

# THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By **MARY ROBERTS RINEHART**  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **ROY WILSON**

SYNOPSIS.

Miss Innes, sponsor and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established summer headquarters at Sunnyside. Amidst numerous difficulties the servants described, as Miss Innes would say for the night she was startled by a dark figure on the stairs. Unusually nervous Gertrude, during the night, in the morning Miss Innes found a strange lock cut-button in a hamper. Gertrude and Halsey arrived with Jack Bailey. The house was attacked by a revolver 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 lock cut-button mysteriously disappeared. Detective Jamieson arrested Gertrude, who was so enraged to Jack Bailey, with whom she talked in the billiard room a few moments before the murder. Jamieson arrested Miss Innes of holding back evidence. He intended to take her to an empty room. The prisoner escaped down a laundry chute. Gertrude was arrested. A search found the other half of what was given to Jack Bailey's cut-button. Halsey responded and gave to Gertrude said she had given Bailey an unloaded revolver, bearing to give the murder. Gertrude's bank, defunct, was arrested for embezzlement. Halsey said Armstrong was in the hall at the lodge. The detective saw Louise and Arnold had talked in the billiard room. Louise was petrified. Louise told Halsey, that while she still loved him she was to marry another, and that he would describe her when he learned the whole story.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

Gertrude and Halsey went for a long walk that afternoon and Louise slept. Time hung heavy on my hands, and I did as I had fallen into a habit of doing lately—I sat down and thought things over. One result of my meditations was that I got up suddenly and went to the telephone. I had taken the most intense dislike to this Dr. Walker, whom I had never seen, and who was being talked of in the countryside as the fiance of Louise Armstrong.

I knew Sam Houston well. There had been a time, when Sam was a good deal younger than he is now, before he had married Anne Endicott, when I knew him even better. So now I felt no hesitation in calling him over the telephone. But when his office boy had given way to his confidential clerk, and that functionary had condescended to connect his employer's desk telephone, I was somewhat at a loss as to how to begin.

"Why, how are you, Rachel?" Sam said cheerfully. "Going to build that house at Rock View?" It was a 20-year-old joke of his.

"Sometimes, perhaps," I said. "Just now I want to ask you a question about something which is none of my business."

"I see you haven't changed a lot in a quarter of a century, Rachel." This was intended to be another jest. "Ask ahead; everything but my domestic affairs is at your service."

"Try to be serious," I said. "And let me tell you, how your firm made any plans for a house recently for a Dr. Walker at Casanova?"

"Yes, we have."

"Where was it to be built? I have a reason for asking."

"It was to be, I believe, on the Armstrong place. Mr. Armstrong himself consulted me, and the inference was—in fact, I am quite certain—the house was to be occupied by Mr. Armstrong's daughter, who was engaged to marry Dr. Walker."

When the architect had inquired for the different members of my family, and had finally rung off, I was certain of one thing, Louise Armstrong was in love with Halsey, and the man she was going to marry was Dr. Walker. Moreover, this decision was not new; marriage had been contemplated for some time. There must certainly be some explanation—but what was it?

That day I returned to Louise the telegram Mr. Hutton had opened. She seemed to understand, but an unhappy face I have never seen. She looked like a criminal whose reprieve is over, and the day of execution approaching.

see Halsey all that day, and the boy was frantic.

We had a quiet hour, Halsey and I, that evening, and I told him several things; about the request that we give up the lease to Sunnyside, about the telegram to Louise, about the rumors of an approaching marriage between the girl and Dr. Walker, and, last of all, my own interview with her the day before.

He sat back in a big chair, with his face in the shadow, and my heart fairly ached for him. He was so big and boyish! When I had finished he drew a long breath.

"Whatever Louise does," he said, "nothing will convince me, Aunt Ray, that she doesn't care for me. And up to two months ago, when she and her mother went west, I was the happiest fellow on earth. Then something made a difference. She wrote me that her people were opposed to the marriage; that her feeling for me was what it had always been, but that something had happened which had changed her ideas as to the future. I was not to write until she wrote me, and whatever occurred, I was to write the best I could of her. It sounded like a puzzle. When I saw her yesterday, it was the same thing, only, perhaps, worse."

"Halsey," I asked, "have you any idea of the nature of the interview between Louise Armstrong and Arnold the night he was murdered?"

"It was stormy. Thomas says once or twice he almost broke into the room, he was so alarmed for Louise."

On Friday night, then, I had gone to bed, resolved to get at once to sleep. Thoughts that insisted on obtruding themselves I pushed resolutely to the back of my mind, and I systematically relaxed every muscle. I fell asleep soon, and was dreaming that Dr. Walker was building his new house immediately in front of my windows; I could hear the thump-thump of the hammers, and then I waked to a knowledge that somebody was pounding on my door.

