

# THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

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## SYNOPSIS.

Miss Jones, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established summer headquarters at Sunnyside. Amidst numerous difficulties the servants deserted. As Miss Jones looked up for the night, she was startled by a dark figure on the veranda. She passed a terrible night which was filled with uneasy toses. In the morning Miss Jones found a strange link and button—a clerk's hamper. Gertrude and Halsey arrived with Jack Bailey. The house was awakened by a revolver shot. A strange man was found shot to death in the hall. It proved to be the body of Arnold Armstrong, whose hamper father owned the country house. Miss Jones found Halsey's revolver in the hall and Jack Bailey had disappeared. The link and button mysteriously disappeared. Detective Jamieson and the constable Gertrude revealed that she was engaged to Jack Bailey, with whom she had talked in the billiard room a few moments before the murder. Jamieson told Miss Jones that she was hiding evidence from him. He imprisoned an intruder in an empty room. The prisoner escaped down a laundry chute. It developed that the intruder was probably a woman. Gertrude was suspected for the intruder left a print of a shoe foot. Gertrude returned home with her right ankle sprained. A negro found the other half of the link and button in a rug in the room. Halsey suddenly disappeared. He said he and Bailey had left because they had received a telegram. Gertrude said that she had given Bailey an unloaded revolver, fearing to give him Halsey's loaded weapon.

## CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

They stared at each other across the big library table, with young eyes all at once hard, suspicious. And then Gertrude held out both hands to him appealingly.

"We must not," she said brokenly. "Just now, with so much at stake, it is shameful. I know you are as ignorant as I am. Make me believe it, Halsey."

Halsey soothed her as best he could, and the breach seemed healed. But long after I went to bed he sat down stairs in the living room alone, and I knew he was going over the case as he had learned it. Some things were clear to him that were dark to me. He knew, and Gertrude, too, why Jack Bailey and he had gone away that night, as they did. He knew where they had been for the last 48 hours, and why Jack Bailey had not returned with him. It seemed to me that with out fuller confidence from both the children—they are always children to me—I should never be able to learn anything.

As I was finally getting ready for bed, Halsey came upstairs and knocked at my door. When I had got into a nightgown I used to say wrapper before Gertrude came back from school—I let him in. He stood in the doorway a moment, and then he went into agonies of silent mirth. I sat down on the side of the bed and waited in severe silence for him to stop, but he only seemed to grow wroth. When he had recovered he took me by the elbow and pulled me in front of the mirror.

"How to be beautiful," he quoted. "Advice to maids and matrons, by Beatrice Fairfax." And then I saw myself. I had neglected to remove my wrinkle eradicators, and I presume my appearance was odd. I believe that it is a woman's duty to care for her looks, but it is much like telling a necessary falsehood—one must not be found out. By the time I got them off Halsey was serious again, and I listened to his words.

"Aunt Ray," he began, extinguishing his cigarette on the back of my ivory hairbrush, "I would give a lot to tell you the whole thing. But—I can't, for a day or so, anyhow. But one thing I might have told you a long time ago. If you had known it, you would not have suspected me for a moment of—of having anything to do with the attack on Arnold Armstrong. Goodness knows what I might do to a fellow like that. If there was enough provocation, and I had a gun in my hand—under ordinary circumstances. But—I care a great deal about Louise Armstrong, Aunt Ray. I hope to marry her some day. Is it likely I would kill her brother?"

"But the whole thing is absurd," I argued. "And besides, Gertrude's sworn statement that you left before Arnold Armstrong came would clear you at once."

Halsey got up and began to pace the room, and the air of cheerfulness dropped like a mask.

"She can't swear it," he said finally. "Gertrude's story was true as far as it went, but she didn't tell everything. Arnold Armstrong came here at 2:30—came into the billiard room and left in five minutes. He came to bring—something."

"Halsey," I cried, "you must tell me the whole truth. Every time I see a way for you to escape you block it yourself with this wall of mystery. What did he bring?"

"A telegram—for Bailey," he said. "It came by special messenger from town, and was most important. Bailey had started for here, and the messenger had gone back to the city. The steward gave it to Arnold, who had been drinking all day and couldn't sleep, and was going for a stroll in the direction of Sunnyside."

"And he brought it?"

"Yes."

"I can tell you—as soon as certain things are made public. It is only a matter of days now, gloomily."

"And Gertrude's story of a telephone?"

"Poor Trude!" he half whispered. "Poor loyal little girl! Aunt Ray, there was no such message. No doubt your detective already knows that and discredits all Gertrude told him."

