

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROY WALTERS

SYNOPSIS

Miss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established summer headquarters at Sunnyside. Amidst numerous difficulties the servants deserted. As Miss Innes looked up for the night she was startled by a dark figure on the veranda. Unusually noises disturbed her during the night. In the morning Miss Innes found a strange ink cuff-button in a bag. Gertrude and Halsey arrived with Jack Bailey. The house was attacked by a regular shot and Arnold Armstrong was found shot to death in the hall. Miss Innes found Halsey's revolver on the lawn. He and Jack Bailey had disappeared. The ink cuff-button mysteriously disappeared. Detective Jamieson arrived. Gertrude revealed she was engaged to Jack Bailey, with whom she talked in the library room a few moments before the murder. Jamieson arrested Miss Innes, holding her in a garage. He imprisoned an intruder in an empty room. The prisoner escaped down a laundry chute, and was arrested. A dog found the other half of what proved to be Jack Bailey's cuff-button. Halsey recognized and says he and Bailey left in response to a telegram. Gertrude said she had given Bailey an unopened envelope. Bailey, who was arrested, was taken to the police station. Armstrong wrecked his own bank and could offer no explanation. Halsey's death was announced. Halsey's former, Louise Armstrong, was found at the lodge. The detective said Louise and Halsey had a long talk the night of the murder. Louise was petrified. Louise told Halsey, that while she still loved him she would marry another, and that he would divorce her when he learned the whole story. It developed that for Halsey and Louise were to be married. A powder was found in the bottom of the circular staircase. Louise said she had had a knock at the door and answered. She found a powder on the stairs and she faintly recalled Halsey is suspected of Armstrong's murder.

CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

"Why was Mr. Halsey not present at the inquest?"

The detective's expression was peculiar.

"Because his physician testified that he is ill and unable to leave his bed."

"Ill?" exclaimed. "Why, neither Halsey nor Gertrude has told me that."

"There are more things than that, Miss Innes, that are puzzling. Halsey gives the impression that he knew nothing of the crash at the bank until he read it in the paper Monday night, and that he went back and surrendered himself immediately. I do not believe it. Jonas, the watchman at the Traders' bank, tells a different story. He says that on the Thursday night before, about 8:30, Bailey went back to the bank. Jonas admitted him, and he says the cashier was in a state almost of collapse. Halsey worked until midnight, then he closed the vault and went away. The occurrence was so unusual that the watchman pondered over it all the rest of the night. What did Halsey do when he went back to the Knickerbocker apartments that night? He packed a suitcase ready for instant departure. But he held off too long; he waited for something. My personal opinion is that he waited to see Miss Gertrude before flying from the country. Then, when he had shot down Arnold Armstrong that night, he had to choose between two evils. He did the thing that would immediately turn public opinion in his favor, and surrendered himself as an innocent man."

"The strangest thing against me in the preparation for flight, and his decision to come back after the murder of Arnold Armstrong. He was allowed enough to disarm suspicion as to the greater charge."

"The evening dragged along slowly. Mrs. Watson came to my bedroom before I went to bed and asked if I had any arnica. She showed me a badly swollen hand, with reddish streaks running toward the elbow; she said it was the hand she had hurt the night of the murder a week before, and that she had not slept well since. It looked to me as if it might be serious, and I told her to let Dr. Stewart see it."

"The next morning Mrs. Watson went up to town on the 11 train and was admitted to the Charity hospital. She was suffering from blood-poisoning. I fully meant to go up and see her there, but other things drove her entirely from my mind. I telephoned to the hospital that day, however, and ordered a private room for her, and whatever comforts she might be allowed."

"Mrs. Armstrong arrived Monday evening with her husband's body, and the services were set for the next day. The house on Chestnut street, in town, had been opened, and Tuesday morning Louise left us to go home. She sent for me before she went, and I saw she had been crying."

"How can I thank you, Miss Innes?" she said—"you have taken me on faith, and you have not asked me any questions. Some time, perhaps, I can tell you, and when that time comes, you will all despise me—Halsey, too."

"I tried to tell her how glad I was to have had her, but there was something else she wanted to say. She said it finally, when she had had a constrained good-bye to Halsey and the car was waiting at the door."

"Miss Innes," she said in a low tone, "if—if there is any attempt made to—have you give up the house, do it. If you possibly can, I am afraid—to have you stay."

