

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROY WATERS
SYNOPSIS.

Miss Innes, spinster and guardian of Gertrude and Halsey, combined 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. Unusually noisy disturbances during the night. In the morning Miss Innes found a strange note pinned to a bumper. 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 hall. Miss Innes found Halsey's revolver on the lawn. He and Jack Bailey had disappeared. The link cut between mysteriously disappeared. Detective Jamieson arrived. Gertrude revealed she was engaged to Jack Bailey, with whom she talked in the ballroom 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 reappears and says he and Bailey left in response to a telegram. Gertrude said she had given Bailey an unloaded revolver, fearing to give him a loaded weapon. Captain Bailey of Paul Armstrong's bank, defunct, was arrested. Halsey's own bank 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 would marry another, and that he should 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 arrested 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 stairs and she fainted. Bailey is suspected of Armstrong's murder. After "seeing a ghost," Thomas, the lodgekeeper, was found dead. A slip was found in his pocket bearing the name "Lucien Wallace, 14 Elm street, Richfield."

CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

"Certain."
"In what part?"
"In the east wing."
"Can you tell me when these intrusions occurred, and what the purpose seemed to be? Was it robbery?"
"No," I said decidedly. "As to time, once on Friday night a week ago, again the following night, when Arnold Armstrong was murdered, and again last Friday night."
The doctor looked serious. He seemed to be debating some question in his mind, and to reach a decision.
"Miss Innes," he said, "I am in a peculiar position; I understand your attitude, of course; but—do you think you are wise? Ever since you have come here there have been hostile demonstrations against you and your family. I'm not a croaker, but—take a warning. Leave before anything occurs that will cause you a life-long regret."
"I am willing to take the responsibility," I said coldly.
I think he gave me up then as a poor proposition. He asked to be shown where Arnold Armstrong's body had been found, and I took him there. He scrutinized the whole place carefully, examining the stairs and the lock. When he had taken a formal farewell I was confident of one thing, Dr. Walker would do anything he could to get me away from Sunnyside.

CHAPTER XXI.

Fourteen Elm Street.

It was Monday evening when we found the body of poor Thomas. Monday night had been uneventful; things were quiet at the house and the peculiar circumstances of the old man's death had been carefully kept from the servants. Rosie took charge of the dining room and pantry, in the absence of a butler, and, except for the warning of the Casanova doctor, everything breathed of peace.
Affairs at the Traders' bank were progressing slowly. The failure had hit small stockholders very hard, the minister of the little Methodist chapel in Casanova among them. He had received as a legacy from an uncle a few shares of stock in the Traders' bank, and now his joy was turned to bitterness; he had to sacrifice everything he had in the world, and his feeling against Paul Armstrong, dead, as he was, must have been bitter in the extreme. He was asked to officiate at the simple services when the dead banker's body was interred in Casanova churchyard, but the good man providentially took cold, and a substitute was called in.
A few days after the services he called to see me, a kind-faced little man, in a very bad frock-coat and laundered tie. I think he was uncertain as to my connection with the Armstrong family, and dubious whether I considered Mr. Armstrong's taking away a matter for condolence or congratulation. He was not long in doubt.
I liked the little man. He had known Thomas well, and had promised to officiate at the services in the rickety African Zion church. He told me more of himself than he knew, and before he left I astonished him—and myself, I admit—by promising a new carpet for his church. He was much affected, and I gathered that he had yearned over his ragged chapel as a mother over a half-clothed child.
"You are laying up treasures, Miss Innes," he said brokenly, "where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal."
I sent him home in the car, with a bunch of hothouse roses for his wife, and he was quite overwhelmed. As for me, I had a generous glow that

was cheap at the price of a church carpet. I received less gratification—and less gratitude—when I presented the new silver communion set to St. Barnabas.

I had a great many things to think about in those days. I made a list of questions and possible answers, but I seemed only to be working around in a circle. I always ended where I began. The list was something like this:

Who had entered the house the night before the murder?

Thomas claimed it was Mr. Bailey, whom he had seen on the foot-path, and who owned the pearl cuff-link.

Why did Arnold Armstrong come back after he had left the house the night he was killed?

No answer. Was it on the mission Louise had mentioned?

Who admitted him?

Gertrude said she had locked the east entry. There was no key on the dead man or in the door. He must have been admitted from within.

Who had been locked in the clothes closet?

Some one unfamiliar with the house, evidently. Only two people missing from the household, Rosie and Gertrude. Rosie had been at the lodge. Therefore—had it been Gertrude? Might it not have been the mysterious intruder again?

Who had accosted Rosie on the drive? Again—perhaps the nightly visitor. It seemed more likely some one who suspected a secret at the lodge. Was Louise under surveillance?

Who had passed Louise on the circular staircase?

Could it have been Thomas? The key to the east entry made this a possibility. But why was he there, if it were indeed he?

Who had made the hole in the trunk-room wall?

It was not vandalism. It had been done quietly, and with deliberate purpose. If I had only known how to read the purpose of that gaping aperture what I might have saved in anxiety and mental strain!

Why had Louise left her people and come home to hide at the lodge?

There was no answer, as yet, to this, or to the next questions.

of Thomas' funeral in the village, and Alex and I were in the conservatory cutting flowers for the old man's casket. Liddy is never so happy as when she is making herself wretched, and now her mouth drooped while her eyes were triumphant.

"I always said there were plenty of things going on here, right under our noses, that we couldn't see," she said, holding out her apron.

"I don't see with my nose," I remarked. "What have you got there?"

Liddy pushed aside a half dozen geranium pots, and in the space thus cleared she dumped the contents of her apron—a handful of tiny bits of paper. Alex had stepped back, but I saw him watching her curiously.

