

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

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SYNOPSIS.

Miss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established summer headquarters at Sibley side. The servants desert. Gertrude and Halsey arrive with Jack Bailey. The house was awakened 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. Gertrude revealed that she was engaged to Jack Bailey, with whom she talked in the billiard room shortly before the murder. Detective Jamieson accused Miss Innes of holding back evidence. He imprisoned an intruder in an empty room. The prisoner escaped. Gertrude was suspected because of an injured foot. Halsey reappears and says he and Bailey were called away by a telegram. Cashier Bailey of Paul Armstrong's bank, defunct, was arrested for embezzlement. Paul Armstrong's death was announced. Halsey's fiancée, Louise Armstrong, told Halsey that while she still loved him, she was to marry another. It developed that Dr. Walker was the man. Louise was found at the bottom of the circular staircase. Recovering consciousness, she said something had brushed by her on the stairway and she fainted. Bailey is suspected of Armstrong's murder. After "seeing a ghost," Thomas, the lodgekeeper, was found dead with a slip in his pocket bearing the name of "Lucien Wallace." Dr. Walker asked Miss Innes to vacate in favor of Mrs. Armstrong. She refused. A note from Bailey to Gertrude arranging a meeting at night was found.

CHAPTER XXI—Continued.

"Grossmutter," he said. And I saw Mr. Jamieson's eyebrows go up. "German," 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." Mr. Jamieson wrote something on a card and gave it to her. "Mrs. Tate," he said, "I want you to do something. Here is some money for the telephone call. The instant the boy's mother appears here, call up that number and ask for the person whose name is there. You can run across to the drug store on an errand and do it quietly. Just say, 'The lady has come.'" "The lady has come," repeated Mrs. Tate. "Very well, sir, and I hope it will be soon. The milk bill alone is almost double what it was." "How much is the child's board?" I asked. "Three dollars a week, including his washing." "Very well," I said. "Now, Mrs. Tate, I am going to pay last week's board and a week in advance. If the mother comes she is to know nothing of this visit—absolutely not a word, and, in return for your silence, you may use this money for—something for your own children." Her tired, faded face lighted up, and I saw her glance at the little Tates' small feet. Shoes, I divined—the feet of the genteel poor being almost as expensive as their stomachs. As we went back Mr. Jamieson made only one remark; I think he was laboring under the weight of a great disappointment. "Is King's a children's outfitting place?" he asked. "Not especially. It is a general department store." He was silent after that, but he went to the telephone as soon as we got home, and called up King & Co. in the city. After a time he got the general manager, and they talked for some time. When Mr. Jamieson hung up the receiver he turned to me. "The plot thickens," he said with his ready smile. "There are four women named Wallace at King's, none of them married, and none over 20. I think I shall go up to the city to-night. I want to go to the Children's hospital. But before I go, Miss Innes, I wish you would be more frank with me than you have been yet. I want you to show me the revolver you picked up in the tulip bed." So he had known all along! "It was a revolver, Mr. Jamieson," I admitted, cornered at last, "but I cannot show it to you. It is not in my possession."

CHAPTER XXII.

A Ladder Out of Place.

At dinner Mr. Jamieson suggested sending a man out in his 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 does anything to take his mind away from trouble—was sleeping soundly on the big leather davenport 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 went slowly across the lawn, skirted the hedge to a break not far from the lodge, and found myself on the open road. Perhaps 100 feet to the left the path led across the valley to the Country club, and only a little way off was the foot-bridge over Casanova creek. But just as I was about to turn down the path I heard steps

coming toward me, and I shrank into the bushes. It was Gertrude, going back quickly toward the house.

I was surprised. I waited until she had had time to get almost to the house before I started. And then I stepped back again into the shadows. The reason why Gertrude had not kept her tryst was evident. Leaning on the parapet of the bridge in the moonlight, and smoking a pipe, was Alex, the gardener. I could have throttled Liddy for her carelessness in reading the torn note where he could hear. And I could cheerfully have choked Alex to death for his audacity.

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

The frequent invasions of the house had effectually prevented any relaxation after dusk. We had redoubled our vigilance as to bolts and window-locks, but, as Mr. Jamieson 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 invader, and to keep a constant guard in the dark at the foot of the circular staircase, seemed to be the only method.

