

# THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By **MARY ROBERTS RINEHART**  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **RAY WHITNEY**  
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## SYNOPSIS.

Miss Innes, sponsor and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established country headquarters at Sunnyside. The servants Gertrude and Halsey arrive with their master. The house was attacked by a burglar and Arnold Armstrong was found shot to death in the hall. Miss Innes and Halsey were arrested on the spot. He and Jack Bailey had disappeared. Gertrude revealed that she was engaged to Jack Bailey, with whom she lived in the hillside room shortly before the murder. Detective Jameson advised Miss Innes of the murder. Halsey was arrested because of an injury to his hand. Halsey and Bailey were arrested because of an injury to his hand. Halsey and Bailey were arrested because of an injury to his hand. Halsey and Bailey were arrested because of an injury to his hand.

## CHAPTER XXI—Continued.

"Gee-whizzler," he said. And I saw Mr. Jameson's eyebrows go up. "Gee-whizzler," he commented. "Well, young man, you don't seem to know much about yourself."

"I've tried it all the week," Mrs. Tate broke in. "The boys know a word or two of German, but he doesn't know where he lived, or anything about himself."

But there was no help for it: I turned and followed Gertrude slowly to the house.

The frequent intrusions of the house had effectually prevented any relaxation after dusk. We had redoubled our vigilance as to bolts and windows, but as Mr. Jameson had suggested, we allowed the door at the east entry to remain as before, locked by the Yale lock only. To provide only one possible entrance for the intruder, and to keep a constant guard in the dark at the foot of the circular staircase, seemed to be the only method.



Mary Anne Had Gone White.

These arrangements were carefully kept from the servants, who were only commencing to sleep at night, and who retired, one and all, with barred doors and lamps that burned full until morning.

The house was quiet again Wednesday night. It was almost a week since Louise had encountered some one on the stairs, and it was four days since the discovery of the hole in the trunk room wall. Arnold Armstrong and his father rested side by side in the Casanova churchyard, and at the Zion African church, on the hill, a new mound marked the last resting-place of poor Thomas.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### A Ladder Out of Place.

At dinner Mr. Jameson suggested sending a man out in the place for a couple of days, but Halsey was certain there would be nothing more, and felt that he and Alex could manage the situation. The detective went back to town early in the evening, and by nine o'clock Halsey, who had been playing golf—as a man doing anything to take his mind away from trouble—was sleeping soundly on the big leather settee in the living room.

I sat and knitted, pretending not to notice when Gertrude got up and wandered out into the starlight. As soon as I was satisfied that she had gone, however, I went out cautiously. I had no intention of eaves-dropping, but I wanted to be certain that it was Jack Bailey she was meeting. Too many things had occurred in which Gertrude was, or appeared to be, involved, to allow anything to be left in question.

I turned to Mary.

"This is due to your carelessness," I said. "If we had all been murdered in our beds it would have been your fault." She shivered. "Now, not a word of this through the house, and send Alex to me."

The effect on Alex was to make him apoplectic with rage, and with it all I fancied there was an element of satisfaction. As I look back, so many things are plain to me that I wonder I could not see at the time. It is all known now, and yet the whole thing was so remarkable that perhaps my stupidity was excusable.

Alex leaned down the chute and examined the ladder carefully.

"It is caught," he said with a grim smile. "The fools, to have left a warning like that! The only trouble is, Miss Innes, they won't be apt to come back for a while."

Liddy said with dignity. "And you had come through what I have, you would be a bundle of nerves, too. Miss Rachel, I'd be thankful if you'd give me my month's wages to-morrow. I'll be going to my sister's."

"Very well," I said, to her evident amazement. "I will make out the check. Warner can take you down to the noon train."

Liddy's face was really funny.

"You'll have a nice time at your sister's?" I went on. "Five children, hasn't she?"

"I shouldn't regard that in the light of a calamity," I replied.

Until late that evening Halsey and Alex worked at the chute. They forced down the ladder at last, and put a new bolt on the door. As for myself, I sat and wondered if I had a deadly enemy, intent on my destruction.

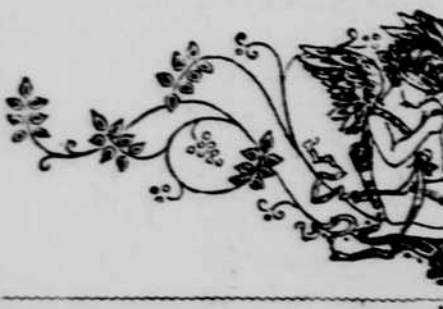
I was growing more and more nervous. Liddy had given up all pretense at bravery, and slept regularly in my dressing room on the couch, with a prayer-book and a game knife from the kitchen under her pillow, thus preparing for both the natural and the supernatural. That was the way things stood that Thursday night, when I myself took a hand in the struggle.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### While the Stables Burned.

