THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

ROBERTS RINEHART ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAYWALTERY

SYNOPSIS.

Miss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established summer headquarters at Sunayside, Arnold Armstrong was found shot to death in the ball. Gertrude and her fiame, Jack Bailey, had conversed in the billiard room shortly before the murler. Detective damieson accused Miss Innes of holding back evidence. Cashier Bailey of Paul Armstrong's bank, defunct, was arrested for embezzlement. Paul Armstrong's death was announced. Halsey's flances, Louise Armstrong, told Halsey that while she still loved him, she was to marry another. It developed that br. Walker was the man. Louise was found unconscious at the bottom of the circular staigcase. She said something had brushed by her in the dark on the stairway and she fainted. Balley in suspected of Armstrong's murder. Thomas, the lodgekeeper, was found dead with a note in his pocket bearing the name "Lucien Wallace," A ladder found out of place deepens the mystery. The stables were burned, and in the dark Miss Innes shot an intruder. Halsey mysteriously disappeared. His auto was found wrecked by a freight train. It developed Halsey had an argument in the library with a woman before his disappearance. New cook disappears. Miss Innes learned Halsey was alive. Dr. Walker's face becomes livid at mention of the name of Nina Carrington. Evidence was secured from a tramp that a man, supposedly Halsey, had been bound and gagged and thrown into an empty box car. Gertrude was missing. Hunting for her, Miss Innes ran into a man and fainted. A confederate of Dr. Walker confessed his part in the mystery.

CHAPTER XXIX .- Continued.

"She struck me as being an ugly customer, and when she left, about 11 o'clock, and went across to the Armstrong place, I was not far behind her. She walked all around the house first, looking up at the windows. Then she rang the bell, and the minute the door was opened she was through it, and into the hall."

"How long did she stay?" "That's the queer part of it," Riggs said eagerly. "She didn't come out that night at all. I went to bed at daylight, and that was the last I heard of her until the next day, when I saw her on a truck at the station, covered with a sheet. She'd been struck by the express and you would hardly have known her-dead, of course. I think she stayed all night in the Armstrong house, and the agent said she was crossing the track to take the up-train to town when the express struck her."

"Another circle!" I exclaimed. "Then we are just where we started."

"Not so bad as that, Miss Innes," Riggs said eagerly. "Nina Carrington came from the town in California where Mr. Armstrong died. Why was the doctor so afraid of her? The Carrington woman knew something. I lived with Dr. Walker seven years. and I know him well. There are few things he is afraid of. I think he killed Mr. Armstrong out in the west somewhere, that's what I think. What else he did I don't know-but he dismissed me and pretty nearly throttled mefor telling Mr. Jamieson here about Mr. Innes' having been at his office the night he disappeared and about my bearing them quarreling."

"What was it Warner overheard the woman say to Mr. Innes in the library?" the detective asked me.

She said I knew there was some thing wrong from the start. A man isn't well one day and dead the next without some reason."

How perfectly it all seemed to fit!

CHAPTER XXX.

When Churchyards Yawn.

It was on Wednesday Riggs told us down with every hour.

His recovery was destined to be almost as sudden as his disappearance, they were doing me honor in making and was due directly to the tramp me one of the party, and I would show Alex had brought to Sunnyside. It them I could be as silent as they. We seems the man was grateful for his went across the fields, passing through release, and when he learned some- the woods that reached almost to the thing of Halsey's whereabouts from ruins of the stable, going over stiles another member of his fraternity- now and then, and sometimes step for it is a fraternity-he was prompt ping over low fences. Once only in letting us know.

strong house trying to see Louise- fence. piece of dirty paper, on which was way we walked for perhaps 20 minues. scrawled the words: "He's at City Johnsville, who seemed to know the information would be valuable to us.