I was up at once, and with the sound of my footstep on the floor the low knocking ceased, to be followed immediately by sibilant whispering through the keyhole.

"Miss Rachel! Miss Rachel!" somebody was saying, over and over.

"Is that you, Liddy?" I asked, my hand on the knob.

"For the love of mercy, let me in!" she said in a low tone.

She was leaning against the door, for when I opened it, she fell in. She was greenish-white, and she had a red and black barred flannel petticoat over her shoulders.

"Listen," she said, standing in the middle of the floor and holding on to me. "Oh, Miss Rachel, it's the ghost of that dead man hammering to get in!"

"Sure enough, there was a dull thud—thud—thud—it came apparently from the wall."

"It's not a ghost," I said decidedly. "If it was a ghost it wouldn't rap; it would come through the keyhole." Liddy looked at the keyhole. "But it

occasion had no influence on her; she had seen the ghost, she persisted, and she wasn't going into the hall. But I got her over to my room at last, more dead than alive, and made her lie down on the bed.

The tappings, which seemed to have ceased for a while, had commenced again, but they were fainter. Halsey came over in a few minutes, and stood listening and trying to locate the sound.

"Give me my revolver, Aunt Ray," he said; and I got it—the one I had found in the tulip bed—and gave it to him. He saw Liddy there and divined at once that Louise was alone.

"You let me attend to this fellow, whoever it is, Aunt Ray, and go to Louise, will you? She may be awake and alarmed."

So in spite of her protests, I left Liddy alone and went back to the east wing. Perhaps I went a little faster past the yawning blackness of the circular staircase; and I could hear Halsey creaking cautiously down the main staircase. The rapping, or pounding, had ceased, and the silence was almost painful. And then suddenly, from apparently under my very feet, there rose a woman's scream, a cry of terror that broke off as suddenly as it came. I stood frozen and still.

Every drop of blood in my body seemed to leave the surface and gather around my heart. In the dead silence that followed it throbbed as if it would burst. More dead than alive, I stumbled into Louise's bedroom. She was not there!



Apparatus for Testing Grain Temperature.

Grain stored in one large bin will often heat. A good many dollars would be saved if the temperature down in the bin could be known at any time. This has been made possible by the Zeleny thermometer, says Popular Electricity. About 90 years ago it was found that two metals, such as bismuth and antimony, if heated while in contact would generate an electromotive force and this principle, that of the thermo-electric pile, is used in this device.

In the illustration one wire of nickel-copper is run in a conduit for protection down into a bin represented at the left. At various points taps are taken off with copper wire. An ordinary galvanometer and scale is placed on the wall near a contact board on which the wires terminate. When the lever is in the position shown, all the circuits are open and the scale (S) is moved so that on looking through the telescope the scale is shown by reflection from the little mirror in the galvanometer. Then the lever is moved over to point (1), for instance, this places the galvanometer in cir-

cuit with one of the thermo-electric junctions down in the bin. A slight current will then flow through the galvanometer due to the heating of the junction and will deflect the galvanometer mirror so that the scale as you look through the telescope will appear to move over. The distance which it moves indicates the temperature of the junction, as the scale is calibrated to read in temperatures. S. C. Corn.

If for the silo the large growing kinds of corn that will mature sufficiently early are to be preferred, as a much greater amount can be grown on an acre, and the process of siloing will put the crop in excellent condition for feeding; but such are not usually the best for curing to feed dry, as there is a liability of being too much waste.

This crop should not be planted too thickly, but space allowed for air and sun, and a fair amount of ears will add materially to the value of the fodder. Plant in rows sufficiently far apart to admit of cultivation which should be the same as for that grown for the grain.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### In the Early Morning.

I stood looking at the empty bed. The coverings had been thrown back, and Louise's pink silk dressing-gown was gone from the foot, where it had lain. The night lamp burned dimly, revealing the emptiness of the place. I picked it up, but my hand shook so that I put it down again, and got somehow to the door.

There were voices in the hall and Gertrude came running toward me. "What is it?" she cried. "What was that sound? Where is Louise?"

"She is not in her room," I said stupidly. "I think—it was she—who screamed."

Liddy had joined us now, carrying a light. We stood huddled together at the head of the circular staircase, looking down into its shadows. There was nothing to be seen, and it was absolutely quiet down there. Then we heard Halsey running up the main staircase. He came quickly down the hall to where we were standing.

"There's no one trying to get in. I thought I heard some one shriek. Who was it?"