"And when she went back it was to get the telegram?"

"Probably," Halsey said slowly. "When you get to thinking about it, Aunt Ray, it looks bad for all three of us, doesn't it? And yet—I will take my oath on one of us even inadvertently killed that poor devil."

I looked at the closed door into Gertrude's dressing room, and lowered my voice.

"The same horrible thought keeps recurring to me," I whispered. "Hal-



They Stared at Each Other Across the Big Library Table.

sey, Gertrude probably had her revolver; she must have examined it, anyhow, that night. After you—and Jack had gone, what if—that ruffian came back, and she—and she—"

I couldn't finish. Halsey stood looking at me with shut lips.

"She might have heard him fumbling at the door—he had no key, the police say—and thinking it was you, or Jack, she admitted him. When she saw her mistake she ran up the stairs, a step or two, and turning, like an animal at bay, she fired."

Halsey had his hand over my lips before I finished, and in that position we stared each at the other, our stricken glances crossing.

"The revolver—my revolver—thrown into the tulip bed!" he muttered to himself. "Thrown perhaps from an upper window, you say it was buried deep. Her prostration ever since, her—Aunt Ray, you don't think it was Gertrude who fell down the clothes chute?"

I could only nod my head in a hopeless affirmative.

## CHAPTER X.

### The Traders' Bank.

The morning after Halsey's return was Tuesday. Arnold Armstrong had been found dead at the foot of the circular staircase at three o'clock on Sunday morning. The funeral services were to be held on Tuesday, and the interment of the body was to be deferred until the Armstrongs arrived from California. No one, I think, was very sorry that Arnold Armstrong was dead, but the manner of his death aroused some sympathy and an enormous amount of curiosity. Mrs. Ogden



Sent Two Telegrams.

Fitzhugh, a cousin, took charge of the arrangements, and everything, I believe, was as quiet as possible. I gave Thomas Johnson and Mrs. Watson permission to go into town to pay their last respects to the dead man, but for some reason they did not care to go.

Halsey spent part of the day with Mr. Jamieson, but he said nothing of what happened. He looked grave and anxious, and he had a long conversation with Gertrude late in the afternoon.

Tuesday evening found us quiet, with the quiet that precedes an explosion. Gertrude and Halsey were both gloomy and distraught, and as Liddy had already discovered that some of the china was broken—it is impossible for any secrets from an avoid servant—I was not in a pleasant humor myself. Warner brought up the afternoon mail and the evening papers at seven—I was curious to know what the papers said of the murder. We had turned away at least a dozen reporters. But I read over the headline that ran half-way across the top of the Gazette twice before I comprehended it. Halsey had opened the Chronicle and was staring at it fixedly.

"The Traders' bank closes its doors," was what I read, and then I put down the paper and looked across the table.

"Did you know of this?" I asked Halsey.

"I expected it. But not so soon," he replied.

"And you?" to Gertrude.

"Jack—told us—something," Gertrude said faintly. "Oh, Halsey, what can he do now?"

"Jack!" I said scornfully. "Your Jack's flight is easy enough to explain now. And you helped him, both of you, to get away! You get that from your mother; it isn't an Innes trait. Do you know that every dollar you have, both of you, is in that bank?"

Gertrude tried to speak, but Halsey stopped her.

"That isn't all, Gertrude," he said quietly; "Jack is—under arrest."

"Under arrest!" Gertrude screamed, and tore the paper out of his hand. She glanced at the heading, then she crumpled the newspaper into a ball and flung it to the floor. While Halsey, looking stricken and white, was trying to smooth it out and read it, Gertrude had dropped her head on the table and was sobbing stormily.

I have the clipping somewhere, but it just now I can remember only the essentials.

On the afternoon before, Monday, while the Traders' bank was in the rush of closing hour, between two and three, Mr. Jacob Trautman, president of the Pearl Brewing Company, came into the bank to lift a loan. As security for the loan he had deposited some 300 International Steamship Company 5's, in total value \$300,000. Mr. Trautman went to the loan clerk, and after certain formalities had been gone through the loan clerk went to the vault. Mr. Trautman, who was a large and genial German, waited for a time, whistling under his breath. The loan clerk did not come back.

After an interval, Mr. Trautman saw the loan clerk emerge from the vault and go to the assistant cashier; the two went hurriedly to the vault. A lapse of another ten minutes, and the assistant cashier came out and approached Mr. Trautman. He was noticeably white and trembling. Mr. Trautman was told that through an oversight the bonds had been misplaced, and was asked to return the following morning, when everything would be made all right.