came into requisition. Mr. Jamieson starlight shining down on rows of called the hospital, while we crowded white headstones and an occasional around him. And when there was no more imposing monument or towering longer any doubt that it was Halsey, shaft. In spite of myself, I drew my and that he would probably recover, breath in sharply. We were on the we all laughed and cried together. I am sure I kissed Liddy, and I have I seem to remember kissing Mr. Jamieson, too, in the excitement.

their several abilities. They had one tried to believe him. clothes and their hair the rest of the doctor wanted to send me back. day. It was bacon, hardtack and

derloin. It was not until Gertrude and Rosie had gone and Sunnyside had settled the foot of the staircase, that Mr. Jamieson broached a subject he had of the shaft for me to sit on. evidently planned before he came.

"Miss Innes," he said, stopping me stairs, "how are your nerves tonight?"

Halsey found, my troubles have gone." "I mean," he persisted, "do you feel as though you could go through with fear of detection. something rather unusual?"

"The most unusual thing I can think anything is going to occur, don't dare reassuring pat on the shoulder. to let me miss it."

me any questions, Miss Innes. Put on ging them up."

Rosie. The domestic force was now of headstones, and although, when I down to Mary Anne and Liddy, with found myself last, I had an instinctive the under-gardener's wife coming desire to keep looking back over my very day to help out. Fortunately, shoulder, I found that, the first uneasi-Warner and the detectives were keep ness past, a cemetery at night is much ng backelor hall in the lodge. Out the came as any other country place, of deference to Liddy they washed filled with vague shadows and unextheir dishes once a day, and they con- pected noises. Once, indeed-but Mr. cocted queer messes, according to Jamieson said it was an owl, and I

triumph that they are regularly for In the shadow of the Armstrong breakfast, and that clong to their granite shaft we stopped. I think the

"It's no place for a woman," I heard onions, fried together. They were all him protesting angrily. But the demost pathetically grateful, however, I tective said something about witnoticed, for an occasional broiled ten- nesses, and the doctor only came over and felt my pulse.

down for the night, with Winters at that nightmare of a house," he said next morning and drop them into the

There is a sense of desecration, of as I was about to go to my room up things, in resurrecting a body from its lived over again the events of the "I have none," I said happily. "With ly by, and watched Alex and Mr. again, as had happened at the grave, Jamieson steaming over their work. I heard Alex's voice, tense and triwithout a single qualm, except the

The doctor kept a keen lookout, but no one appeared. Once in a while and over until he seemed to shriek it of would be a peaceful night. But if he came over to me, and gave me a

"I never expected to come this," he "Something is going to occur," he said once. "There's one thing suresaid. "And you're the only woman I I'll not be suspected of complicity. A can think of that I can take along." doctor is generally supposed to be man whose body we had resurrected? He looked at his watch. "Don't ask handler at burying folks than at dig-



"She Walked All Around the House First, Looking Up at the Windows."

beavy shoes, and some old dark! clothes, and make up your mind not to be surprised at anything."

Liddy was sleeping the sleep of the just when I went upstairs, and I think, while the heavy coffin was be- ber might lie. Certainly, in daylight, the story of his connection with some bunted out my things cautiously. The ing raised. I felt that my composure Sunnyside deserved its name; never incidents that had been previously undetective was wafting in the hall, and explained. Halsey had been gone I was astonished to see Dr. Stewart shriek, I tried to think of something since the Friday night before, and with him. They were talking conwith the passage of each day I felt fidentially together, but when I came | Halsey-anything but the grisly realithat he might be carried thousands down they ceased. There were a few ty that lay just beyond me on the and yet, somewhere behind its handof miles in the box-car, locked in, per- preparations to be made: the locks to grass. haps, without water or food. I had be gone over, Winters to be instructed read of cases where bodies had been as to renewed vigilance, and then, found locked in cars on isolated sid- after extinguishing the hall light, we ings in the west, and my spirits went crept, in the darkness, through the front door, and into the night.