Our stricken faces told him the truth. "Some one screamed down there," I said. "And—Louise is not in her room."

With a jerk Halsey took the light from Liddy and ran down the circular staircase. I followed him, more slowly. My nerves seemed to be in a state of paralysis; I could scarcely stop. At the foot of the stairs Halsey gave an exclamation and put down the light.

"Aunt Ray," he called sharply. "At the foot of the staircase, huddled in a heap, her head on the lower stair, was Louise Armstrong. She lay limp and white, her dressing-gown dragging loose from one sleeve of her night-dress, and the heavy braid of her dark hair stretching its length a couple of steps above her head, as if she had slipped down."

She was not dead; Halsey put her down on the floor and began to rub her cold hands, while Gertrude and Liddy ran for stimulants. As for me, I sat there at the foot of that ghostly staircase—sat, because my knees wouldn't hold me—and wondered where it would all end. Louise was still unconscious, but she was breathing better, and I suggested that we get her back to bed before she came to. There was something grisly and horrible to me, seeing her there in almost the same attitude and in the same place where we had found her brother's body. And to add to the similarity, just then the hall clock, far off, struck faintly three o'clock.

It was four before Louise was able to talk, and the first rays of dawn were coming through her windows, which faced the east, before she could tell us coherently what had occurred. I give it as she told it. She lay propped in bed, and Halsey sat beside her, unrebuffed, and held her hand while she talked.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"We Had a Quiet Hour," Halsey and I.

Another thing, Halsey," I said, "have you ever heard Louise mention a woman named Carrington, Nina Carrington?"

"Never," he said positively.

For try as we would, our thoughts always came back to that fatal Saturday night, and the murder. Every conversational path led to it, and we all felt that Jamieson was tightening the threads of evidence around John Bailey. The detective's absence was hardly reassuring; he must have had something to work on in town or he would have returned.

The papers reported that the cashier of the Traders' bank was ill in his apartments at the Knickerbocker—a condition not surprising, considering everything. The guilt of the defunct president was no longer in doubt; the missing bonds had been advertised, and some of them discovered. In every instance they had been used as collateral for large loans, and the belief was current that not less than a million and a half dollars had been realized. Every one connected with the bank had been placed under arrest, and released on heavy bond.

Was he alone in his guilt, or was the cashier his accomplice? Where was the money? The estate of the dead man was comparatively small—a city house on a fashionable street, Sunnyside, a large estate largely mortgaged, an insurance of \$50,000, and some personal property—this was all. The rest lay in speculation probably, the papers said. There was one thing which looked uncomfortable for Jack Bailey: He and Paul Armstrong together had promoted a railroad company in New Mexico, and it was rumored that together they had sunk large sums of money there. The business alliance between the two men added to the belief that Bailey knew something of the looting. His unexplained absence from the bank on Monday lent color to the suspicion against him. The strange thing seemed to be his surrendering himself on the point of departure. To me, it seemed the shrewd calculation of a clever rascal. I was not actively antagonistic to Gertrude's lover, but I meant to be convinced, one way or the other. I took no one on faith.

That night the Sunnyside ghost began to walk again. Liddy had been sleeping in Louise's dressing room on a couch, and the approach of dusk was a signal for her to barricade the entire suite. Situated as it was, beyond the circular staircase, nothing but an extremity of excitement would have made her pass it after dark. I confess myself that the place seemed to me to have a sinister appearance, but we kept that wing well lighted, and until the lights went out at midnight it was really cheerful, if one did not know its history.

London Mulberry Trees

sounds very much as though some one is trying to break into the house."

Liddy was shivering violently. I told her to get me my slippers and she brought me a pair of kid gloves, so I found my things myself and prepared to call Halsey. As before, the night alarm had found the electric lights gone; the hall, save for the night lamp, was in darkness, as I went across to Halsey's room. I hardly know what I feared, but it was a relief to find him there, very sound asleep, and with his door unlocked.

"Wake up, Halsey," I said, shaking him.

He stirred a little. Liddy was half in and half out of the door, afraid as usual to be left alone, and not quite daring to enter. Her scruples seemed to fade, however, all at once. She gave a suppressed yell, bolted into the room and stood tightly clutching the foot-board of the bed. Halsey was gradually waking.

"I've seen it," Liddy wailed. "A woman in white down the hall!"

I paid no attention.

"Halsey," I persevered, "some one is breaking into the house. Get up, won't you?"

