heaven!" he said. Then with a swift self-reproach he seized her hand. "Constance—I will not call you by that other name again—forgive me!—I have been a fool. Let me confess how stupendous has been my folly. I—forgive me! knowing you had concealed something of your past life from Sir Richard—I was fool enough to imagine that there was some other and greater motive for that concealment than the natural one—and it was only probable that you should dislike to have your stage life chattered and slandered about by the friends of your new life. You were right, quite right. But why did you distrust me? Why did you refuse to show me your mother's picture—why avoid all mention of the past with which I was acquainted? Could you not trust me? You knew I loved you?"

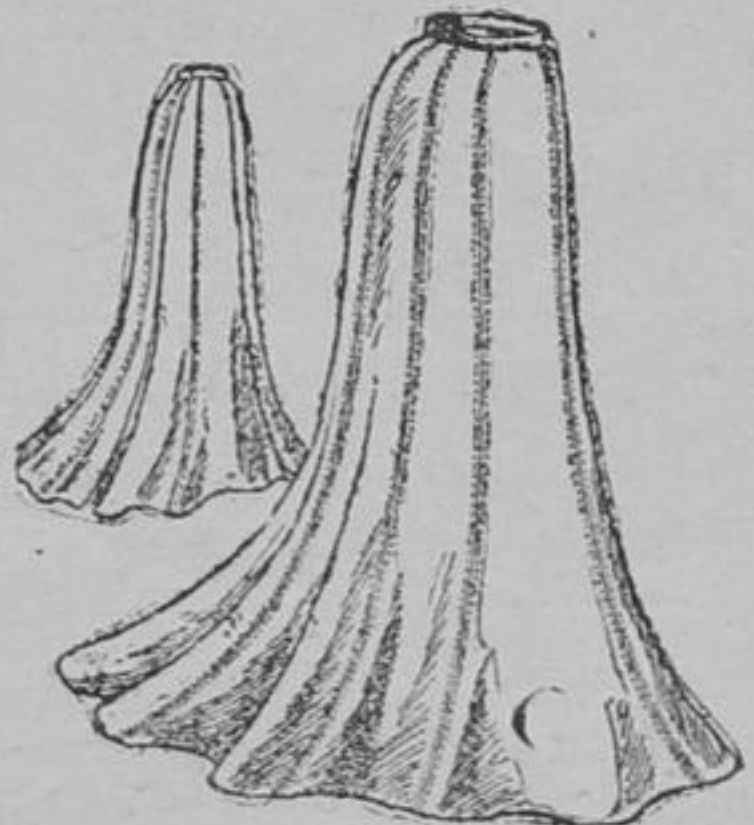
"Yes," she faintly murmured.

"You know I love you now, most truly, most dearly, with all my heart and soul. Answer me, my love, my darling."

With a low sob, she drew her hand from his arm and covered her face. Gathering courage from her weakness he put his arm around her and drew her nearer to him.

"Constance, my love!—my only love!" he murmured.

For a moment the tired head rested gladly, contentedly on his shoulder. Then the remembrance of her tainted name came to her, and, as if stung, she started back, and putting out her



WOMAN'S NINE-GORED SKIRT.

The nine-gored skirt has certain inherent advantages peculiar to itself. It gives a more slender effect than any other style. It adds to the apparent height. It provides ample flare at the feet. Withal it is exceedingly economical.

To cut this skirt for a woman of medium size 8 yards of material 21 inches wide, 7 yards 27 inches wide, 6½ 30 inches wide will be required.



GIRL'S COSTUME.

Simple blouses with gored skirts make the best of all costumes for young girls. This pretty and stylish model is adapted both to school wear and to occasions of mere formal dress; the former when made of sturdy dark-hued material, the latter when of light weight fabrics in pale or light colors. As shown it is designed for service however, and is made of Napoleon blue cheviot with strappings of the same, collar of blue velvet and chemisette of blue taffeta.

The blouse is cut with a plain back, drawn down snugly at the waist, and slightly loose fronts that droop over the belt. The neck is finished with a roll-over round collar, and the chemisette, or shield, renders it high at the neck. The sleeves are in bishop style with narrow pointed cuffs.

The skirt is cut in five gores and is snug about the hips while it places gracefully at the lower portion. The fulness at the back is laid in inverted plaits under which the placket can be finished, or the plaits can be stitched flat as illustrated, and the opening made invisibly at the left front seam.

To cut this costume for a girl of 10 years of age 5 yards of material 27 inches wide, 2½ yards 44 inches wide or 2¼ yards 50 inches wide will be required.

hand to keep him from her, said, brokenly:

"No, no! Do not speak to me—do not look at me! If—if you love me, leave me now, without another word—go! Oh, go, go!"

"Heaven forgive you!" he muttered, hoarsely. "A moment ago I would have sworn that you loved me."

"No, no!" she cried, piteously. "I did not know what I was doing. I ought not to have listened. I—oh, pity me, and go!"

"No," he said, in the sharp tone of great agony, suppressed; "I cannot leave you here. Come!" and he held out his arm.

Slowly, falteringly, she put her hand within it, and with averted head, allowed him to lead her to the terrace.

Within the light that streamed from an open door, he stopped, and allowed her arm to fall to her side. Then he raised his hat, and was going without a word, but he could not resist a last look, and his eye fell thirstily on her beautiful face, so pale and sad, his anguish came rushing to his lips.

"Constance," he said hoarsely, "do not send me away. For mercy's sake do not. Let me stay, and—who knows?—this barrier that divides us may be broken down."