"That was all Gertrude went into town with her and saw her safely home. She reported a decided coolness in the greeting between Louise and her mother, and that Dr. Walker was there, apparently in charge of the arrangements for the funeral. Halsey disappeared shortly after Louise left and came home about nine that night, muddy and tired, as for Thomas, he went around dazed and sad, and I saw the detective watching him closely at dinner. Even now I wonder—what did Thomas know? What did he suspect?"

"At ten o'clock the household had settled down for the night. Liddy, who was taking Mrs. Watson's place, had finished examining the tea-towels and the corners of the shelves in the cooling room, and had gone to bed. Alex, the gardener, had gone heavily



It Was Thomas.

up the circular staircase to his room, and Mr. Jamieson was examining the locks of the windows. Halsey dropped into a chair in the living room and stared moodily ahead. Once he roused, "What sort of a looking chap is that Walker, Gertrude?" he asked.

"Rather tall, very dark, smooth-shaven. Not bad looking," Gertrude said, putting down the book she had been pretending to read. Halsey kicked a taboret viciously.

"Lovely place this village must be in the winter," he said irrelevantly. "A girl would be buried alive here."

"It was then some one rapped at the knocker on the heavy front door. Halsey got up leisurely and opened it, admitting Warner. He was out of breath from running, and he looked half-ashed.

"I am sorry to disturb you," he said. "But I didn't know what else to do. It's about Thomas."

"What about Thomas?" I asked. Mr. Jamieson had come into the hall and we all stared at Warner.

"He's acting queer," Warner explained. "He's sitting down there on the edge of the porch, and he says he has seen a ghost. The old man looks bad, too; he can scarcely speak."

"He's all of superstition as an old man," I said. "Halsey, bring some whisky and we will all go down."

No one moved to get the whisky, from which I judged there were three pocket flasks ready for emergency. Gertrude threw a shawl around my shoulders, and we all started down the hill. I had made so many nocturnal excursions around the place that I knew my way perfectly. But Thomas was not on the veranda, nor was he inside the house. The men exchanged significant glances, and Warner got a lantern.

"He can't have gone far," he said. "He was trembling so that he couldn't stand when I left."

Jamieson and Halsey together made the round of the lodge, occasionally calling the old man by name. But there was no response. No Thomas came, bowing and showing his white teeth through the darkness. I began to be vaguely uneasy. For the first time, Gertrude, who was never nervous in the dark, went alone down the drive to the gate, and stood there, looking along the yellowish line of the road, while I waited on the tiny veranda.

Warner was puzzled. He came around to the edge of the veranda and stood looking at it as if it ought to know and explain.

"He might have stumbled into the house," he said, "but he could not have climbed the stairs. Anyhow, he's not inside or outside, that I can see." The other members of the party had come back now, and no one had found any trace of the old man. His pipe, still warm, rested on the edge of the rail, and inside on the table his old gray hat showed that its owner had not gone far.

He was not far, after all. From the table my eyes traveled around the room, and stopped at the door of a closet. I hardly knew what impulse moved me, but I went in and turned the knob. It burst open with the impetus of a weight behind it, and something fell partly forward in a heap on the floor. It was Thomas—Thomas without a mark of injury on him, and dead.

CHAPTER XX.

Dr. Walker's Warning.

Warner was on his knees in a moment, fumbling at the old man's collar to loosen it, but Halsey caught his hand.

"Let him alone," he said. "You can't help him; he is dead."

We stood there, each avoiding the other's eyes, we spoke low and reverently in the presence of death, and we tacitly avoided any mention of the suspicion that was in every mind. When Mr. Jamieson had finished his cursory examination, he got up and dusted the knees of his trousers.

"There is no sign of injury," he said, and I know I, for one, drew a long breath of relief. "From what Warner says and from his hiding in the closet, I should say he was scared

to death. Fright and weak heart, together."

"But what could have done it?" Gertrude asked. "He was all right this evening at dinner. Warner, what did he say when you found him on the porch?"

Warner looked shaken; his honest, boyish face was colorless.

"Just what I told you, Miss Innes. He'd been reading the paper downstairs; I had put up the car, and feeling sleepy, I came down to the lodge to go to bed. As I went upstairs Thomas put down the paper and taking his pipe went on to the porch. Then I heard an exclamation from him."

"Didn't he say anything you could understand?" I asked.

"He said something about the grave giving up its dead."

Mr. Jamieson was going through the old man's pockets, and Gertrude was composing his arms, folding them across his white shirt-bosom, always so spotless.