I asked no questions. I felt that somebody spoke, and then it was an On Wednesday evening Mr. Jamie. emphatic bit of profanity from Dr. son, who had been down at the Arm. Stewart when he ran into a wire

and failing-was met near the gate at | We were joined at the end of five Sunnyside by an individual precisely minutes by another man, who fell into as repulsive and unkempt as the one step with the doctor silently. He car-Alex had captured. The man knew ried something over his shoulder the detective, and he gave him a which I could not make out. In this

The doctor was puffing somewhat hospital, Johnsville." The tramp who when we finally came to a halt. I conbrought the paper pretended to know fess that just at that minute even nothing, except this: The paper had Sunnyside seemed a cheerful spot. We been passed along from a "hobo" in had paused at the edge of a level cleared place, bordered all around with primly trimmed evergreen trees, Again the long-distance telephone Between them 1 caught a glimpse of edge of the Casanova churchyard.

I saw now both the man who had had terrible moments since when joined the party and the implements he carried. It was Alex, armed with two long-handled spades. After the Anyhow, by 11 o'clock that night' first shock of surprise, I flatter my-Gertrude was on her way to Johns | self I was both cool and quiet. We ville, 380 miles away, accompanied by went in single file between the rows Paul Armstrong!

The uncanny moment came when

Alex and Jamieson tossed the spades on the grass, and I confess I hid my face. There was a period of stress, I hind what one of them a secret chamwas going, and, for fear I would else-what time Gertrude would reach | There was not a corner apparently

And then I heard a low exclamation from the detective and I felt the pres. all the possibilities it would involve. sure of the doctor's fingers on my

"Now, Miss Innes," he said gently. If you will come over-

I held on to him frantically, and somehow I got there and looked down.



"But the Face That Showed in the Light-"

The lid of the casket had been raised and a silver plate on it proved we had made no mistake. But the face that showed in the light of the lantern was a face I had never seen before. The man who lay before us was not



CHAPTER XXXI.

Between Two Fireplaces. What with the excitement of the dis

covery, the walk home under the stars in wet shoes and draggled skirts, and getting upstairs and undressed without rousing Liddy, I was completely used up. What to do with my boots was the greatest puzzle of all, there being "Anyhow, I don't believe you're any no place in the house safe from Lidworse off here than you would be in dy, until I decided to slip upstairs the finally, and put his coat on the steps hole the "ghost" had made in the trunkroom wall.

I went asleep as soon as I reached a reversal of the everlasting fitness of this decision, and in my dreams I mother clay. And yet that night, in night. Again I saw the group around the Casanova churchyard, I sat quiet the silent figure on the grass, and umphant:

> "Then we've got them," he said. Only, in my dreams, he said it over in my ears.

> I wakened early, in spite of my fatigue, and lay there thinking. Who was Alex? I no longer believed that he was a gardener. Who was the And where was Paul Armstrong? Probably living safely in some extraditionless country on the fortune he had stolen. Did Louise and her mother know of the shameful and wicked deception? What had Thomas known, and Mrs. Watson? Who was Nina Carrington?

This last question, it seemed to me, was answered. In some way the woman had learned of the substitution, and had tried to use her knowledge for blackmail. Nina Carrington's own story died with her, but, however it happened, it was clear that she had carried her knowledge to Halsey the afternoon Gertrude and I were looking for clews to the man I had shot on the east veranda. Halsey had been half crazed by what he heard; it was evident that Louise was marrying Dr. Walker to keep the shameful secret, for her mother's sake. Halsey, always reckless, had gone at once to Dr. Walker and denounced him, There had been a scene, and he left on his way to the station to meet and notify Mr. Jamieson of what he had learned. The doctor was active mentally and physically. Accompanied perhaps by Riggs, who had shown himself not everscrupulous until he quarreled with his employer, he had gone across to the railroad embankment, and, by jumping in front of the car, had caused Halsey to swerve. The rest of the story we knew.

That was my reconstructed theory of that afternoon and evening; it was almost correct-not quite.

