

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By MARY ROBERTS RINHART
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROY WINTER

SYNOPSIS

Miss Louise, coroner and guardian of Gertrude, had, on the previous afternoon, discovered the murderer of Arnold Armstrong. As she had been looking for the girl, she had started in a dark room, and had found a woman who had been hidden in a trunk. Gertrude and Louise arrived at the house at the same time, and Louise, who had been told by a neighbor that Arnold Armstrong was dead, was shocked to find the girl alive. She had been hidden in a trunk, and had been told by a neighbor that Arnold Armstrong was dead. She had been hidden in a trunk, and had been told by a neighbor that Arnold Armstrong was dead.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"You heard no other sound?" the coroner asked. "There was no one with Mr. Armstrong when he entered."

"It was perfectly dark. There were no voices and I heard nothing. There was just the opening of the door, the shot, and the sound of somebody falling."

"Then, while you went through the drawing room and upstairs to alarm the household, the criminal, whoever it was, could have escaped by the east door?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. That will do."

I flatter myself that the coroner got little enough out of me. I saw Mr. Jamieson smiling to himself, and the coroner gave me up, after a time. I admitted I had found the body, said I had not known who it was until Mr. Jarvis told me, and ended by looking up at Barbara Fitzhugh and saying that in re-entring the house I had not expected to be involved in any family scandal. At which she turned purple.

The verdict was that Arnold Armstrong had met his death at the hands of a person or persons unknown, and we prepared to leave Barbara Fitzhugh flustered out without waiting to speak to me, but Mr. Harton came up, as I knew he would.

"You have decided to give up the house, I hope, Miss Innes," he said. "Mrs. Armstrong has wired me again."

"I am not going to give it up," I maintained, "until I understand some things that are puzzling me. The day that the murderer is discovered, I will leave."

"Then, judging by what I have heard, you will be back in the city very soon," he said. "And I know that he supported the discredited cashier of the Traders' bank."

Mr. Jamieson came up to me as I was about to leave the coroner's office.

"How is your patient?" he asked with his old little smile.

"I have no patient," I replied, startled.

"I will put it in a different way, then. How is Miss Armstrong?"

"She—she is doing very well," I stammered.

"Good," cheerfully. "And our guest is it?"

"Mr. Jamieson," I said suddenly, "I wish you would come to Sunnyside and spend a few days there. The chest is not laid. I want you to spend one night at least watching the circular staircase. The murder of Arnold Armstrong was a beginning, not an end."

"He looked serious.

"Perhaps I can do it," he said. "I have been doing something else, but—well, I will come to-night."

We were very silent during the trip back to Sunnyside. I watched Gertrude closely and somewhat sadly. There was one glaring flaw in her story, and it seemed to stand out for every one to see. Arnold Armstrong had had no key, and yet she said she had locked the east door. He must have been admitted from within the house, over and over I repeated it to myself.

That night, as gently as I could, I told Louise the story of her step-brother's death. She sat in her big, pillow-filled chair, and heard me through without interruption. It was clear that she was shocked beyond words; if I had hoped to learn anything from her expression, I had failed. She was as much in the dark as we were.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Hole in the Wall.

My taking the detective out to Sunnyside raised an unexpected storm of protest from Gertrude and Halsey. I was not prepared for it, and I scarcely knew how to account for it. To me Mr. Jamieson was far less formidable under my eyes, when I knew what he was doing, than he was off in the city, waiting circumstances and motives to suit himself and learning what he wished to know about events at Sunnyside in some occult way. I was glad enough to have him there, when settlements began to come thick and fast.

A new element was about to enter into affairs; Monday, or Tuesday at the latest, would find Dr. Walker back in his green and white house in the village, and Louise's attitude to him in the immediate future would signi-

ness, as it might turn out. Then, too, Halsey's happiness or wretchedness, the return of her mother would mean, of course, that she would have to leave us, and I had become greatly attached to her.