About nine o'clock that night Liddy came into the living room and reported that one of the housemaids declared she had seen two men slip around the corner of the stable. Gertrude had been sitting staring in front of her, jumping at every sound. Now she turned on Liddy pettishly.

"I declared, Liddy," she said. "You are a bundle of nerves. What if Eliza did see some men around the stable? It may have been Warner and Alex."



### Well, Mary," I said encouragingly.

"Well, Mary," I said encouragingly. "What's the matter? Don't dare to tell me the soap is out."

"No, ma'am, Miss Innes." She had a nervous habit of looking first at my one eye and then at the other, her own eyes shifting ceaselessly, right eye, left eye, right eye, until I found myself doing the same thing. "No, ma'am, I was asking you what the ladder left up the clothes chute?"

"The what?" I screamed, and was sorry the next minute. Seeing her suspicions were verified, Mary Anne had gone white, and stood with her eyes shifting more wildly than ever.

"There's a ladder up the clothes chute, Miss Innes," she said. "It's up that tight I can't move it, and I didn't like to ask for help until I spoke to you."

It was useless to dissemble: Mary Anne knew now as well as I did that the ladder had no business to be there. I did the best I could, however. I put her on the defensive at once.

"Then you didn't lock the laundry last night?"

"I locked it tight, and put the key in the kitchen on its nail."

"Very well, then you forgot a window."

Mary Anne hesitated.

"Yes," she said at last. "I thought I locked them all, but there was one open this morning."

I went out of the room and down the hall, followed by Mary Anne. The door into the clothes chute was securely bolted, and when I opened it I saw the evidence of the woman's story. A prunus ladder had been brought from where it had lain against the stable and now stood upright in the clothes shaft, its end resting against the wall between the first and second floors.



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"You'll have a nice time at your sister's?" I went on. "Five children, hasn't she?"

"You are two big babies," she said soothingly. "Neither one of you could get along for an hour without the other. So stop quarreling and be good. Liddy, go right up and lay out aunt's night things. She is going to bed early."

After Liddy had gone I began to think about the men at the stable, and I grew more and more anxious. Halsey was aimlessly knocking the billiard balls around in the billiard room, and I called to him.

"Halsey," I said when he sauntered in. "Is there a policeman in Casanova?"

"Constable," he said laconically. "veteran of the war, one arm; in office to conciliate the G. A. R. element. Why?"

"Because I am uneasy tonight," I said. "I told him what Liddy had said. 'Is there any one you can think of who could be relied on to watch the outside of the house to-night?'"

"We might get Sam Bohannon from the club," he said thoughtfully. "It wouldn't be a bad scheme. He's a smart shark, and with his mouth shut and his shirt-front covered, you couldn't see him a yard off in the dark."

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# THE AMERICAN HOME

## W. A. RADFORD EDITOR

Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 394 Fifth Ave., Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

It is one of the beautiful signs of present day building that the interior arrangement of a house is given more attention and is considered more important than its exterior appearance. Home builders have outgrown that period when matters of design were regulated by what the neighbors would think.

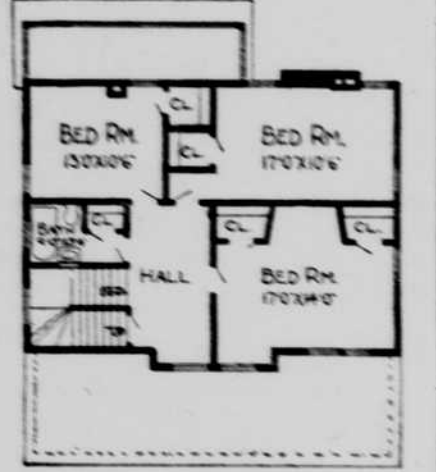
A generation ago every house had to have its front and back parlor; the former preferably furnished with a round table and bay window arrangement on the corner and the exterior elaborately supplied with fancy ornaments. If the building was to command any distinction at all in the community, and all of this was to the general detriment of the home interior.

A modern house, on the other hand, is designed to meet the needs of the family life, providing rooms that are well lighted, well ventilated, of proper size and so arranged that the work of house keeping may be reduced to its lowest terms.

The architect draws his floor plans and lets the exterior appearance largely take care of itself. Yet, in spite of this, the modern houses planned in this way are more attractive in their general exterior appearance than were the pretentious, over-ornamented dwellings of old.

Simplicity and directness are the two first requirements for successful design—elements which come strongly into play in this present-day idea of home planning.