Mr. Trautman, however, was a shrewd business man, and he did not like the appearance of things. He left the bank apparently satisfied, and within 30 minutes he had called up three different members of the Traders' board of directors. At 3:30 there was a hastily convened board meeting, with some stormy scenes, and late in the afternoon a national bank examiner was in possession of the books. The bank had not opened for business Tuesday.

At 12:30 o'clock the Saturday before, as soon as the business of the day was closed, Mr. John Bailey, the cashier of the defunct bank, had taken his hat and departed. During the afternoon he had called up Mr. Aronson, a member of the board, and said he was ill, and might not be at the bank for a day or two. As Halsey was highly thought of, Mr. Aronson merely expressed a regret. From that time up

til Monday night, when Mr. Bailey had surrendered to the police, little was known of his movements. Some time after one on Saturday he had entered the Western Union office at Cherry and White streets and had sent two telegrams. He was at the Greenwood Country club on Saturday night, and appeared unlike himself. It was reported that he would be released under enormous bond some time that day, Tuesday.

The article closed by saying that while the officers of the bank refused to talk until the examiner had finished his work, it was known that securities aggregating a million and a quarter were missing. Then there was a diatribe on the possibility of such an occurrence; on the folly of a one-man bank, and of a board of directors that met only to lunch together and to listen to a brief report from the cashier, and on the poor policy of a government that arranges a three or four day examination twice a year. The mystery, it insinuated, had not been cleared by the arrest of the cashier. Before now minor officials had been used to cloak the misdeeds of men higher up. Inseparable as the words "speculation" and "peculation" have grown to be, John Bailey was not known to be in the stock market. His only words, after his surrender, had been: "Send for Mr. Armstrong at once." The telegraph message which had finally reached the president of the Traders' bank in an interior town in California, had been responded to by a telegram from Dr. Walker, the young physician who was traveling with the Armstrong family, saying that Paul Armstrong was very ill and unable to travel.

That was how things stood that Tuesday evening. The Traders' bank had suspended payment, and John Bailey was under arrest, charged with wrecking it; Paul Armstrong lay very ill in California, and his only son had been murdered two days before. I sat dazed and bewildered. The children's money was gone; that was bad enough, though I had plenty, if they would let me share. But Gertrude's grief was beyond any power of mine to comfort; the man she had chosen stood accused of a colossal embezzlement—and even worse. For in the instant that I sat there I seemed to see the coils closing around John Bailey as the murderer of Arnold Armstrong. Gertrude lifted her head at last and stared across the table at Halsey.

"Why did he do it?" she wailed. "Couldn't you stop him, Halsey? It was suicidal to go back!"

Halsey was looking steadily through the windows of the breakfast room, but it was evident he saw nothing.

"It was the only thing to do, Trude," he said at last. "Aunt Ray, when I found Jack at the Greenwood club last Saturday night, he was frantic. I can't talk until Jack tells me I may, but—he is absolutely innocent of all this, believe me. I thought, Trude and I thought, we were helping him, but it was the wrong way. He came back last night that the act of an innocent man."

"Then why did he leave at all?" I asked, unconvinced. "What innocent man would run away from here at three o'clock in the morning? Doesn't it look rather as though he thought it impossible to escape?"

Gertrude rose angrily. "You are not even just!" she flamed. "You don't know anything about it, and you condemn him!"

"I know that we have all lost a great deal of money," I said. "I shall believe Mr. Bailey innocent the moment he is shown to be. You profess to know the truth, but you cannot tell me! What am I to think?"

Halsey leaned over and patted my hand.

"You must take us on faith," he said. "Jack Bailey hasn't a penny that doesn't belong to him; the guilty man will be known in a day or so."

"I shall believe that when it is proved," I said grimly. "In the meantime, I take no one on faith. The Inneses never do."

Gertrude, who had been standing aloof at a window, turned suddenly. "But when the bonds are offered for sale, Halsey, won't the thief be detected at once?"

Halsey turned with a superior smile.

"It wouldn't be done that way," he said. "They would be taken out of the vault by some one who had access to it, and used as collateral for a loan in another bank. It would be possible to realize 80 per cent. of their face value."



# PROMINENT PEOPLE

## MEYER BOOSTS THE NAVY



"In time of peace prepare for war."

This old axiom seems to be the basis of operations in the navy department of the United States these days under the direction of Secretary George von Lengerke Meyer, who has been reorganizing the navy to bring about better efficiency and at the same time save money.

Of course Mr. Meyer would take all the dreadnoughts and other fighting craft congress would give him, but in recent days he has shown greater interest in making the best of what he has.

