THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

BY MARY ROBERTS RINEHART ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROYWATERS

SYNOPSIS.

Aliss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established sommer hendquarters at Sunnyside. The servants desert. Gertrude and Halsey arrive with Jack lialley. The house was awakened by a revolver shot ami Arnold Armstrong was found shet to death in the Indi. Miss Innes found Halsey's revolver on the lawn. He and Jack Bailey had disappeared. Gertrude revealed that she was engaged to Jack Bailey, with whom she talked in the billiard room shortly before the murder. Detective Jamieson accused Miss Innes of holding back evidence. He imprisoned an intruder in an empty room. The prisoner escaped. Gertrude was suspected because of an injured foot. Halsey reappears and says he and Bayley were called away by a telegram. Cashier Bailey of Paul Armstrong's bank, defunct, was arrested for embezzlement. Paul Armstrong's death was announced. Halsey's fiancee, Louise Armstrong, teld Halsey that while she still loved him, she was to marry another. It developed that Dr. Walker was the man. Louise was found at the bottom of the circular staircase. Recovering consciousness, she said something had brushed by her on the stairway and she fainted. Bailey is auspected of Armstrong's murder. After "seeing a ghost," Thomas, the lodgekeeper, was found dead with a slip in his pocket bearing the name of "Lucien Wallare." Dr. Walker asked Miss Innes to vacate in favor of Mrs. Armstrong. She refused. A note from Balley to Gertrude arranging a meeting at night was found. A ladder out of place deepens the mystery. The stables were burned. During the exclement a man stole into the house. A search failed to reveal him, Miss Innes shot an intruder. A man limping was seen on the road.

CHAPTER XXIV-Continued.

"Did they go toward the club?" Gertrude asked suddenly, leaning for-

"No, miss. I think they came into the village. I didn't get a look at their faces, but I know every chick and child in the place, and everybody knows me. When they didn't shout at me-in my uniform, you know-! took it they were strangers."

So all we had for our afternoon's work was this: Some one had been shot by the bullet that went through the door; he had not left the village, and he had not called in a physician. Also, Dr. Walker knew who Lucien Wallace was, and his very denial made me confident that, in that one direction at least, we were on the right track.

"Gertrude," I said, "I have been a very seifish old woman. You are going to leave this miserable house tonight. Annie Morton is going to Scotland next week, and you shall go right with her."

To my surprise, she flushed pain-

"I don't want to go, Ampt Ray," she said. "Don't make me leave now." "You are losing your health and

your good looks," I said decidedly. ou should have a change

"I shan't stir a foot." She was equally decided. Then, more lightly: "Why, you and Liddy need me to ar bitrate between you every day in the

Perhaps I was growing suspicious of Gertrude's gayety was forced and artificial. I watched her covertly during the rest of the drive, and I did not like the two spots of crimson in her pale cheeks. But I said nothing more she would not go.

CHAPTER XXV.

A Visit from Louise.

That day was destined to be an eventful one, for when I entered the house and found Eliza ensconsed in the upper hall on a chair, with Mary Anne doing her best to stiffe her with household ammonia, and Liddy rubbing her wrists-whatever good that is supposed to do-I knew that the ghost had been walking again, and this time in daylight.

Eliza was in a frenzy of fear. She clutched at my sleeve when I went close to her, and refused to let go until she had told her story. Coming it. just after the fire, the household was demoralized, and it was no surprise to me to find Alex and the undergardener struggling downstairs with a heavy trunk between them.

"I didn't want to do it, Miss Innes," Alex said. "But she was so excited I was afraid she would do as she said - drag it down herself, and scratch

the staircase." I was trying to get my bonnet off and to keep the maids quiet at the same time. "Now, Eliza, when you have washed your face and stopped bawling," I said, "come into my sitting room and tell me what has happened."

Liddy put away my things without speaking. The very set of her shoulders expressed disapproval.

"Well,"I said, when the silence became uncomfortable, "things seem to

be warming up." Silence from Liddy, and a long sigh.

lence. "Rosie is probably a good cook." Sniff.

"Liddy," I said at last, "don't dare of your life. You positively gloat in ment that had been used. this excitement. You never looked

"It's not myself I'm thinking about." be my liver was torpid, and maybe it rand with pride. wasn't; but I know this: I've got

be the same woman again."