In the course of his investigations the detective had come to the inner pocket of the dead butler's black coat. Here he found some things that interested him. One was a small flat key, with a red cord tied to it, and the other was a bit of white paper, on which was written something in Thomas' cramped hand. Mr. Jamieson read it; then he gave it to me. It was an address in fresh ink:

LUCIEN WALLACE,
14 Elm Street, Richfield.

As the card went around, I think both the detective and I watched for any possible effect it might have, but beyond perplexity, there seemed to be none.

"Richfield?" Gertrude exclaimed. "Why, Elm street is the main street; don't you remember, Halsey?"

"Lucien Wallace?" Halsey said. "That is the child Stewart spoke of at the inquest."

Warner, with his mechanic's instinct, had reached for the key. What he said was not a surprise.

"Yale lock," he said. "Probably a key to the east entry."

There was no reason why Thomas, an old and trusted servant, should not have had a key to that particular door, although the servants' entry was in the west wing. But I had not known of this key, and it opened up a new field of conjecture. Just now, however, there were many things to be attended to, and, leaving Warner with the body we all went back to the house. Mr. Jamieson walked with me, while Halsey and Gertrude followed.

"I suppose I shall have to notify the Armstrongs," I said. "They will know if Thomas had any people and how to reach them. Of course, I expect to defray the expenses of the funeral, but his relatives must be found. What do you think frightened him, Mr. Jamieson?"

"It is hard to say," he replied slowly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Her Happiest Time of Life

When the Dutch Housewife Sees Life with Her Own Instead of Husband's Eyes.

No, not even for the Tartlets would I care to be a Dutchwoman, unless, from the very beginning, I could be an elderly Dutch widow with a fortune.

One day I went to lunch with such a lady, and I think, when I myself am very old, and memories of earth are growing hazy in the sunset which lights the way to that other land beyond, I still shall stand by that tiny old Dutch Mevrouw standing in one of the rooms of her large old merchant mansion, her dress of fine black cloth, her little apron of silk with a flourish of rare old lace, her eyes bright and merry as a girl's, her face eager with the joy of living, her voice laughing out her welcome.

These old Dutch ladies make one marvel. They are like pearls kept close that they may mellow when brought to the light. When their men, as they call their husbands, are too old or too wise with years to bother over everything as they do in their youth, or are gone to a country where for once their "japs" and "beans" are second, these ladies seem to develop and expand, and their understanding to blossom. They are then very spontaneous. They laugh much, they chuckle over stories they could not have even whispered in their youth, they talk most entertainingly in many languages and often play the piano with skill and lively enjoyment. The dust-rags have ceased to interest them, the perambulators are empty, and they seem to be taking a joyful inspection of the world and its life which they have heretofore seen only through the eyes of a husband—Harper's Weekly.

For Hot Weather



When the sun strengthens and blazes in the sky and heat becomes a factor to reckon with in dress, and everything else, millinery must be cool looking or it will fail to be attractive.

All white or combinations of white with black give us the crispest and best effects for the dog days. But white set off with a bit of scarlet, deft blue or leaf green is smart and effective also, and may be chosen instead of white with black.

Black for day time wear is not cool looking except when made of the thinnest fabrics, like lace and net. The big black hats of hair braid or pyroxyline are lace in texture and the admiration and the darling of the summer girl's heart. This season they belong to the "mystery" class; those hats that come down over the head, veiling the eyes and showing the profile from one side only. The corday hats of net and lace

or those made on the "helmet" shapes have captivated as many as the big drooping picture hats.

A lovely hat for the hot weather is shown here made of dead white chip, overlaid with black chandilly lace. A grouping of four immense roses in tulle and silk is mounted across the front, they are almost colorless with a bush of pale pink at the edges of some of the petals. The effect is of millinery as light as air.

A pretty sailor for practical wear is trimmed with white wings and a coronet of plaited ribbon across the front. The shape is a Milan in the natural pale yellow of the finished hat. All the trimming is pure white and a crisp satin faced ribbon is chosen for making the plaiting.

A floating washable lace veil is the thing generally worn with these sailors.

CHARMING LINGERIE GOWN

Exceedingly Pretty Dress Eminently Suitable for Garden Party or River Wear.