Virtual reorganization has been accomplished by Secretary Meyer in the year in which he has held the portfolio. He has brought about a saving of money in different directions, it is said, and many of the changes are the result, direct or indirect, of suggestions offered at his request by officers in all parts of the naval service.

Economy in the use of coal has been brought about by systematic firing, economy of steam, replacing defective joints and journals and stopping leaky valves. On the Montana a saving of fifteen tons of coal daily is due to systematic firing. With reference to oil the saving has been as great. On the battleship Georgia improved evaporators have reduced the cost of making fresh water 40 per cent.

Secretary Meyer's reorganization plans include systematic overhauling of the vessels at the shipyards after each cruise. This permits the continuous employment of expert machinists, many of whom formerly would be dismissed after a piece of work was done and not be ready to return when needed again. A saving of thousands of dollars in repair work has been effected by having repair shops on shipboard.

The establishment of a school of marine engineering at Annapolis is another means whereby Secretary Meyer hopes to train for special work engineer officers who give promise of being of special value in any part of his reorganization plan.

Mr. Meyer is a native of Massachusetts and bears the distinction of being one of two holdovers from the Roosevelt cabinet. He was postmaster general when Taft became president, but went to the navy department soon thereafter. He has had a splendid business training through his connection with some large commercial organizations and has sought to apply business rules to the navy with eminent success.

## BOOM HOOSIER GOVERNOR



Two years will pass before the political parties will be holding their national conventions and nominating presidential candidates, but this does not keep the politicians from expressing their views concerning the prospective standard bearers.

As in former years, various states will have the interests of their own statesmen at heart when convention time comes in 1912. From present appearances Indiana will be among these at the Democratic convention and the delegates from the Hoosier state probably will go to the great meeting with the intention of bringing about the nomination of their governor, Thomas R. Marshall.

Thomas Taggart, national committeeman from Indiana, was in Washington several days ago and in an interview said: "Indiana is for Marshall for president. Mr. Bryan has lots of friends in Indiana, but the Democrats of our state are for our governor for the nomination."

Governor Marshall was elected in 1908 and took office in January, 1909. His term does not expire until January, 1912. Indiana has always been the center of hot political battles in both parties and frequently has been placed in the doubtful list in presidential campaigns. Just at present the Republicans are having a hard fight for supremacy in the contest between insurgents and stand-patters. The Democrats seem to be working in harmony for the election of John W. Kern as senator to succeed Beveridge.

"There is many a slip betwixt cup and lip," is an old saying that may apply to candidates for political preference, and while it now seems that Governor Marshall has an excellent chance of going before the convention with a solid Indiana delegation behind him, something may develop to prevent between now and time for the nomination speeches to be made in the convention hall.

Governor Marshall is a man of pleasing personality and has shown in handling important matters that have come before him that he has ability. Presidential candidates, however, have not always been chosen because of their ability and pleasing manners, but geographical conditions have frequently played a more important part. The leaders may think when the time comes for choosing that New York or Ohio would be better for selecting a presidential candidate and it must be said in all fairness that both of those states have men in the Democratic ranks who may be considered good presidential timber.

## ROUSES NEW KING'S IRE



King George V. has started an "In Bad" club. Of course in an empire there are lots of people who are in bad on general principles and there have been many persons who have been persona non grata to the king or queen.

It is the Right Honorable Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, home secretary in the British cabinet, who is the original member of his majesty's "In Bad" club. Mr. Churchill knows how Francis Burton Harrison, member of congress from New York, roused the ire of the new king Mr. Harrison was told that he wasn't wanted at the White House. Whether they have exchanged cablegrams of condolence has not been made public.

George V. held a reception of the cabinet ministers at Marlborough house and discussed the political situation. After hearing Mr. Churchill's views the king told him his opinion about the outstanding controversies.

"I do not agree with your majesty," said Churchill. "Leave my presence immediately," said King George, and Churchill, abashed and crestfallen, slunk dejectedly away.

It was because he did not agree with President Taft that Mr. Harrison was barred from seeing the president, so the cases are somewhat similar. Mr. Churchill formerly held the position of president of the board of trade. He is a son of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, his mother (daughter of the late Leonard Jerome of New York) being now Mrs. George Cornwallis West, she having married the latter upon the death of Lord Randolph Churchill. Mr. Churchill was born in 1874 and was educated at Harrow and the military academy and Sandhurst. He served in South Africa and for a time was war correspondent, and in 1905-08 he was undersecretary of state for the colonies. He is a pronounced radical in his political views.