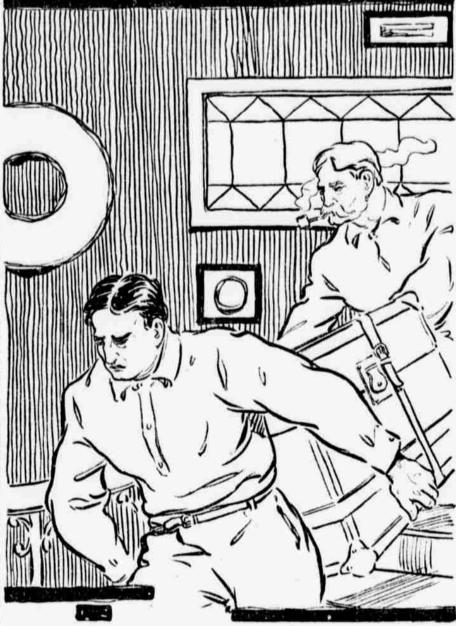
Well, I'm glad of that anything Eliza, flanked by Rosle and Mary along,"

Her story, broken with sobs and corrections from the other two, was this: At two o'clock (2:15, Rosie fasisted) ten and unimpeachable references. I. Halsey is not here. He has gone to she had gone upstairs to get a picture Rachel Innes, have learned not to the station for Mr. Jamieson. What from her room to show Mary Anne. mind if the cook sits down comfort- has happened?" (A pleture of a lady, Mary Anne inter- ably in my sitting room when she is posed.) She went up the servants' taking the orders for the day, and I sure? staircase and along the corridor to her am grateful if the silver is not cleaned room, which lay between the trunkroom and the unfinished ballroom. She | merely told Liddy to send the new apheard a sound as she went down the plicant in. When she came, however, of fact tone, and allowed herself to corridor like some one moving furni. I could hardly restrain a gasp of surture, but she was not nervous. She prise. It was the woman with the thought it might be men examining the house after the fire the night before, but she looked in the trunkroom and saw nobody.

standing at the foot of that staircase came to come up for two girls and shootin' through the door-I'll never their trunks I supposed there was something doing, and as this here woman had been looking for work in for a change," I said. And in came the village I thought I'd bring her

> Already I had acquired the true suburbanite ability to take servants on faith; I no longer demanded writ- trude burst out, "tell us what is wrong. with scouring soap. And so that day I pitted face.

She stood somewhat awkwardly just inside the door, and she had an air of self-confidence that was inspiring. She went into her room quietly. The Yes, she could cook; was not a fancy trude and I recognized the futility of noise had ceased and everything was cook, but could make good soups and asking Louise any questions; her quiet. Then she sat down on the side desserts if there was any one to take of her bed, and, feeling faint-she was charge of the salads. And so, in the assumed. Our ears were strained for subject to spells-("I told you that end, I took her. As Halsey said, when



Struggling Down-Stairs with a Heavy Trunk.

down on her pillow and-"Took a nap. All right!" I said. "Go

"When I came to, Miss Innes, sure I knew, an iron bar that long (fully tion between them was unchanged. two yards by her measure) "shot through that hole and tumbled on the bed. If I'd been still sleeping" ("Fainting," corrected Rosle) "I'd 'a' been hit on the head and killed!"

"I wisht you'd heard her scream." put in Mary Anne. "And her face as white as a pillow-slip when she tumbled down the stairs."

"No doubt there is some natural explanation for it, Eliza," I said. "You may have dreamed it, in your 'fainting attack. But if it is true, the metal rod and the hole in the wall will show

Eliza looked a little bit sheepish. "The nole's there all right, Miss Innes," she said. "But the bar was gone when Mary Anne and Rosle went up to pack my trunk."

"That wasn't all," Liddy's voice came funereally from a corner, "Eliza said that from the hole in the wall a burning eye looked down at her!"

"The wall must be at least six inches thick," I said with asperity. "Unless the person who drilled the hole carried his eyes on the ends of a stick, Eliza couldn't possibly have seen them."

But the fact remained, and a visit to Eliza's room proved it. I might icer all I wished; some one had drilled a hole in the unfinished wall of the ballroom, passing between the bricks of the partition, and shooting through the unresisting plaster of Eliza's room with such force as to "if Eliza goes, I don't know where send the red flying on to her bed. I to look for another cook." More si- bad gone upstairs alone, and I confess the thing puzzled me; in two or three places in the wall small apertures had been made, none of them of any depth. Not the least mysterious thing was to deny that you are having the time the disappearance of the iron imple-

Mary Anne and Eliza left that after better. It's my opinion all this running | noon, but Rosle decided to stay. It around, and getting joited out of a was about five o'clock when the back rut, has stirred up that torpid liver of came from the station to get them, and, to my amazement, it had an occupant. Matthew Geist, the driver, she said, goaded into speech. "May asked for me, and explained his er-