"It isn't our house," he said sleepily. And then he roused to the exigency of the occasion. "All right, Aunt Ray," he said, still yawning. "If you'll let me get into something—"

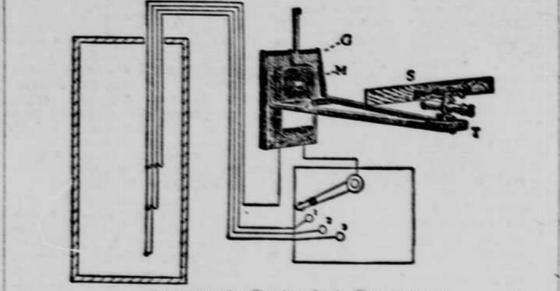
It was all I could do to get Liddy out of the room. The demands of the

Pinbury Circus gardens, which have just furnished fruit for the lord mayor, are by no means the sole city haunt of the mulberry tree, says the London Daily News. The "wisest of trees," as Pliny termed it, evidently "likes London," and flourishes even at the Charterhouse in murky Smithfield. A thriving little sapling has recently been planted in the picturesque northern corner of St. Paul's churchyard hard by the spot where once stood the famous Paul's cross. Asked how the prospective fruit would be protected from marauding street rascals, chapter gardener replied: "I hope he won't never bear no berries in my time."

London Mulberry Trees

## APPARATUS FOR TESTING TEMPERATURE OF GRAIN

Heat Is Not Uncommon in Bins and When Elevator Man Can Locate It Many Dollars Can be Saved—How Done.



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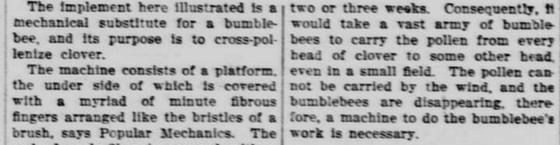
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This crop should not be planted too thickly, but space allowed for air and sun, and a fair amount of ears will add materially to the value of the fodder. Plant in rows sufficiently far apart to admit of cultivation which should be the same as for that grown for the grain.

## SUBSTITUTE FOR BUMBLE BEE



The implement here illustrated is a mechanical substitute for a bumble-bee, and its purpose is to cross-pollinate clover.

The machine consists of a platform, the under side of which is covered with a myriad of minute fibrous fingers arranged like the bristles of a brush, says Popular Mechanics. The end of each fiber is covered with a rubber-like substance to which the pollen of the clover will cling.

When driven across a field, the platform, or frame, moves up and down, the little fingers reaching down into the heads of the clover. All that is required of the operator of the machine is to know when the pollen is in the proper state to be carried from one blossom to another by the machine.

The clover pollen, unlike that of most plants, is heavy and has a tendency to adhere to the heart of the blossom. The period in which the pollen can be carried from one blossom to another lasts not longer than

two or three weeks. Consequently, it would take a vast army of bumblebees to carry the pollen from every head of clover to some other head, even in a small field. The pollen cannot be carried by the wind, and the bumblebees are disappearing, therefore, a machine to do the bumblebee's work is necessary.

Beet sugar factories are now in successful operation in 16 states, Colorado, California and Michigan being the leaders in the order named. The largest of the factories handles three thousand tons of beets per day. They pay the growers \$5.35 per ton and the acreage has increased to eight times the area of ten years ago. The business seems to be profitable for the growers and improves the market value of farm lands in the neighborhood of the factories. The by-products, pulp and molasses, are fed to stock, increasing the amount of cattle kept and fed in the factory districts.

## GOOD FARMING IS PROFITABLE

How Three Men and a Boy Operate Successfully 100-Acre Farm—Finds Time to Give Neighbor a Lift.

(By a HIRED MAN.)

The owner of our farm and another man besides myself and a sixteen-year-old boy as chore boy and messenger, farm 160 acres of land and farm it right too. In the spring we put four good horses on a riding plow or three on the big disk and keep them hustling along. We harrow mostly with four horses, because in this way one man and the team can cover nearly as much ground as two men and two teams. We hitch two horses to the drill and always use a two-horse riding cultivator for the corn.

When haying time comes we use a hay loader and a side delivery rake and the hay fork with the horse on the end of the rope makes the job comparatively easy.

Sometimes we lift out a neighbor and he gives us a lift later. I notice that the boss always takes care of his own hay and grain first before he works to any trade. Somehow, he seems to be always a little ahead of our neighbors so that this arrangement works well. Our grain is always stacked, although some of our neighbors thresh right out of the field. This saves time, but our boss seems to think that wheat that goes through a sweat in the stack keeps better in storage. Our threshing is done by a man with his own machine and crew.

