

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED WHITEHEAD
SYNOPSIS

Miss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Louise, established summer headquarters at Annapolis. Anxious to see the girls, she was disappointed. In the morning Miss Innes found a strange note pinned to a chair in her room. The note was addressed to Jack Harton, who was a member of the law firm of Harton, Walker and Armstrong. The note was written by a woman who called herself "Louise Armstrong," whose father owned the country house at Annapolis. The note was signed "Louise Armstrong" and was addressed to Jack Harton. The note was written by a woman who called herself "Louise Armstrong," whose father owned the country house at Annapolis. The note was signed "Louise Armstrong" and was addressed to Jack Harton. The note was written by a woman who called herself "Louise Armstrong," whose father owned the country house at Annapolis. The note was signed "Louise Armstrong" and was addressed to Jack Harton.



Armstrong died insolvent, as I believe was the case, his widow ought to be glad to be rid of so expensive a piece of property." The lawyer cleared his throat. "I am very sorry you have made this decision," he said. "Miss Innes, Mrs. Fitzhugh tells me Louise Armstrong is with you." "She is." "Has she been informed of this—double bereavement?" "Not yet," I said. "She has been very ill; perhaps to-night she can be told." "It is very sad; very sad," he said. "I have a telegram for her, Miss Innes. Shall I send it out?" "Better open it and read it to me," I suggested. "If it is important, that will save time." There was a pause while Mr. Harton opened the telegram. Then he read it slowly, judicially. "Watch for Nina Carrington. Home Monday. Signed F. L. W."

Millinery for All



SO MANY girls are trying their hands upon hat making at home that a few examples of those hats which are likely to be most successful in the hands of the amateur, are interesting just now. These are the hats made of embroidery or lace or Swiss and batiste which have come to show me a dozen big yellow eggs nesting among the bottles. "Real eggs," he said proudly. "None of your anemic store eggs, but the real thing—some of them still warm. Feed them! Egg-nog for Louise!" He was beaming with satisfaction, and before he left, he insisted on going back to the pantry and making an egg-nog with his own hands. Somehow, all the time he was doing it, I had a vision of Dr. Willoughby, my nerve specialist in the city, trying to make an egg-nog. I wondered if he ever prescribed anything so plebeian—and so delicious. And while Dr. Stewart whisked the eggs he talked. "I said to Mrs. Stewart," he confided, a little red in the face from the exertion, "after I went home the other day, that you would think me an old gossip, for saying what I did about Walker and Miss Louise."

PRETTY IDEA FOR DRESS



Materials required: about 7 yards embroidery 18 inches wide, 3 yards founcing, about 6 yards insertion, 1 1/2 yard ribbon, 1 1/2 yard lace for edging collar. Do you want streaked hair of 17 different shades when next autumn comes around? If you do not you must make up your mind to wear a hat during the summer. A bother, you say? Of course. Did you ever know anything connected with keeping fresh that wasn't a bother? And it is not half as hard as spending time and money later getting over the effects of sunburnt hair. Too strong a dose of sun acts on the scalp and then burning just as a hot flatiron scorches linen. If it is impossible for you to wear a hat, oil must be rubbed regularly into the scalp to counteract this drying effect. Remember that the most beautiful hair in the world comes from the peasant women of Brittany, who keep their heads covered with their little white caps.

WEAR HAT IN HOT WEATHER

Important for the Girl Who Has a Dislike for Hair of Different Shades. Do you want streaked hair of 17 different shades when next autumn comes around? If you do not you must make up your mind to wear a hat during the summer. A bother, you say? Of course. Did you ever know anything connected with keeping fresh that wasn't a bother? And it is not half as hard as spending time and money later getting over the effects of sunburnt hair. Too strong a dose of sun acts on the scalp and then burning just as a hot flatiron scorches linen. If it is impossible for you to wear a hat, oil must be rubbed regularly into the scalp to counteract this drying effect. Remember that the most beautiful hair in the world comes from the peasant women of Brittany, who keep their heads covered with their little white caps.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"I Am Very Sorry You Have Made This Decision," He Said. "Miss Innes," she said, "has my stepbrother Arnold gone away?" "What do you mean?" I asked, startled. But Louise was literal. "He didn't come back that night," she said, "and it was so important that I should see him." "I believe he has gone away," I replied uncertainly. "Isn't it something that we could attend to instead?" But she shook her head. "I must do it myself," she said dully. Halsey came to the door at that moment and I could hear him coaxing Liddy for admission to the sick room. "Shall I bring him in?" I asked Louise, uncertain what to do. The girl seemed to shrink back among her pillows at the sound of his voice. I was vaguely irritated with her; there are few young fellows like Halsey—straightforward, honest, and willing to sacrifice everything for the one woman. I knew one once, more than 30 years ago, who was like that; he died a long time ago. And sometimes I take out his picture, with its cane and its queer silk hat, and look at it. But of late years it has grown too painful; he is always a boy—and I am an old woman. I would not bring him back if I could.

CHAPTER XIV.