A very charming lingerie gown has a smartly cut skirt tucked flounce, upon which appears a row of vandyked insertion, the insertion being continued at the top of the flounce in the same form, and appearing at intervals upon the skirt, the center im-

mediately below the knee being beautifully embroidered. The bodice has a collar of valenciennes lace, insertions of which appear in dainty design upon the bodice and upon the long sleeves and waist belt, the center of the bodice being embroidered to match the skirt. This is an exceedingly pretty and useful model, and is eminently suitable for garden party or river wear. This model is the one illustrated above.

ART IN WEARING OF SASH

Height and Breadth Can be Increased or Toned Down by Draping of Sash.

There is a great deal of art in the wearing of a sash. One can increase one's height or one's breadth, adorn a plain gown, tone down an elaborate one, give a touch of distinction to one's whole appearance, simply by the way in which the sash is draped and adjusted.

Try wearing the sash in shawl style over the shoulders, caught by a stitch in back and tucked under the girdle, to fall in diagonal lengths to just above the ankles.

Or wind it twice around the waist, like a girdle, cross it in front and fasten with a knot at the sides of the skirt below the knees.

Then there is the Scotch tartan effect, especially attractive with a plaid scarf, where there is a broad band draped over the left shoulder, a narrow draped one over the back, and the right, and a knot at the waist on the left side, so that the sash falls in a broad wide almost to the bottom of the frock.

The adjustment of the sash may well have reference to the concealment of some defect in the garment it covers—a tiny tear, perhaps, or an ineradicable stain. It should emphasize the good points of the figure and hide the bad. That is why the old fashion of the stiff bow at the back was so bad; it made every woman look stout.

Give a little thought to the draping of your sash, and half your battle for beauty of appearance is won.

Effective Sofa Pillows.

An effective and easily made sofa pillow for a summer home is made in oblong shape, 14 by 20 inches.

The pillow is covered with plain heavy weave crash in ecru or gray. Two inches from each end are bands of flowered cretonne, three inches wide crossing the pillow. These bands are edged on both sides with narrow ecru lace applied flat.

Another variation had the body of the pillow of flowered chintz or cretonne with bands of figured ecru lace such as is used for furniture covering. The ends of this pillow have a two-inch wide linen lace in ecru tints.

ings and correct care from the day the chick is hatched. A chick kept growing from the very beginning of its existence until it reaches the age when it is fit for the showroom, will ask no odds on condition from any of its rivals. A bird which has had the proper care and range may be picked from the fields in which it has roamed at will, and placed in the showroom without fear of its condition. How often have we heard the remark when some exhibitor was complimented upon the appearance of his birds: "I've done nothing to them. They are here just as they run out of doors." A close examination in such cases usually confirms the opinion first expressed. There is no way to improve upon the condition of such a bird when picked at the right degree of maturity and in perfect health. It is the natural process, and the best one.

Just remember this when you are feeding and scrutinizing your flock of youngsters.

The newest shoes are arched for the shortening effect and have a medium vamp.

Try This, This Summer. The very next time you're hot, tired or thirsty, step up to a soda fountain and get a glass of Coca-Cola. It will cool you off, relieve your bodily and mental fatigue and quench your thirst delightfully. At soda fountains or carbonated in bottles—5c everywhere. Delicious, refreshing and wholesome. Send to the Coca-Cola Co., Atlanta, Ga., for their free booklet "The Truth About Coca-Cola." Tells what Coca-Cola is and why it is so delicious, refreshing and thirst-quenching. And send 2c stamp for the Coca-Cola Baseball Record Book for 1910—contains the famous poem "Casey At The Bat," records, schedules for both leagues and other valuable baseball information compiled by authorities.

Another Tradition Exploded. Two Englishmen were resting at the "Red Horse Inn" at Stratford-on-Avon. One of them discovered a print picturing a low tumbling building underneath which was printed: "The House in Which Shakespeare Was Born." Turning to his friend in mild surprise he pointed to the print. His friend exhibited equal surprise, and called a waiter who assured them of the accuracy of the inscription. "Pon my word," said the observing Englishman, shaking his head dubiously, "I thought he was born in a manger!"—Success Magazine.

One Side Enough. Senator William Alden Smith tells of an Irish justice of the peace out in Michigan. In a trial the evidence was all in and the plaintiff's attorney had made a long and very eloquent argument, when the lawyer acting for the defense arose. "What are you doing?" asked the justice, as the lawyer began. "Going to present our side of the case." "I don't want to hear both sides argued. It has tendency to confuse the court."—Washingtonian.

Included Her. "Why did she get angry at the stranger in town?" "She asked him if he had seen her daughter and he answered that he had seen all the sights of the place."

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