"I've brought you a cook, Miss Insome feelings left, and to see you ness," he said. "When the message

when I came, didn't I, Rosie?" "Yes'm,! we told him, it didn't matter much every one, but it seemed to me that indeed she did!")-she put her head about the cock's face if it was clean. I have spoken of Halsey's restless-

ness. On that day it seemed to be more than ever a resistless impulse that kept him out until after luncheon. as I'm sittin' here, I thought I'd die. I think he hoped constantly that he about sending her to Scotland; I knew | Sometitin' hit me in the face, and I might meet Louise driving over the set up, sudden. And then I seen the bills in her runabout; possibly he did plaster drop, droppin' from a little meet her occasionally, but from his hole in the wall. And the first thing continued gloom I felt sure the situa-

> Part of the afternoon I believe he read-Gertrude and I were out, as I have said, and at dinner we both noticed that something had occurred to distract him. He was disagreeable, which is unlike him, nervous, looking at his watch every few minutes, and he ate almost nothing. He asked twice during the meal on what train Mr. Jamieson and the other detective were coming, and had long periods of abstraction during which he dug his fork into my damask cloth and did not hear when he was spoken to. He refused dessert, and left the table early, excusing himself on the ground that he wanted to see Alex.

Alex, nowever, was not to be found. It was after eight when Halsey ordered the car and started down the hill at a pace that, even for him, was unusually reckless. Shortly after Alex reported that he was ready to go over the house preparatory to closing it for the night. Sam Bohannon came at a quarter before nine and began his patrol of the grounds, and with the arrival of the two detectives to look forward to I was not especially appre-

At half-past nine I heard the sound of a horse driven furiously up the drive. It came to a stop in front of the house and immediately after there were hurried steps on the veranda. Our nerves were not what they should have been, and Gertrude, always apprehensive lately, was at the door alhad burst into the room and stood there bareheaded and breathing hard.

"Where is Halsey?" she demanded. Above her plain black gown her eyes looked big and somber, and the rapid drive had brought no color to her face. I got up and drew forward a chair.

"He has not come back," I said quietly. "Sit down, child; you are aged three, cuddled up close to her fa- love not only honors God, but elevates not strong enough for this kind of ther this being her first ride with him man. Love is the most ennobling act thing."

I don't think she even heard me. asked, looking from me to Gertrude, shall we talk about, dearie?" "Well, thus loves ennobled, purified, enlarged, 'Do you know where he went? Where | father," as she laid her little hand on

can I find him?" "For heaven's sake, Louise," Ger- other."



"To the station, Gertrude? You are

"Yes," I said. "Listen. There is the whistle of the train now." She relaxed a little at our matter-

sink into a chair. "Perhaps I was wrong," she said heavily. "He-will be here in a few moments if-everything is right."

We sat there, the three of us, with out attempt at conversation. Both Gerreticence was a part of a role she had the first throb of the motor as it turned into the drive and commenced the climb to the house. Ten minutes passed, 15, 20. I saw Louise's hands grow rigid as they clutched the arms of her chair. I watched Gertrude's bright color slowly ebbing away, and around my own heart I seemed to feel the grasp of a giant hand.

Twenty-five minutes, and then a sound. But it was not the chug of the motor; it was the unmistakable rumble of the Casanova back. Gertrude drew aside the curtain and peered into the darkness.

"it's the hack, I am sure," she said, evidently relieved. "Something has gone wrong with the car, and no wonder-the way Halsey went down the

It seemed a long time before the creaking vehicle came to a stop at the door. Louise rose and stood watching, her hand to her throat. And then Gertrude opened the door, admitting Mr. Jamleson and a stocky, middleaged man. Halsey was not with them. When the door had closed and Louise realized that Halsey had not come, her expression changed. From tense watchfulness to relief, and now again to absolute despair, her face was an open page.

"Halsey?" I asked unceremoniously, ignoring the stranger. "Did he-not meet you?"

"No." Mr. Jamieson looked slightly surprised. "I rather expected the car, but we got up all right."

"You didn't see him at all?" Louise demanded breathlessly.

Mr. Jamieson knew her at once, although he had not seen her before. She had kept to her rooms until the morning she left.

"No. Miss Armstrong," he said. "I saw nothing of him. What is wrong?" "Then we shall have to find him, she asserted. "Every instant is precious. Mr. Jamieson, I have reason for believing that he is in danger, but I don't know what it is. Only-he must be found."

The stocky man had said nothing. Now, however, he went quickly toward the door.

"I'll catch the back down the road and hold it," he said. "Is the gentleman down in the town?"

"Mr. Jamieson," Louise said impulsively, 'I can use the hack. Take my service in return. This service was the horse and trap outside and drive like mad. Try to find the Dragon Fly-it ought to be easy to trace. I can God's." God as your maker, preserver, think of no other way. Only, don't lose a moment."