An Egg-Nog and a Telegram. We had discovered Louise at the lodge Tuesday night. It was Wednesday I had my interview with her. Thursday and Friday were uneventful, save as they marked improvement in our patient. Gertrude spent almost all the time with her, and the two had grown to be great friends. But certain things hung over me constantly; the coroner's inquest on the death of Arnold Armstrong, to be held Saturday, and the arrival of Mrs. Armstrong and young Dr. Walker, bringing the body of the dead president of the Traders' bank. We had not told Louise of either death. Then, too, I was anxious about the children. With their mother's inheritance swept away in the wreck of the bank, and with their love affairs in a disastrous condition, things could scarcely be worse. Added to that, the cook and Liddy had a flare up over the proper way to make beef-tea for Louise, and of course, the cook left. Mrs. Watson had been glad enough, I think, to turn Louise over to our care, and Thomas went upstairs night and morning to greet his young mistress from the doorway. Poor Thomas! He had the faculty—found still in some old negroes, who cling to the traditions of slavery days—of making his employer's interest his. It was always "we" with Thomas. I miss him sorely; pipe-smoking, obsequious, not over reliable, kindly old man! On Thursday Mr. Harton, the Armstrongs' legal adviser, called up from town. He had been advised, he said, that Mrs. Armstrong was coming east with her husband's body and would arrive Monday. He came with some hesitation, at last, to the fact that he had been further instructed to ask me to relinquish my lease on Sunny-side, as it was Mrs. Armstrong's desire to come directly there. I was aghast. "Here!" I said. "Surely you are mistaken, Mr. Harton. I should think, after what happened here only a few days ago, she would never wish to come back." "Nevertheless," he replied, "she is most anxious to come. This is what she says: 'Use every possible means to have Sunny-side vacated. Must go there at once.'" "Mr. Harton," I said testily, "I am not going to do anything of the kind. I and mine have suffered enough at the hands of this family. I rented the house at an exorbitant figure and I have moved out here for the summer. My city home is dismantled and in the hands of decorators. I have been here one week, during which I have had not a single night of uninterrupted sleep, and I intend to stay until I have recuperated. Moreover, if Mr.

DRESS SUIT FOR A CHURCH

Interesting Information Given by the Groom to the Shrinking Bride. They were on their honeymoon—be, all-important; she, timid and shrinking. He intended that she should miss none of the sights as they rode down Broadway, New York, in an open car one hot night, so he called her attention to various points of interest in a very loud voice and with elaborate gesticulation. His ideas, however, were rather hazy as to location, and she looked in vain, at his solicitation, for the Metropolitan tower clock on the Flatiron building, although she assured him timidly that she had seen it. Then, the conductor, at Fourteenth street, volunteered "This is Herald square, where the new Pennsylvania station is to be." After this startling information, given in all seriousness, passengers were even more amazed to hear the bridegroom saying: "Just a minute now and we come to Grace street."

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

The gardener mentioned by Halsey came out about two o'clock in the afternoon, and walked up from the station. I was favorably impressed by him. His references were good—he had been employed by the Innes until they went to Europe, and he looked young and vigorous. He asked for my assistant, and I was glad enough to get off so easily. He was a pleasant young fellow, with black hair and blue eyes, and his name was Alexander Graham. I have been particular about Alex, because, as I said before, he played an important part later. That afternoon I had a new insight into the character of the dead banker. I had my first conversation with Louise. She sent for me, and against my better judgment I went. She held out her hand and I took it between both of mine. "What can I say to you, Miss Innes?" she said slowly. "To have come like this—" "I thought she was going to break down, but she did not." "You are not to think of anything but of getting well," I said, putting her hand. "When you are better, I am going to send you for coming here at once. This is your home, my dear, and of all people in the world, Halsey's old aunt ought to make you welcome." She smiled a little, sadly, I thought. "I ought not to see Halsey," she said. "Miss Innes, there are a great many things you will never understand. I am afraid, I am an imposter on your sympathy, because I—stay here and let you lavish care on me, and all the time I know you are going to despise me." "Nonsense!" I said briskly. "Why, what would Halsey do to me if I even ventured such a thing? He is so big and masterful that if I dared to be anything but rapturous over you, he would throw me out of a window. In fact, he would be quite capable of it." She seemed scarcely to hear my cautious tone. She had elegant brown eyes—the Inneses are fair, and wore to a grayish-green optic that is better for use than appearance—and they seemed now to be clouded with trouble. "Poor Halsey!" she said softly. "Miss Innes, I cannot marry him, and I am afraid to tell him. I am a coward—a coward!" "I sat beside the bed and stared at her. She was too ill to argue with me, and besides, sick people take queer fancies. "We will talk about that when you are stronger," I said gently. "But there are some things I must tell you," she insisted. "You must wonder how I came here, and why I stayed hidden at the lodge. Dear old Thomas has been almost crazy, Miss Innes. I did not know that my stepfather, but the news must have reached her after I left. When I started east, I had only one idea—to be alone with my thoughts for a time, to bury myself here. Then, I must have taken a cold on the train. "You came east in clothing suitable for California," I said, "and like all young girls nowadays, I don't suppose you wear fashions." But she was not listening.



He Looked Young and Vigorous. anything but rapturous over you, he would throw me out of a window. In fact, he would be quite capable of it." She seemed scarcely to hear my cautious tone. She had elegant brown eyes—the Inneses are fair, and wore to a grayish-green optic that is better for use than appearance—and they seemed now to be clouded with trouble. "Poor Halsey!" she said softly. "Miss Innes, I cannot marry him, and I am afraid to tell him. I am a coward—a coward!" "I sat beside the bed and stared at her. She was too ill to argue with me, and besides, sick people take queer fancies. "We will talk about that when you are stronger," I said gently. "But there are some things I must tell you," she insisted. "You must wonder how I came here, and why I stayed hidden at the lodge. Dear old Thomas has been almost crazy, Miss Innes. I did not know that my stepfather, but the news must have reached her after I left. When I started east, I had only one idea—to be alone with my thoughts for a time, to bury myself here. Then, I must have taken a cold on the train. "You came east in clothing suitable for California," I said, "and like all young girls nowadays, I don't suppose you wear fashions." But she was not listening.

Novelty. "I thought you told me you had something original in this libretto," said the manager, scornfully. "Here at the very outset you have a lot of merry villagers singing, 'We are happy and gay!'" "You don't catch the idea at all!" replied the poet, wearily. "The 'g' is soft. It should be pronounced 'happy and jay!'"

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