

The noblest study of mankind is weather.

Evidently the law of gravitation has not been repealed.

For 50 cents now you can buy either a melon or a dozen lemons.

There are few joy-riders back of the lawn mower or mowing machine this year.

Last year Great Britain cut its liquor bill \$54,000,000, yet nobody died of thirst.

Keep cool and be cool. The mental attitude has much to do with physical condition.

Bowling has been introduced into England. It will now become popular at Newport.

Since the comet has departed people have to charge up to sun spots whatever they cannot understand.

Regarded merely as a peril, it is much easier to dodge a coming aeroplane than it is to dodge a motorcycle.

It is said that a substitute for radium has been found. Some druggists to the contrary, a substitute is not always something "just as good."

"Music an aid to dairy management!" That's an old story. Was there ever a comic opera without a variation of the merry, merry milkmaid chorus?

An airship passenger service between London and Paris is being talked of. People who expect to take that route should go to the trouble of first learning to swim.

And now they say that either a phonograph or a pretty singing milkmaid furnishing music in the stall makes a cow give more milk. The cow's artistic discernment is apparently not highly developed.

It is estimated that over 15,000,000 words were spoken during the recent session of congress. All honor should be shown the stenographers who stayed at their posts and listened to every one of them.

An expert at the National Educational association convention in Boston says that children are naughty when they are ill. Will the old saying have to be revised to read "Spare the castor oil and spoil the child?"

The northern Michigan dairyman who claims to have discovered that music sweet and low from a phonograph woos milk from his cows, might try for ice cream by giving his devoted animals the "cold shoulder."

The dean of Norwich indignantly denies that King George ever had a morganatic wife and adds: "King George is a man who, with a wife of like disposition to himself, has been wont during his leisure to sit in his garden with his young children round him, just the same as any of us might do in our own patch of garden." Also the dean might have told us how the king's tomatoes are coming on.

The poor should be remembered this hot weather, for their sufferings are considerable. Ice often means health to the sick and pure milk life for babies, but these are luxuries for which the prisoners of poverty must look to their more fortunate brethren to supply them. There should also be generous public support of the various fresh-air enterprises which do so much toward ameliorating the condition of the poor in a large city during the heated term.

The discovery of defective armor plate on the battleships Utah and North Dakota after the ships had been commissioned has caused agitation in the navy department favorable to a plan for the inspection of the plating of every battleship in service. It is fair to assume that if two battleships could be provided with faulty plates without discovery until the ships were in active service there may be other ships with poor plates that may have escaped detection.

The predicament of two men with their wives who were held into the night off Chicago by the failure of the engine of their gasoline launch, and who were rescued only after the women had sacrificed their skirts as torches, should recommend the lashing of sweeps on the decks of such craft, so that men can help themselves in emergencies. A pair of muscular arms applied to a sweep would soon re-establish confidence after accident by giving the disabled craft motion enough to creep toward shore.

And now a Torrington, Conn., man is planning to walk to California. Isn't it about time for some ambitious California citizen to set out to walk east to New England?

That bitter taste in the mouth experienced on first arising in the morning, says an authority, may be removed by taking a little nux vomica mixed with water. Should the experimenter, however, desire to remove all taste from his mouth permanently this can be accomplished by adding more nux vomica.

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROY WINTER

SYNOPSIS.

Miss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, established summer headquarters at Sunnyside. Amidst numerous difficulties the servants deserted. As Miss Innes looked up for the night she was startled by a dark figure on the veranda. Unseen noises disturbed her during the night. In the morning Miss Innes found a strange link cuff-button in a hamper. Gertrude and Halsey arrived with Jack Bailey. The house was awakened by a revolver shot and Arnold Armstrong was found shot to death in the lawn. He and Jack Bailey had disappeared. The link cuff-button mysteriously disappeared. Detective Jamieson arrived. Gertrude revealed she was engaged to Louise. Bailey's revolver she talked in the billiard room a few moments before the murder. Jamieson accused Miss Innes of holding back evidence. He imprisoned an intruder in an empty room. The prisoner escaped down a laundry chute. Gertrude was suspected. A negro found the other half of what proved to be Jack Bailey's cuff-button. Halsey responds to a telegram. Gertrude said she had given Bailey an unloaded revolver fearing to give him a loaded weapon. Cashier Bailey of Paul Armstrong's bank, defunct, was arrested for embezzlement. Halsey said Armstrong wrecked his own bank and could clear Bailey. Paul Armstrong's death was announced. Halsey's fiancée, Louise Armstrong, was found at the lodge. The lodgekeeper said Louise and Arnold had a long talk the night of the murder. Louise was prostrated. Louise told Halsey, that while she still loved him she was to marry another, and that he would despise her when he learned the whole story. It developed that Dr. Walker and Louise were to be married. A prowler was heard in the house. Louise was found at the bottom of the circular staircase. Louise said she had heard a knock at the door and answered it. Something brushed past her on the stairway and she fainted.