In the absence of the detective, Alex and Halsey arranged to change off, Halsey to be on duty from ten to two, and Alex from two until six. Each man was armed, and, as an additional precaution, the one off duty slept in a room near the head of the circular staircase and kept his door open, to be ready for emergency.

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.

Louise was with her mother in town, and, beyond a polite note of thanks to me, we had heard nothing from her. Dr. Walker had taken up his practice again, and we saw him now and then flying along the road, always at top speed. The murder of Arnold Armstrong was still unavenged, and I remained firm in the position I had taken—to stay at Sunnyside until the thing was at least partly cleared. And yet, for all its quiet, it was on Wednesday night that perhaps the boldest attempt was made to enter the house. On Thursday afternoon the laundress sent word she would like to speak to me, and I saw her in my private sitting room, a small room beyond the dressing room.

Mary Anne was embarrassed. She had rolled down her sleeves and tried a white apron around her waist, and she stood making folds in it with fingers that were red and shiny from her soap-suds.

"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 optics shifting ceaselessly, right eye, left eye, right eye, until I found myself doing the same thing. "No, ma'am. I was askin' did you want 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'm," 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 pruning 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.

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."

"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 of 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 declare, 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."

"Warner is in the kitchen, miss," Liddy said with dignity. "And if 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 moon 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?"

"That's it," Liddy said, suddenly bursting into tears. "Send me away, after all these years, and your new shawl only half done, and nobody knowin' how to fix the water for your bath."

"It's time I learned to prepare my own bath." I was knitting complacently. But Gertrude got up and put her arms around Liddy's shaking shoulders.

"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 aunty'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." And 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 ducky, and with his mouth shut and his shirt-front covered, you couldn't see him a yard off in the dark."

Halsey conferred with Alex, and the result, in an hour, was Sam. His instructions were simple. There had been numerous attempts to break into the house; it was the intention, not to drive intruders away, but to capture them. If Sam saw anything suspicious outside, he was to tap at the east entry, where Alex and Halsey were to alternate in keeping watch through the night.

As before, Halsey watched the east entry from ten until two. He had an eye to comfort, and he kept vigil in a heavy oak chair, very large and deep. We went upstairs rather early, and through the open door Gertrude and I kept up a running fire of conversation. Liddy was brushing my hair, and Gertrude was doing her own, with a long free sweep of her strong, round arms.

"Did you know Mrs. Armstrong and Louise are in the village?" she called. "No," I replied, startled. "How did you hear it?"

"I met the oldest Stewart girl to-day, the doctor's daughter, and she told me they had not gone back to town after the funeral. They went directly to that little yellow house next to Dr. Walker's, and are apparently settled there. They took the house furnished for the summer."

"Why, it's a bandbox," I said. "I can't imagine Fanny Armstrong in such a place."

"It's true, nevertheless. Ella Stewart says Mrs. Armstrong has aged terribly, and looks as if she is hardly able to walk."

I lay and thought over some of these things until midnight. The electric lights went out then, fading slowly until there was only a red-hot loop to be seen in the bulbs, and then even that died away and we were embarked on the darkness of another night. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Condemns Sunshine Fad.

A well-known medical man condemns emphatically the form of vanity that leads people on their holidays to do their utmost to get sunburned. "Workers in city offices," he says, "who go into the country or to the seashore for only one or two weeks will deliberately sit about hatless in the blazing sun, so that they may come back looking brown and healthy. As often as not this practice will send them home far less fit for work than they were when the f started, for even if one escapes sunstroke the effects of the sun's rays upon the uncovered head are very bad. They will cause dizziness, headache, nausea and loss of appetite and will often upset the digestive system for many days. There are ways of avoiding the more serious effects of the sun, but personally I would advise the city dweller who must have a brown face to stain it with walnut juice and wear a broad-brimmed hat like a sane and sensible individual."

Making Him Go.

"I don't think I shall go to the poker party to-night." "That's one of the truest things you have done for quite awhile." "Jax owes me \$5 which he was to pay me at the party to-night, and which I had decided to give to you to go shopping with, but I am really too tired to go out; guess I'll let it go this time." "That is just like you! If it was anything you wanted to do you would go in a minute, but when it is something for your wife you are too tired! You will go to that poker party to night or you will hear from me!"