The new detective had gone, and his Son, their Messlah, had a right to a moment later Jamieson went rapidly | claim love and obedience from them. down the drive, the cob's feet striking fire at every step. Louise stood looking after them. When she turned around she faced Gertrude, who stood in them, the best citizens they have. indignant, almost tragic, in the hall.

"You know what threatens Halsey, Louise," she said accusingly. "I believe you know this whole horrible



"I Believe You Know This Whole Horrible Thing, This Mystery."

thing, this mystery that we are strugmost instantly. A moment later Louise gling with. If anything happens to Halsey, I shall never forgive you." Louise only raised her hands despairingly and dropped them again. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Prompted by Instinct.

proprieties of a buggy ride. Helen, unattended. As father tucked the "He has not come back?" she chirped to his horse he asked: "What his arm, "let's talk about loving each

THREE QUESTIONS

Sunday School Lesson for Sept. 18, 1910

Specially Arranged for This Paper

LESSON TEXT.—Matthew 22:15-22, -46. Memory verses 27-39 . GOLDEN TEXT.—"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."—Matt. 22:22.

TIME Tuesday, April 14, A. D. 30 The same day as our last lesson. PLACE. - The Court of the Temple is

Suggestion and Practical Thought. The rulers of the Jews had determined on the death of Jesus (Mark 11:18), and were now seeking some way of ensnaring Jesus into expressing opinions which could be used as an accusation for which he could be convicted in the courts. But by Jesus' answers Divine truth was made more

The question was asked by a wily combination of two parties. It was, Is It lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? The Pharisees sent their disciples, learners, students, who would come as those who wanted to learn, and not as the teachers who, being supposed to know, would appear to be merely wanting to entrap Jesus, "A cunning device." These would represent one side of the question, opposed to paying tribute to Caesar.

"Fierce opposition was offered to the tribute law . . . which was regarded as an implety, inasmuch as no Lord could be recognized but God. . . Others offered opposition to the legality of the tax, while one leader, Judah of Gamala, associated with a Pharisee named Zadok, formed a party to work solely on this line of attack. Then vengeance was sworn against whomsoever should transgress the Mosaic law, and the Zealots were plous assassins who imposed upon themselves the sacred obligations of killing all transgressors of the law."

The Herodians were adherents of the Herods, who owed what power they possessed to the Roman government. "They vied with the Sadduces in skepticism, and with the Greeks in licentiousness, pandered to the vice and cruelty of the Herods and truckled to the Romans." These represented the other side of the question, favoring tribute to Caesar, and opposed to the Messianic hopes of the Pharisees.

No matter which side Jesus took it seemed impossible for him not to seriously damage his cause. If he decided for either jarty, the other would be his enemy. He was sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. If he said it was not right to pay taxes, he would be in collision with the whole Roman power, which would regard and treat him as a criminal. His career would be ended. If he said it was lawful for the Jews, the great mass of the people would be against him, and he would lose his hold upon them; for they hated the Roman government, and one of the first and greatest things they expected of the Messiah was deliverance from this subjection to a foreign power, "The taxes were a constant cause of revolt."

They say unto him, Caesar's (pronounced Kaisar by Romans and Greeks. It is the German kaiser and Russian czar), "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." The image and superscription on the coin implied the sovereignty of Caesar. The Jews, by using the coins, in so far were served by the Roman government. They therefore owed it some payment of taxes.

"And unto God the things that are giver of countless good gifts, one of the choicest of which was the gift of

Christians have to live in countries where the government is not perfect, and it is their duty to be good citizens This was one of the ways by which Christianity conquered the Roman empire. To have fought the empire with their worldly weapons would have been ruin; as Christ himself said: "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52).

God's image is stamped in the soul of man. It is sometimes soiled in the mire of sin, dimmed by the friction of worldly cares, bent and distorted by wrongs done and wrongs received; but every man was created in the image of God. This makes it possible to be restored, to receive the fuller, sweeter, more perfect image of God's holiness.

When Tamerlane was in his wars, one of his captains dug up a great pot of gold, and brought it to him. Tamerlane asked whether !t had his father's stamp upon it; but when he saw it had the Roman stamp, and not his father's, he would not own it.

A lawyer, a scribe, a student and teacher of the law, asked, "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" Tempting him, testing him to see what kind of an answer the wise teacher would give to one of the stock questions which divided the Jewish teachers into rival schools, for he realized that Jesus had answered wisely the Sadducee's question (Mark).

All we have and are we owe to him; and the only way in which we can make any return is to love him and obey him in love. That is all that There is a certain type of femininity is ours to give; to withhold it is unutwhich instinctively understands the terably mean. "The best thing in man is love, and God wants the best." Such of the soul; and the nobler and higher robe about the dainty miss and the object and the more intense the love, so much the more is the one who exalted in nature. In him are found all that ought to move the highest affections of men.

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