## GREAT BANK'S PRESIDENT



From plow boy in Iowa cornfields to president of the second largest bank in the United States is a record of which George M. Reynolds, head of the recently consolidated Continental and Commercial National banks of Chicago, is justly proud.

Mr. Reynolds is a man who never stepped out of the beaten track, never went outside of his business, never stopped working and never suffered a reverse. He has never lost a day from sickness, he has never taken a vacation that did not have business on the side, he does not drink, he does not smoke, he does not play bridge, he does not play golf, he has no favorite author, residence, he does not even take exercise.

He works nine hours a day. This is the only record that insidious luxury has made upon the habits of a busy life. He moved to work eleven hours when he first came to Chicago in 1897 to be cashier of the Continental National bank.

"Make your business your pleasure and marry early. These are my rules," said Mr. Reynolds. "I married at nineteen a girl in the little country town where I was cashier of the bank. I guess I have the banker's temperament, because I have always found my greatest pleasure in my business. I am a farmer's boy. I passed my boyhood in the fields of Iowa, where I was born just after the war, near the little town of Pandora. I spent my summers making garden, plowing, driving the reaper and pitching hay.

"They gave me my health and strength. I think I have had the grippe twice since I have lived in Chicago, but I have never had anything like a real sickness. I never paid a doctor a cent in my life for myself."

# CORN PLANTING IS OVER

THAT CANADIAN TRIP SHOULD NOW BE TAKEN.

If you had intended going to Canada for the purpose of purchasing land on which to establish a home and accompanying some land company, whose holdings you proposed to look over or to go up on your own account to select one hundred and sixty acres of land free, you should delay no longer.

Corn-planting is over, your wheat crop is well ahead, and you have a few weeks' time before you are required in the fields again. Now make your intended trip. Reports at hand show that the crop prospects in Canada were never better than they are today. The cool weather has not affected the crop, but if anything, it has been a benefit. There has been plenty of moisture and those who have had their land properly prepared look upon this year as likely to be one of the best they have had. A great many are going up this season who expect to pay two or three dollars an acre more than they were asked to pay last year. Others who wish to homestead are prepared to go farther from the line of railway than would have been necessary last year. Still it is worth it. So it will be with you.

Next year lands will be higher-priced and homesteads less accessible. There is a wonderful tide of immigration to Central Canada now. It is expected that one hundred and fifty thousand new settlers from the United States will be numbered by the end of the present year, an increase of fifty per cent over last year. In addition to this there will be upwards of one hundred thousand from the old country, which does not include those who may come from the northern countries of the Continent. These all intend to settle upon the land. The reader does not require an answer to the questions, "Why do they do it?" "Why are they going there in such large numbers?" Western Canada is no longer an experiment. The fact that one hundred and fifty million bushels of wheat were raised there last year as against ninety-five million the year previous, shows that the tiller of the soil in Central Canada is making money and it is safe to say that he is making more money than can be made anywhere else on the Continent in the growing of grain. He gets good prices, he has a sure and a heavy crop, he enjoys splendid railway privileges, and he has also the advantages of schools and churches and such other social life as may be found anywhere. It is difficult to say what district is the best. Some are preferred to others because there are friends already established. The Grand Trunk Pacific, on its way across the Continent, is opening up a splendid tract of land, which is being taken up rapidly. The other railways—the Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern are extending branch lines into parts inaccessible a couple of years ago. With a perfect network of railways covering a large area of the agricultural lands it is not difficult to secure a location. Any agent of the Canadian Government will be pleased to render you assistance by advice and suggestion, and a good plan is to write or call upon him. The Government has located these agents at convenient points throughout the States, and their offices are well equipped with a full supply of maps and literature.

## PROOF WANTED.



Mr. Sainly—Things do not always go as we plan. "Man proposes and—"

Miss Oldmeyer—He does, eh? Well, go ahead, sir, and prove that the saying is true.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. For children teething, soothes the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. Be a totter.

A genius is a man who tries to borrow money—and gets it.

Lewis' Single Binder, extra quality tobacco, costs more than other 5c cigars.

To love and to serve is the motto which every true knight should bear on his shield.—Downs.

## DON'T WAIT TOO LONG

Don't wait until the digestive organs are almost beyond help—don't wait until the bowels have become constipated and don't wait until the liver and kidneys have become weak and inactive; just take Hostetter's Stomach Bitters—at the very first sign of trouble. It will save you lots of suffering because its results are certain. Try it today for Indigestion, Cramps, Diarrhoea, Malaria, Fever and Ague. Be sure to get Hostetter's.