In the accompanying design the most important consideration was to have the first floor so planned that an impression of spaciousness be gained upon entering the front door; at the same time it was desired that



Second Floor Plan.

adaptation of the Dutch colonial style. Cement plaster on metal lath is employed for the walls. A number of attractive color schemes are feasible for its use; cream color for the cement plaster and brown for the wood trim around the doors and windows being perhaps as good as any. The roof is of slate.

The cost of this house is estimated at \$4,000.

## FUSSY ABOUT THE CHANGE

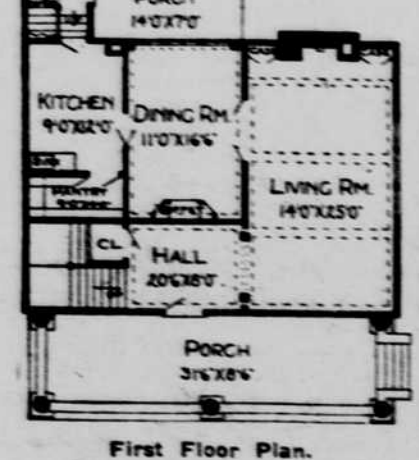
Man, Unlike Woman, Does Not Like the Way It Usually is Given to Him.

To be sure, the change we receive in these days of the high cost of most



the dining room and kitchen be separated from the rest of the house at times, when a certain privacy there is desired. This is a very frequent requirement; yet, it is surprising how often our houses as they are built fulfill but part of this requirement.

A glance at the first-floor plan will show an arrangement which accomplishes the purpose very successfully in this case. Entrance is had at the center in front into a spacious square hall; to the left the stairway ascends to the second floor; to the right through the column archway is the large living room, 14 by 25 feet, occupying the entire left side of the house. This is a beautiful room, with



First Floor Plan.

beamed ceiling and having a large brick fireplace at its further end. The dining room is in the center at the rear, directly back of the entrance hall. This room is reached by way of a broad doorway from the side of the living room, double doors separating the two when desired.

Both the living room and dining room are exceptionally well lighted, the three window groups being both attractive in appearance and efficient for lighting and ventilation. It is seldom that one finds so good an arrangement as this in a house of square outline, which, of course, is the most economical to build. It is usually necessary, in order to secure the desirable features mentioned, to

## The Colors in the Rainbow.

A learned German scientist, in the course of an exhaustive study of the evolution of the sense of color, discovered that the rainbow has not looked the same to men in all ages. He found that it was at first thought to be all of one color. To Homer, he says, the rainbow seemed purple white. At a later period Xenophon saw in it "a purple cloud, red and yellow green."



Tramp—Help me, kind sir. I have seen better days dan dis— Mr. Jinks—So have I. This weather is awful.

### THE KEYSTONE TO HEALTH IS HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

When the digestion is bad you need something that will not only relieve but will strengthen the digestive organs and assist them back to their normal condition. This calls for the Bitters first of all. Try it.

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## STUNG BY BASE INGRATITUDE

Bowery Denizen Seemingly Had Right to Be Indignant at Old Friend's Attitude.

"You remember an irate Bowery denizen. He's dat stiff dat's doin' time up der river—Sing Sing—bogleary—ten years. Well, you know all I done for dat stiff. When he was pinched didn't I put up der coin for der lawyers? Didn't I pay der witness? Sure I did. De oder day I tinks I'll just go an' see dat mutt just t' leave him know his frien's ain't tied de can on 'im. So I drives out to d' jail and goes into d' warden's office and he says! Dye getter send me card in. Me card! Dye get dat? Well, anyhow, I writes my name on a piece o' paper an' a guy takes it into Jim Burke, an' what d' you t'ink dat stiff tells dat guy to tell me?"

"I've no idea," said the listener.

"He tells him," concluded the angry one, "t' tell me dat he ain't in!"—From Success Magazine.

The Stylish Fisherman. One of the guests at a fashionable summer resort in West Virginia got himself up in his best "fishing togs" and started along a certain mountain stream.

Meeting a native, he asked: "Here, my good man! Kindly tell me whether it would be worth my while to try fishing in this vicinity?"

"The native regarded him scornfully. "The fishin' ain't good," he finally said, "but I ain't informed as to how you values your time."—Lippincott's.

The discovery that he has invested in a salted mine is apt to make a man peppery.

## There Are Reasons

Why so many people have ready-at-hand a package of

## Post Toasties

The DISTINCTIVE FLAVOUR delights the palate.

The quick, easy serving right from the package—requiring only the addition of cream or good milk is an important consideration when breakfast must be ready "on time."

The sweet, crisp food is universally liked by children, and is a great help to Mothers who must give to the youngsters something wholesome that they relish.

The economical feature appeals to everyone—particularly to those who wish to keep living expenses within a limit.

Post Toasties are especially pleasing served with fresh sliced peaches.

"The Memory Lingers"

Postum Cereal Co., Ltd. Battle Creek, Mich.