From the day Mr. Jamieson came to Sunnyside, there was a subtle change in Gertrude's manner to me. It was elusive, difficult to analyze, but it was there. She was no longer frank with me, although I think her affection never wavered. At the time I laid the change to the fact that I had forbidden all communication with John Halsey, and had refused to acknowledge any engagement between the two. Gertrude spent much of her time wandering through the grounds, or taking long cross-country walks. Halsey played golf at the Country Club day after day, and after Louise left as she did the following week, Mr. Jamieson and I were much together. He played a fair game of cribbage, but he cheated at solitaire.

The night the detective arrived, Saturday, I had a talk with him. I



There Was Something Baffling in the Girl's Eyes.

told him of the experiences Louise Armstrong had had the night before on the circular staircase, and about the man who had so frightened Rosie on the drive. I saw that he thought the information was important, and to my suggestion that we put an additional lock on the east wing door he opposed a strong negative.

"I think it probable," he said, "that our visitor will be back again, and the thing to do is to leave things exactly as they are, to avoid roosting suspicion. Then I can watch for at least a part of each night and probably Mr. Innes will help us out. I would say as little to Thomas as possible. The old man knows more than he is willing to admit."

I suggested that Alex, the gardener, would probably be willing to help, and Mr. Jamieson undertook to make the arrangement. For one night, however, Mr. Jamieson preferred to watch alone. Apparently nothing occurred. The detective sat in absolute darkness on the lower step of the stairs, doing, he said afterwards, now and then. Nothing could pass him in either direction, and the door in the morning remained as securely fastened as it had been the night before. And yet one of the most inexplicable occurrences of the whole affair took place that very night.

Liddy came to my room on Sunday morning with a face as long as the moral law. She laid out my things as usual, but I missed her customary garrulousness. I was not regaled with the new cook's extravagance as to eggs, and even forbore to mention "that Jamieson," on whose arrival she had looked with silent distaste.

"What's the matter, Liddy?" I asked at last. "Didn't you sleep last night?"

"No, ma'am," she said stiffly.

"Did you have two cups of coffee at your dinner?" I inquired.

"No, ma'am," indignantly.

I sat up and almost upset my hot water—I always take a cup of hot water with a pinch of salt, before I get up. It times the stomach.

"Liddy Allen," I said, "stop combing that switch and tell me what is wrong with you."

Liddy heaved a sigh.

"Girl and woman," she said, "I've been with you 25 years, Miss Rachel, through good temper and bad—the idea! and what I have taken from her in the way of sulks!—but I guess I can't stand it any longer. My trunk's packed."

"Who packed it?" I asked, expecting from her tone to be told she had gossiped to find it done by some ghostly hand.

"I did," Miss Rachel, you won't believe me when I tell you this house is haunted. Who was it fell down the clothes chute? Who was it scared Miss Louise almost into her grave?"

"I'm doing my best to find out," I said. "What in the world are you driving at?" She drew a long breath.

"There is a hole in the trunkroom wall, dug out since last night. It's big enough to put your head in, and the plaster's all over the place."

"Nonsense!" I said. "Plaster is always falling."

But Liddy clenched that.

"Just ask Alex," she said. "When he put the new cook's trunk there last night the wall was as smooth as this. This morning it's dug out, and there's the plaster on the cook's trunk. Miss Rachel, you can get a dozen detectives

and put one on every stair in the house, and you'll never catch anything. There's some things you can't handcuff."

Liddy was right. As soon as I could, I went up to the trunkroom, which was directly over my bedroom. The plan of the upper story of the house was like that of the second floor, in the main. One end, however, over the east wing, had been left only roughly finished, the intention having been to convert it into a ballroom at some future time. The maids' rooms, trunkroom, and various storerooms, including a large airy linen room, opened from a long corridor, like that on the second floor. And in the trunkroom, as Liddy had said, was a fresh break in the plaster.