She shook her head, and, though there were no tears in her eyes, her voice was full of them as she murmured:

"Never, never! No power on earth can bridge the gulf that divides us. It is best that we should part. The time will come when you will thank me for letting you go—will be grateful to me for saving you from the pitfall toward which I have drawn you. Go, now," and she held out her hand.

He took it eagerly. It was hot and burning. He passionately clung to it.

"I will go," he said, his dark eyes fixed on her face. "Yes, I will go. If in the coming time you may have need of me, do not believe that my love may have waned, or doubt that I will come as quickly as I now leave you. That time may never come, but if it should, remember that a word, a look, will bring me to your side."

The last words were almost inaudible by reason of his emotion. With a sigh he raised his hand to his lips and kissed it twice, slowly, passionately, and then, was gone.

To be Continued.

A GENEROUS HOSTESS.

Our cook didn't break a dish while she lived with us; but we had to buy new ones when she left.

How was that?

Oh, we think that every time any of her friends visited her she gave them souvenirs.

About the ... House

SOME GOOD RECIPES.

Stewed Steak and Vegetables.—Cut a thick slice of beefsteak, weighing about two pounds, and put it in a stewpan with a sufficient quantity of sliced carrots, turnips and onion, 6 peppercorns, 2 cloves, 6 allspice and a bunch of savory herbs. Barely cover the meat with stock or water, put on the lid and stew gently for two and one-half hours.

Picnic Sandwiches.—Pound the yolks of 3 hard-boiled eggs with 1 oz butter, season with cayenne, add ½ cup grated cheese, salt to taste, and pound all well together. Spread on buttered white bread and cut into fancy shapes.

Yorkshire Tea Cakes.—Sift a scant ½ teaspoon salt with 4 cups sifted flour, and rub into it ½ cup solid butter. Dissolve ½ yeast cake in a little tepid water, and add it to the flour, with enough milk to make as soft a dough as can be handled. Roll into very thin sheets, and cut in cakes the size of a tea saucer, set them in a warm place and let rise until they are three times as thick as they were originally. Bake in a quick oven. As soon as they are done, split each one, butter, cut into quarters with a hot knife and serve at once. These are delicious for breakfast, lunch or tea.

Potato Fritters.—Two cups riced potatoes, 4 tablespoons thin cream, 1 teaspoon salt, a dash of grated nutmeg, 2 whole eggs, yolks of 2 others, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, ½ cup cream and ½ cup sifted flour. Add the cream to the potatoes, salt and nutmeg, set in bowl in ice water, and chill thoroughly. When cold, add the cream, parsley, eggs (well beaten) and lastly the flour. Beat the mixture thoroughly and drop from a spoon into a kettle of smoking hot oil or fat, and fry to a delicate brown.

Maryland Chicken.—Cut chicken into serving pieces, and roll each piece in flour, egg and crumbs. Lay in a well-buttered pan and bake in a hot oven. Baste with butter and water. When done, serve with the following sauce: Two tablespoons butter, 1 tablespoon each of minced onion and carrot, a blade of mace, a bit of parsley and a bay leaf. Cook in a saucepan until the butter has melted, then add ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon paprika, 2 tablespoons flour and ½ cup stock or water.

Grilled Fowl.—Cut the remains of cold fowl into pieces, season with pepper and salt and squeeze over them the juice of ½ lemon. Let stand for three-quarters of an hour. Wipe them dry, dip them into clarified butter, then into bread crumbs and grated lemon peel, place them on a gridiron, and boil over a clear fire.

Cold Fowl in Cases.—Cut cold fowl into dice of equal size and shred a good, firm lettuce into pieces. Cut some thick slices of bread in small squares, and scoop out the middle, leaving walls and bottom an inch thick. Butter these slices, then place in the hollows the chicken, moistening with a little mayonnaise dressing, and garnish with a spoonful of the dressing and the grated yolk of a hard-boiled egg. Place the squares of bread on a platter, mix the lettuce with a little mayonnaise, and arrange it neatly about the bread.

DRINK MORE WATER.

Dark, shadowy, puffy places under the eye are annoying beyond everything to a sensitive woman. They make one look haggard, tired and weary of life. Massage and electric treatment will be found good, but the main part of the work of beautifying must be accomplished by yourself, says an exchange.

Any slight kidney disorder will bring the puffy look, and for that reason, drinking plenty of water is one of the finest remedies known. Sip the water slowly, and do not have it too cold. Three pints a day is not a drop too much. A good way is to sip a big tumblerful half an hour before each meal, and to take another big tumblerful two hours after each meal.

Not one woman among a hundred drinks enough water to keep her system in a healthy condition, anyhow. A sluggish circulation and torpidity of the liver will bring the disfiguring blemishes.

Exercise daily, nutritious food, deep breathing, a quick hand bath with tepid salt water every day, sleep enough to thoroughly rest you, a well-ventilated bedroom—all these are very, very beneficial.

REMEDY FOR LOCKJAW.

To a double handful of peach tree leaves, well crushed in an earthen dish, add 1 teaspoon of salt. Mix well and apply to the wound, renewing as often as necessary, and keep it on as long as the wound discharges. Leaves can be dried for winter use, and soaked and prepared as fresh ones, are equally good. Another remedy, where peach leaves cannot be obtained, is to put wool or feathers on hot coals and hold the wound over the smoke. Both of these remedies have been used, and have no doubt saved life when physicians failed. The leaves are good for animals as well. A man had a horse whose leg was lacerated, and treatment failed, and he was about to kill it, when the leaves were applied and it was saved.