A RARE SHEEP OPPORTUNITY

Enormous Receipts at Market—Farmers and Sheep Feeders Can Stock Up at Bargain Prices.

CAUSES OF THE RUN.

200,000 sheep and lambs received in three days—such, in round numbers, is the record-breaking run thus far this week on the Chicago market!

This enormous over-marketing of sheep is the result of temporary and peculiar causes, and offers a rare opportunity for farmers and sheep feeders to stock up at bargain prices.

This great rush of sheep to market comes mainly from Montana and adjoining western range country, and cannot last more than two or three weeks longer. It is no evidence of over-production. Its principal causes are the recent drought, which so burned out the grass that there will be very little winter feed on the range, and which prevented the putting up of sufficient hay to carry any considerable number of sheep over winter, while last winter was a very severe one and hay was so closely fed that there is no old hay left over for the purpose. The consequence is that sheep owners are forced to market the bulk of their sheep this fall, or else lose them in the fierce storms of winter.

The most serious cause of the present general liquidation, however, is the restriction of the range through occupation and fencing by dry farmers, who are grain growers, and not live stock raisers. The tremendous rush of these settlers upon the range within the last three years, and especially within the last twelve months, is hard for eastern people to realize. It is not alone the area actually enclosed by these settlers, but the breaking up thereby of vast regions of grazing lands into such small sections that they are no longer available to stockmen for grazing their flocks, which is one of the main reasons why the sheep supplies of the western range country are being more closely marketed this year than ever before in the history of the trade.

This means an inevitable shortage at market later on and next year, and with a constantly growing demand for both mutton and wool, it would seem that future good prices are assured.

The western range country has heretofore been the chief source of sheep market supplies, but unless the farmers of the corn belt begin at once to raise many more sheep than they have ever done before, there will be a great scarcity of both mutton and wool before long in this country. Moreover, there is a world-shortage of live stock of all kinds. All Europe is short of sheep, and even Australia's supply is declining with rapidity. The same general causes that exist in this country are operating in other countries also. Populations are growing rapidly everywhere, while grazing areas are being reduced. As pasture land is turned to production of cereals, sheep raising declines.

Thousands of American farmers can turn this situation to their benefit, through increase of both soil fertility and money profit, by beginning right now each to keep a small flock of sheep upon his farm. And by taking advantage of the present opportunity to buy healthy, thrifty, growing western range sheep at bargain prices upon the heavily supplied Chicago market, they can stock up at minimum cost, whether they want foundation stock for breeding or the growing kind to fatten for market.

A Distant Compliment.

They were talking about a certain man who did not seem to be particularly popular. At last one of the group decided that it was time for him to say something complimentary about the subject of the conversation. "That stepchild of his is a good little feller," he remarked, "and they say that he takes after his father, too."—Youth's Companion.

"Smoke" Was Mosquitoes.

A cloud of "smoke" which appeared to be arising from the cathedral tower at Belgrade was found, when the fire brigade arrived, to be a large cluster of mosquitoes, compact at the base and tapering toward the top.

New Idea for Pontoon Bridge.

Denmark is trying out a new pontoon bridge in which the pontoons are anchored beneath the surface of the water, the bridge remaining motionless irrespective of the rise and fall of the tide.

Chinese Seek Education.

The sudden demand for popular education in China is shown by the fact that the school attendance in one province has increased 8,000 per cent. in five years.

Say Raisins Impart Energy.

Speaking of the announcement by scientists that people may become energetic by eating raisins, the Chicago Record-Herald puts in the comment that the trouble is that most of the energy produced by eating raisins has to be expended in removing the seeds.

Abraham's Predicament.

The Sunday school class had reached the part in the lesson where "Abraham entertained the angel unaware." "And what now is the meaning of 'unaware?'" asked the teacher. "There was a bashful silence, then the smallest girl in the class piped up: 'Unaware is what you take off before you puts on your nightie.'—Lippincott's.

When a man seals up his head he is apt to think he is holding the fort.