Not only in the plaster, but through the lathing, the aperture extended. I reached into the opening, and three feet away, perhaps, I could touch the bricks of the partition wall. For some reason the architect in building the house had left a space there that struck me, even in the surprise of the

ment. I had expected a secret room, at the very least, and I think even Mr. Jamieson had fancied he might at last have a clue to the mystery. There was evidently nothing more to be discovered; Liddy reported that everything was serene among the servants, and that none of them had been disturbed by the noise. The maddening thing, however, was that the nightly visitor had evidently more than one way of gaining access to the house, and we made arrangements to redouble our vigilance as to windows and doors that night.

Halsey was inclined to pooh-pooh the whole affair. He said a break in the plaster might have occurred months ago and gone unnoticed, and that the dust had probably been stirred up the day before. After all, we had to let it go at that, but we put in an uncomfortable Sunday Gertrude went to church, and Halsey took a long walk in the morning. Louise was able to sit up, and she allowed Halsey and Liddy to assist her downstairs late in the afternoon. The east veranda was shady, green with vines and palms, cheerful with cushions and lounging chairs. We put Louise in a stroller chair, and she sat there passively enough, her hands clasped in her lap.

We were very silent. Halsey sat on the rail with a pipe, openly watching Louise, as she looked broodingly across the valley to the hills. There was something baffling in the girl's eyes; and gradually Halsey's boyish features lost their glow at seeing her about again, and settled into grim lines. He was like his father just then.

We sat until late afternoon, Halsey growing more and more moody. Shortly before six he got up and went into the house, and in a few minutes he came out and called me to the telephone. It was Anna Whitcomb, in town, and she kept me for 20 minutes, telling me the children had had the measles and how Mme. Sweeney had botched her new gown.

When I finished, Liddy was behind me, her mouth a thin line.

"I wish you would try to look cheerful, Liddy," I groaned. "Your face would sour milk." But Liddy seldom replied to my gibes. She folded her lips a little tighter.

"He called her up," she said oracularly, "he called her up, and asked her to keep you at the telephone, so she could talk to Miss Louise. A thankless child is sharper than a serpent's tooth."

"Nonsense!" I said brusquely. "I might have known enough to leave them. It's a long time since you and I were in love, Liddy, and—we forget."

Liddy sniffed.

"No man ever made a fool of me," she replied virtuously.

"Well, something did," I retorted.

CHAPTER XIX.

Concerning Thomas.

"Mr. Jamieson," I said, when we found ourselves alone after dinner that night, "the inquest yesterday seemed to me the merest recapitulation of things that were already known. It developed nothing new beyond that story of Dr. Stewart's, and that was volunteered."

"An inquest is only a necessary formality, Miss Innes," he replied. "Unless a crime is committed in the open inquest does nothing beyond getting evidence from witnesses while events are still in their minds. The police step in later. You and I both know how many important things never transpired. For instance: The dead man had no key, and yet Miss Gertrude testified to a fumbling at the lock, and then the opening of the door. The piece of evidence you mention, Dr. Stewart's story, is one of those things we have to take cautiously; the doctor has a patient who wears black and does not raise her veil. Why, it is the typical mysterious lady! Then the good doctor comes across Arnold Armstrong, who was a graceless scamp—de mortuis—what's the rest of it?—and he is quarreling with a lady in black. Behold, says the doctor, they are one and the same."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER XX.

Mule Discovers Rich Mine.

Ownership of Property Subject of Interesting Decision by Spokane Judge.

Judge Norman S. Buck, a member of the lower house of the Washington legislature died at Spokane. Judge Buck was a pioneer resident of that district and of the Coeur d'Alene mining district and was widely known and popular.

In the late '80's Judge Buck rendered a decision while sitting on the bench in Idaho that attracted attention throughout the nation, as it decided the ownership of the Bunker Hill and Sullivan mine, the greatest silver-lead producer in the world, still said to worth \$10,000,000 and having an annual output of over \$2,000,000.

The mine was located by Phil O'Rourke and his partner during a prospecting tour in the winter of 1884-85 as a result of the uncovering of the outcropping through the paving of a pack mule which they had found astray and appropriated. "Dutch

Jake" Goetz and Harry Baer owned the mule, and Judge Buck decided that they were therefore entitled to a grubstake interest in the mine. They sold their interest for \$300,000, which became the foundation for a much greater fortune accumulated in business in Spokane.