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 renting 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 parson or persons unknown, and we prepared to leave. Barbara Fitzhugh founced 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 knew that he suspected 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 odd little smile.

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

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

"She is doing very well," I stammered.

"Good," cheerfully. "And our ghost? Is it laid?"

"Mr. Jamieson," I said suddenly, "I wish you would come to Sunnyside and spend a few days there. The ghost 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 out to-night."

We were very silent during the trip back to Sunnyside. I watched Gertrude closely and somewhat sadly. To me 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, where I knew what he was doing, than he was off in the city, twisting 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 excitements 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 signify Halsey's happiness or wretchedness, as it might turn out. Then, too, 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



There Was Something Baffling in the Girl's Eyes.

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 Bailey, 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 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 rousing 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, dozing, 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 she even forbore to mention "that Jamieson," on whose arrival she had looked with silent disfavor.

"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 tones 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 wakened 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 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 discovery, as an excellent place for a conflagration to gain headway.

"You are sure the hole was not here yesterday?" I asked Liddy, whose expression was a mixture of satisfaction and alarm. In answer she pointed to the new cook's trunk—that necessary adjunct of the migratory domestic. The top was covered with fine white plaster, as was the floor. But there were no large pieces of mortar lying around—no bits of lathing. When I mentioned this to Liddy she merely raised her eyebrows. Being quite confident that the gap was of unholy origin, she said not concern herself with such trifles as a bit of mortar and lath. No doubt they were even then heaped neatly on a gravestone in the Casanova churchyard!

I brought Mr. Jamieson up to see the hole in the wall, directly after breakfast. His expression was very odd when he looked at it, and the first thing he did was to try to discover what object, if any, such a hole could have. He got a piece of candle, and by enlarging the aperture a little was able to examine what lay beyond. The result was nil. The trunkroom, although heated by steam heat, like the rest of the house, boasted of a fireplace and mantel as well. The opening had been made between the flue and the outer wall of the house. There was revealed, however, on inspection, only the brick of the chimney on one side and the outer wall of the space extended only to the flooring. The breach had been made about four feet

from the floor, and inside were all the missing bits of plaster. It had been a methodical ghost.

It was very much of a disappointment. 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 pooch-pooch 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 steamer 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. Sweeny 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 he 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 the 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.)

Sameness.

"There is a certain sameness about natural scenery," said the man who looks 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 tins."

Not So Bad.

Nervous Lady—Don't your experiments frighten you terribly, professor? I hear that your assistant met with a horrible death by falling 4,000 feet from a balloon.

Professor—Oh, that report was greatly exaggerated.

Nervous Lady—Exaggerated! How?

Professor—It wasn't much more than 2,500 feet that he fell.—Puck.



Ella—A man is as old as he feels.
Stella—How about woman?
Ella—She is as young as she can bluff people into thinking she is.

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 2c stamp for 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 carbonated in bottles—so everywhere.

It Was the Other Way.

"Mr. Jones," said the senior partner in the wholesale dry goods house to the drummer who stood before him in the private office, "you have been with us for the past ten years."

"Yes, sir."

"And you ought to know the rules of the house. One of them is that no man of ours shall take a side line."

"But I have none, sir."

"But you have lately got married."

"Yes; but can you call that a side line, Mr. Jones?"

"Technically, it may not be."

"You needn't fear that having a wife is going to bring me in off a trip any sooner!"

"Oh, I don't. It is the fear that having a wife at home you'll want to stay out on the road altogether!"

The Wrong Sort.

An old Irish peasant was one Sunday sitting in front of his cottage puffing away furiously at his pipe.

Match after match he lighted, pulling hard at the pipe the while, until at last the ground all round his feet was strewn with struck matches.

"Come in to your dinner, Patsy," at length called out his wife.

"Faith, and Oi will in a minute, Biddy," said he. "Moike Mulrooney has been a-telling me that if Oi smoked a bit av ghlass Oi cud see the shpots on the sun. Oi don't know whether Moike's been a-fooling me or whether Oi've got hold av the wrong kind of ghlass."—Scraps.

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?"

"Eere zay are, m' dear, in m' ves' pocket, and w'ile zay ain't so many of 'em, m' dear, we had lots of fun—Gus an I—huntin' 'em."

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.

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. They 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."