TERRIBLE SUFFERING ENDED.

How An Allegan, Mich., Woman Regained Her Health.

Mrs. Robert Schwabe, R. F. D. No. 2, Allegan, Mich., says: "Doctors could not cure me and I was rapidly running into Bright's disease. Kidney secretions were like blood and I arose 8 to 10 times at night to void them. I became frightened at my condition. My sight began to fail and pains in my back were like knife-thrusts. I cried for hours, unable to control my nerves. After I started using Doan's Kidney Pills, I began to feel better and soon I was cured. I am a living testimonial of their merit." Remember the name—Doan's. For sale by all dealers. 50 cents a box. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

The Place of Honor.

Farmer Hodge was of the good, old-fashioned school, and he always gave a feast to his hands at harvest time. It was harvest time and the feast was about to commence.

Giles was the oldest hand and the hostess, with beaming cordiality, motioned him to the seat by her right hand. But Giles remained silently unresponsive.

"Come," said the hostess, "don't be bashful, Mr. Giles—he was just Giles on ordinary occasions—you've a right to the place of honor, you know." Giles deliberated a moment, then spoke.

"Thank you kindly, Mrs. Hodge," he said, "but if it's all the same to you, I'd rather sit opposite this pud-den!"

Who Scratched the Bathtub?

Nice, porcelain bathtub, too; and all the folks thought it was just lovely. But somebody was washing it out and used common laundry soap—the yellow kind with rosin and strong caustic in it—and away went the enamel and the finish. (If that kind of soap will harm porcelain enamel, what won't it do to clothes?) "Easy Task Soap," the pure, white, antiseptic, five-cent-a-cake kind, will not harm anything but dirt. Try two cakes and get your money back if it isn't as represented.

History of Red Cross Seal.

"Charity stamps," first used in Boston in 1862 for the soldiers' relief funds during the Civil war, were the original forerunners of the Red Cross Christmas seal, which will be used this year to bring happiness and cheer to millions. The Delaware Anti-Tuberculosis society in 1907 for the first time in America made use of a stamp for the purpose of getting revenue to fight consumption. In a hastily organized campaign of only three weeks they realized \$3,000. The next year, 1908, the American Red Cross conducted the first national tuberculosis stamp campaign. From this sale \$135,000 was realized for the anti-tuberculosis movement. In 1909, under many adverse conditions, \$250,000 was realized from these stamps. This year the slogan of the tuberculosis fighters and the Red Cross is "A Million for Tuberculosis From Red Cross Seals in 1910."

Prudent Bridegroom.

"The uncertainties of life in New York are reflected in wedding rings," said the jeweler. "Of all the wedding rings I have sold this season more than half were brought back after the ceremony to have the date put on. The rest of the inscription was engraved when the ring was purchased, but in order that the date might be correct it was cautiously omitted until after the knot was tied."

News to Her.

He—Concerning love, everything possible has been said and thought. She (cooly)—But not to me.—Fleegende Blaetter.

COFFEE WAS IT.

People Slowly Learn the Facts.

"All my life I have been such a slave to coffee that the very aroma of it was enough to set my nerves quivering. I kept gradually losing my health but I used to say 'Nonsense, it don't hurt me.'"

"Slowly I was forced to admit the truth and the final result was that my whole nervous force was shattered."

"My heart became weak and uncertain in its action and that frightened me. Finally my physician told me, about a year ago, that I must stop drinking coffee or I could never expect to be well again."

"I was in despair, for the very thought of the medicines I had tried so many times nauseated me. I thought of Postum but could hardly bring myself to give up the coffee."

"Finally I concluded that I owed it to myself to give Postum a trial. So I got a package and carefully followed the directions, and what a delicious, nourishing, rich drink it was! Do you know I found it very easy to shift from coffee to Postum and not mind the change at all!"

"Almost immediately after I made the change I found myself better, and as the days went by I kept on improving. My nerves grew sound and steady, I slept well and felt strong and well-balanced all the time."

"Now I am completely cured, with the old nervousness and sickness all gone. In every way I am well once more."

It pays to give up the drink that acts on some like a poison, for health is the greatest fortune one can have. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pgs. "There's a Reason."



Mary Anne Had Gone White