Sameness.

"There is a certain sameness about natural scenery," said the man who looked bored.

"Do you mean to compare a magnificent mountain with the broad expanse of the sea?"

"Yes. Wherever you find a spot of exceptional beauty somebody is sure to decorate it with sardine tins and biscuit boxes."

The Natural Result.

"I wonder," she sighed, "why they always talk of the sad sea waves?"

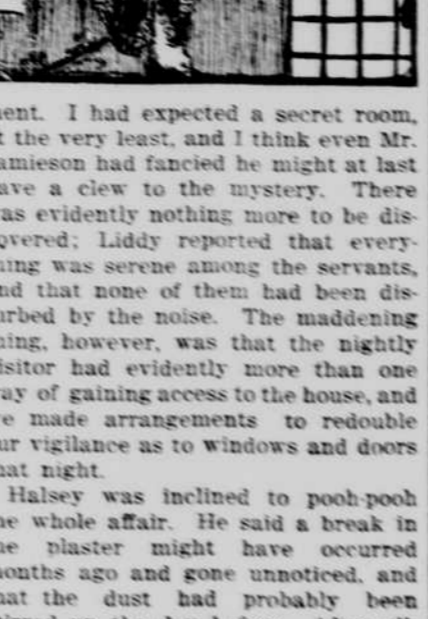
"Because," he answered, "the sea is always blue."



Mule Discovers Rich Mine.

WORK HORSES SHOULD RECEIVE GOOD TREATMENT

Keep Them in Condition By Feeding Grain. Work Early in Morning and Late at Night, With Long Rest at Noon.



When the Day's Work is Ended.

Work horses should be grain fed; a horse cannot work and keep in condition on grass alone. An average sized horse at hard work will require about 16 pounds of good mixed hay, 10 pounds of cracked corn and oats and 4 pounds of wheat bran per day. A bushel of fine-cut hay weighs about 8 pounds, and corn chops about 45 pounds to the bushel. One-half peck of corn mixed with one quart of wheat bran, mixed with one bushel of cut hay, adding just enough water to make the meal stick to the hay, makes a good meal for the horse. Give this ration three times a day, with a little long hay at night. If you have a pasture close to the stables, turn the animal out at night, after the mixed feed is eaten.

Work early in the morning and late in the evening and give a long rest during the hottest part of the day. This is best for man and horse. Rest and water the teams between meals. Water that has been exposed to the sun for an hour or two is better for the horse than cold well water. Mix one quart of wheat bran in each bucket of water. Let the horse rest and cool off before watering. One gallon may be given to each one at one time. Have fly nets—a guano sack cut open may be used in place of a leather net to keep off flies. Have strong but light harness. Keep the collars clean, wash the shoulders off with cold water when brought in, and rub dry. For chafed shoulders dust with powdered air-slacked lime or dress with crude petroleum. Keep the stables clean. Open windows and doors for the air to circulate. This is necessary for the health of the horse. Be careful with the teams when labor is heavy and the day hot. If a horse commences to flag and show signs of exhaustion, he should be rested at once, removed to a shady spot, his mouth and nose sponged with cold water, and allowed to rest for an hour or so. Many a valuable animal is permanently injured through pure carelessness on the part of the driver. In harvesting, have the work well planned out; let each man have his part to do. Keep steady at it, with no rushing. More can be done and that without injury to either man or horse.

TO INCREASE FARM CROPS

All Progressive Agriculturists Interested in Question of How to Make Lands Yield More.



When the Day's Work is Ended.

old civilization, hundreds of years before the Christian era began, and agriculture is still the most important industry in Italy, as 85 per cent of the soil is productive.

"In this connection, the published statistics showing the amount of commercial plant food materials used in Italy are significant. With a total area of less than 115,000 square miles (about twice the area of Illinois), Italy used 1,147,700 tons of commercial fertilizers in 1907."