Prevents Potatoes Sprouting. Consul General Richard Gunther, at Frankfurt, reports that a German publication, the Practical Adviser in Fruit Raising and Gardening, states that a new method for keeping potatoes and preventing sprouting consists in placing them on a layer of coke. Doctor Schiller of Brunswick, who has published the method, is of the opinion that the improved ventilation by means of coke is not alone responsible for the result, but believes that it is due to the oxidation of the coke, which, however, is a very slow one. Coke always contains sulphur, and it is very possible that the minute quantities of oxide of carbon and sulphur, which result from the oxidation, mixing with the air and penetrating among the potatoes, are sufficient greatly to retard sprouting. Potatoes so treated are said to keep in good condition until the following July.

Ingredients of Best Fertilizers. The highest agricultural value in fertilizers is found in those that are manufactured mainly from animal matter, such as animal bone, dried blood, animal tankage, nitrate of soda and high-grade potash salts.

To Prevent Gapes. Gapes have been prevented and cured by using oil of sassafras. Place a few drops in the food for prevention, and for a cure drop down the windpipe with a medical dropper. Put it on the head "na" under the wings for lice.

## LEADING MISTAKES IN LIFE

Writer Has Recorded Ten, of Which Most of Us Assuredly Have Our Share.

Some of us may be glad to be told that there are only ten life mistakes, for there seem to be so many more, but a recent writer has catalogued them. Perhaps these are only the ten leading ones from which the smaller errors arise. Let's look over the list and see how many of them are ours: First, to set up our own standard of right and wrong and judge people accordingly; second, to measure the enjoyment of others by our own; third, to expect uniformity of opinion in this world; fourth, to look for judgment and experience in youth; fifth, to endeavor to mold all dispositions alike; sixth, to look for perfection in our own actions; seventh, to worry ourselves and others with what cannot be remedied; eighth, to refuse to yield in immaterial matters; ninth, to refuse to alleviate, so far as it lies in our power, all which needs alleviation; tenth, to refuse to make allowance for the infirmities of others.

## EPIDEMIC OF ITCH IN WELSH VILLAGE

"In Dowlais, South Wales, about fifteen years ago, families were stricken wholesale by a disease known as the itch. Believe me, it is the most terrible disease of its kind that I know of, as it itches all through your body and makes your life an inferno. Sleep is out of the question and you feel as if a million mosquitoes were attacking you at the same time. I knew a dozen families that were so affected.

"The doctors did their best, but their remedies were of no avail whatever. Then the families tried a druggist who was noted far and wide for his remarkable cures. People came to him from all parts of the country for treatment, but his medicine made matters still worse, as a last resort they were advised by a friend to use the Cuticura Remedies. I am glad to tell you that after a few days' treatment with Cuticura Soap, Ointment and Resolvent, the effect was wonderful and the result was a perfect cure in all cases.

"I may add that my three brothers, three sisters, myself and all our families have been users of the Cuticura Remedies for fifteen years. Thomas Hugh, 1650 West Huron St., Chicago, Ill., June 29, 1909."

EASY TO ANSWER.



The Teacher—Who was it that climbed slowly up the ladder of success, carrying his burden with him as he went; who, when he reached the top gazed upon those far beneath him, and—

The Scholar (aged 8)—I know, ma'am. It was Pat O'Rourke, president of the Hodcarriers union.

A Knewing Girl. When young Lord Stanleigh came to visit an American family, the mis-tress told the servants that in so dressing him they should always say "Your Grace." When the young gentleman one morning met one of the pretty house servants in the hallway and told her that she was so attractive looking he thought he would kiss her, she demurely replied, clasping her hands on her bosom and looking up into his face with a beatific expression, "O Lord, for this blessing we are about to receive, we thank thee."—Lippincott's.

More Serious. "Mathilde Browne was very rude to an over-dressed old woman she met on the street the other day."

"I know the story. The old woman turned out to be Mathilde's very rich aunt, and now she's going to give all her money to a hospital for decrepit dogs."

"Nothing of the sort. In fact, it's worse. The old woman was the Brownes' new cook—and now they haven't any."

The Home of the Cod. There is just one other great cod bank in the world besides those off Newfoundland. It lies off Cape Agulhas, which is the southern tip of Africa, and south of the Cape of Good Hope. The Agulhas plateau is said to be almost a duplicate in size and richness of the north cod banks. But this is too far off, so there is little promise of its appeasing the hungry appetite of the world for cod.

For Breakfast—  
**Post Toasties**  
with cream or milk  
The smile that follows will last all day—  
"The Memory Lingers"  
Sold by Grocers.  
Figs. 10c and 15c  
POSTUM CEREAL CO., Inc.  
Battle Creek, Mich.