There was a telegram that morning from Gertrude.

Halsey conscious and improving. Probably home in day or so. GERTRUDE.

With Halsey found and improving in health, and with at last something to work on, I began that day. Thursday, with fresh courage. As Mr. Jamieson had said, the lines were closing up. That I was to be caught and almost finished in the closing was

happily unknown to us all. It was late when I got up. I lay in my bed, looking around the four walls of the room, and trying to imagine bewas a house more cheery and open, less sinister in general appearance. that was not open and above-board, somely papered walls I believed firmly that there lay a hidden room, with

I made a mental note to have the house measured during the day to discover any discrepancy between the outer and inner walls, and I tried to recall again the exact wording of the paper Jamieson had found. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

At the Half-Century Mark.

Youth is eternal to him who believes in eternity. To me youth means anywhere from eight onward. I was an exceedingly old person at eight and I trust I violate no confidence when I confess a youthful exuberance now that I have bumped against the halfway post. Fifty is a splendid time for youthful expansion; one's fancy still retains all its ingenuity while one's judgment is bettered by experience. When sitting on the 50 milestone the vane of man's vision points southward to the past and northward to the future with a minimum of oscillation. Rancorous thought and splenetic expression give way to quieter nerves and calmer view, and the mellow lighted vista of the years that have gone soften the heart of the youth of a half century of years.-John Philip Sousa in the Circle.

Different.

"I wrote him that I was ready to come home.

"Was he glad?"

"He wrote me that he would have to borrow money to pay my fare." "What did you do?"

"I asked him what I should do, and he said he would borrow money enough for me to stay there a while longer."

NFLUENCE OF THE MOTHER

Well to Remember That She is Ever a Model of Behavior to the Children.

"It is hard for a young mother, who has not yet overcome the wayward tendencies of her own youthful nature, to realize the influence she exerts over her little one. She is constantly surrounded by critical imitators who copy her morals and manners.

As the mother is, so are her sons and daughters. If a family of children are blessed with an intelligent mother, who is dainty and refined in her manner, and does not consider it necessary to be one woman in the drawing room and an entirely different person in her everyday life, but who is a true mother and always a tender, charming woman, she will invariably see her habits of speech and perfect manners repeated in her children.

Great, rough men and notsy, busy boys will always tone down their voices and step quietly and try to be more mannerly when she stops to give them a kind word and a pleasant smile. For a true woman will never fall to say and do all the kind, pleasant things she can that will in any way help to lift up and cheer those whose lives are shaded with care and toil. The mother of today rules the world of tomorrow.

Queer Questions.

Queer questions come over the telephone to the newspaper offices. Here was one that the man who chanced to answer the phone had put up to him the other day:

"Say." began the unknown seeker after the truth, "do you-do you remember who it was that killed Abel?"

"Why. Cain, of course," replied the newspaper man, who put in several years at Sunday school. "Who'd ju

"Well," observed the man at the other end in an annoyed tone, "doggon if I ain't gone and made a fool o' myself. Course it was Cain, now that you mention it, but I made a two to one bet with a fellow that 'twas Goliath, and now I'll have to go without a new overcoat, I reckon, this next winter."-Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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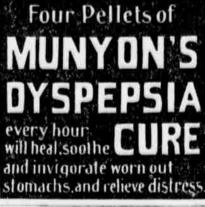
If it had not been for his lantern and the tub he lived in, probably Diogenes would never have been heard

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. For children teething, softens the gums, reduces in tammation, silays pain, cures wind coilc. Zea be the

An Ohlo man aged seventy married a girl aged twenty and deeded her 500 acres of land. Then she had plenty of grounds for divorce.

Lewis' Single Binder gives a man what he wants, a rich, mellow-tasting cigar.

"Any port in a story;" also anyone's umbrella.



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Genuine muster Signature

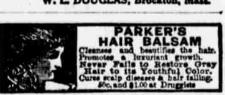
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