"The great factor has been the introduction of fertilizers and purchased feeding stuffs. As soon as you can introduce on a farm some extraneous source of fertility you can raise the standard of production."—A. D. Hall, Rothamsted Experiment Station, Harpenden, England.

Tuberculosis in Chickens.

Tuberculosis in chickens has been found in five cases this year by the State Hygienic laboratory at the University of Wisconsin. In no case, however, has it been proven that people have contracted the disease through eating such fowls.

"It is quite evident that the chickens get the disease by pecking about in barnyards where there are cows of people infected with it," said Dr. M. P. Ravenel, director of the laboratory. "We had a chicken scabber, and us not long ago from the neighborhood of Janesville. We found the bird had tuberculosis, and upon visiting the farm it had come from discovered that nearly every animal in the entire dairy herd there was badly infected."

"Few cases of the disease among fowls have been reported hitherto, only two or three having been known in the United States until this year."

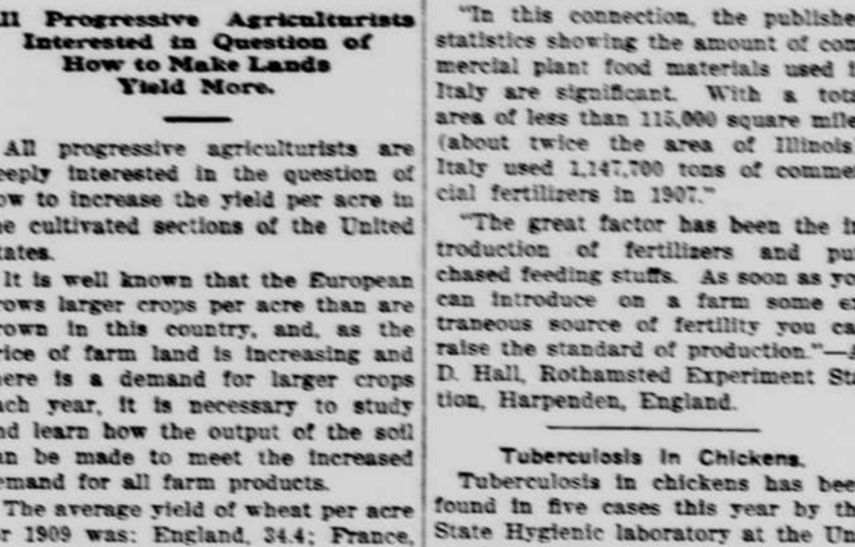
Saddle Grafting.

Saddle grafting is used for small plants, the stock being cut to a wedge and the scion cut and set upon the wedge. In splicing grafting of the simplest form the two parts are cut across diagonally and laid together, being tied together with a string and waxed. It is useful for soft or tender wood which will not admit of splitting.

Great Run of Hogs.

The greatest run of hogs in one day at Chicago was \$7,716 on February 10, 1908. Over 300,000 have been received in a week, more than 1,100,000 in a month and nearly 9,000,000 in a year.

GENERAL PURPOSE STABLE



The accompanying illustration shows the elevation and floor plan of one of the barns on the farm of the Wisconsin agricultural college at Madison. It was designed for a general purpose barn and as will be seen it is very conveniently arranged. It might be said that there is too much room taken up by the driveways, but they make the interior accessible to wagons and manure spreaders and prove most convenient. Very desirable features are the five room box-stalls, feed and harness rooms and interior water trough.

In stormy weather the stock can be easily and comfortably cared for in

such a barn. Windows are plenty and of sufficient size to permit a free entrance of sunlight. The walls are high and allow a large place on the second floor for the storage of hay, fodder and grain.

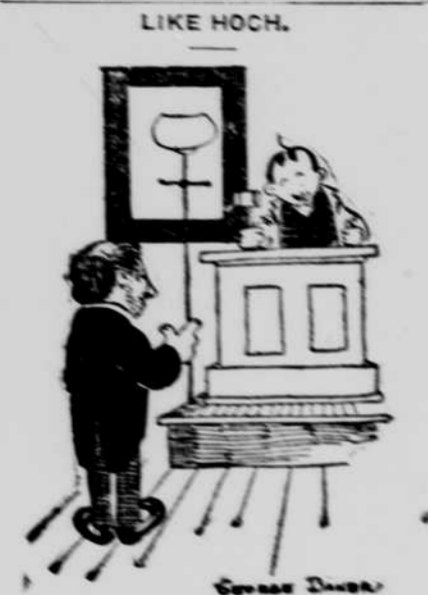
Altogether, this plan is an admirable one for the general farmer.

Silage Experiment.

Twenty-three acres of corn after rye, planted June 1, last year, with cowpeas drilled between rows at the first cultivation, produced at the New Jersey Experiment station 214.5 tons of silage. The total cost was \$3.51 per ton in the silo.

Four Pellets of
MUNYON'S
DYSPEPSIA
every hour
will heal, soothe
and invigorate worn out
stomachs and relieve distress.

CURE



LIKE HOCH.
"What have you to say to this charge of bigamy; why did you have so many wives?"
"Well, judge, I expected to weed out a few of them later."

Casey at the Bat.
This famous poem is contained in the Coca-Cola Baseball Record Book for 1910, together with records, schedules for both leagues and other valuable baseball information compiled by authorities. This interesting book sent by the Coca-Cola Co., of Atlanta, Ga., on receipt of 10 cent postage. Also copy of their booklet "The Truth About Coca-Cola" which tells all about this delicious beverage and why it is so pure, wholesome and refreshing. Are you ever hot-tired-thirsty? Drink Coca-Cola—it is cooling, relieves fatigue and quenches the thirst. At soda fountains and car bonated in bottles—So everywhere.

His Soft Answer.
And this is the sort of excuse you put up for coming home two hours late for dinner and in such a condition—that you and that disreputable Augustus Jones were out hunting mushrooms, you wretch! And where, pray, are the mushrooms?
"Here my dear, in my vest pocket; and while you say so many of 'em, my dear, we had lots of fun—GUS an' I—huntin' 'em."

The Nurse's Opinion.
A nurse had been called as a witness to prove the correctness of the bill of a physician.
"Let us get at the facts in the case," said the lawyer, who was doing a cross-examination. "Didn't the doctor make several visits after the patient was out of danger?"
"No, sir," answered the nurse. "I considered the patient in danger as long as the doctor continued his visits."

An Unnecessary System.
"You ought to have a burglar alarm system in your house," said the electrical supply agent, "so that you will be awakened if a burglar raises one of the windows or opens a door at night."
"No burglar can get in here while we are peacefully sleeping," replied Mr. Newpop. "We are wearing our baby."

Reformation.
"You say you are a reformer?"
"Yep," replied the local boss; "of the deepest dye."
"But you were not always so."
"No. The reformers reformed our town last year and I want to reform it back again."

Playing the Market.
"Curbroke never pays for his meat until a month afterward."
"So I hear. Prices in the meantime go up, and he feels as though he'd made something."—Puck.
Young girls ought to make the most of their birthdays, for in after years they cease to have them.
You have got to know a business before you can make a success of it.

A COOL PROPOSITION
And a Sure One.
The Body Does Not Feel Heat Unpleasantly if it has Proper Food—
Grape-Nuts

People can live in a temperature which feels from ten to twenty degrees cooler than their neighbors enjoy, by regulating the diet.

The plan is to avoid meat entirely for breakfast, use a goodly allowance of fruit, either fresh or cooked. Then follow with a saucer containing about four heaping teaspoonfuls of Grape-Nuts, treated with a little rich cream. Add to this about two slices of crisp toast with a meager amount of butter, and one cup of well-made Postum.

By this selection of food the bodily energy is preserved, while the hot, carbonaceous foods have been left out. The result is a very marked difference in the temperature of the body, and to this comfortable condition is added the certainty of ease and perfect digestion, for the food being partially digested is quickly assimilated by the digestive machinery.

Experience and experiment in food, and its application to the human body has brought out these facts. They can be made use of and add materially to the comfort of the user.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pgs. "There's a Reason."