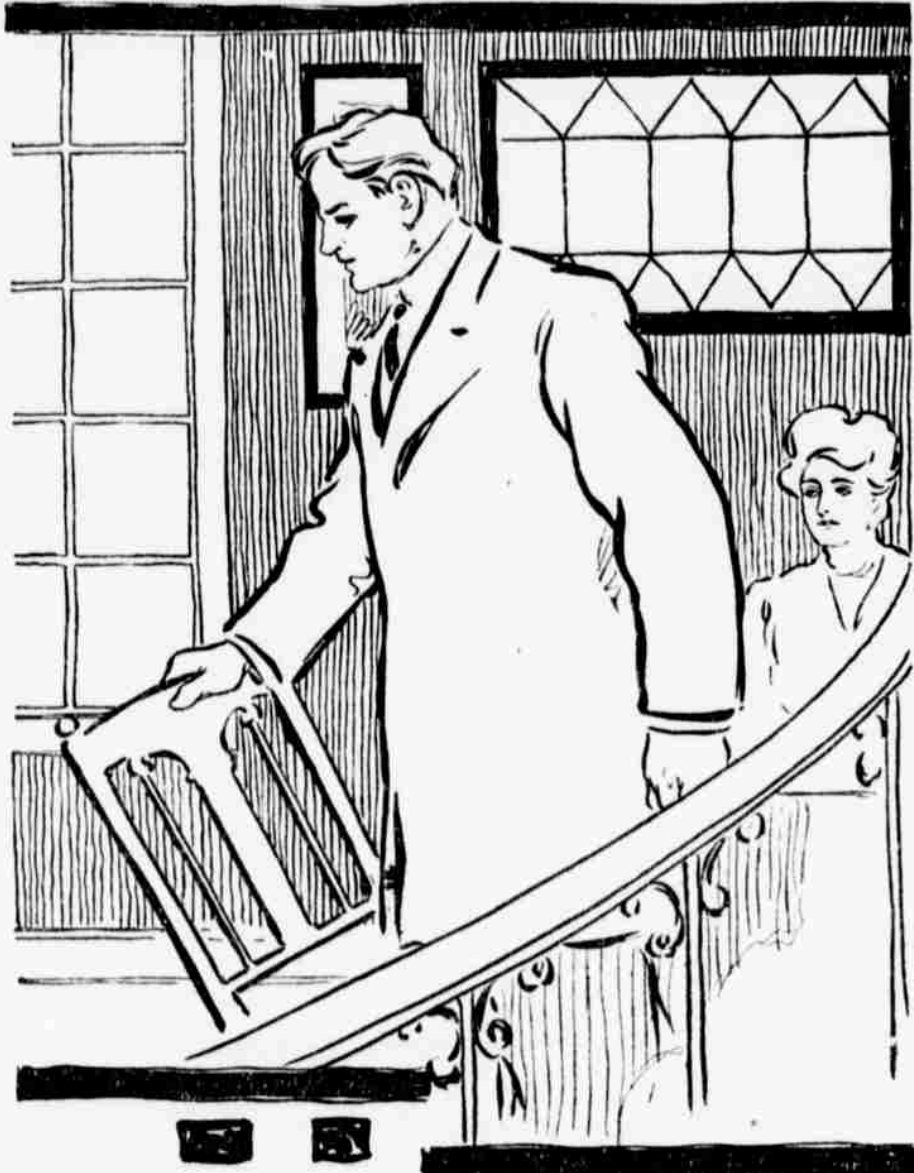
"Wait a moment, Liddy," I said. "You have been going through the library paper-basket again?"

"Did it ever occur to you," I went on, putting my hand over the scraps, "that when people tear up their correspondence it is for the express purpose of keeping it from being read?"

"If they wasn't ashamed of it they wouldn't take so much trouble, Miss Rachel," Liddy said oracularly. "More than that, with things happening every day, I consider it my duty. If you don't read and act on this, I shall give it to that Jamieson, and I'll venture he'll not go back to the city to-day."

That decided me. If the scraps had anything to do with the mystery ordinary conventions had no value. So Liddy arranged the scraps, like working out one of the puzzle-pictures children play with, and she did it with much the same eagerness. When it was finished she stepped aside while I read it.

"Wednesday night, nine o'clock.



He Scrutinized the Whole Place Carefully.

Why did both she and Dr. Walker warn us away from the house?

Who was Lucien Wallace?

What did Thomas see in the shadows the night he died?

What was the meaning of the subtle change in Gertrude?

Was Jack Bailey an accomplice or a victim in the looting of the Traders' bank?

What all-powerful reason made Louise determine to marry Dr. Walker?

The examiners were still working on the books of the Traders' bank, and it was probable that several weeks would elapse before everything was cleared up. The firm of expert accountants who had examined the books some two months before testified that every bond, every piece of valuable paper, was there at that time. It had been shortly after their examination that the president, who had been in bad health, had gone to California. Mr. Bailey was still ill at the Knickerbocker, and in this, as in other ways, Gertrude's conduct puzzled me. She seemed indifferent, refused to discuss matters pertaining to the bank, and never, to my knowledge, either wrote to him or went to see him. Gradually I came to the conclusion that Gertrude, with the rest of the world, believed her lover guilty, and—although I believed it myself, for that matter—I was irritated by her indifference. Girls in my day did not meekly accept the public's verdict as to the man they loved.

But presently something occurred that made me think that under Gertrude's surface calm there was a seething flood of emotions.

Tuesday morning the detective made a careful search of the grounds, but he found nothing. In the afternoon he disappeared, and it was late that night when he came home. He said he would have to go back to the city the following day, and arranged with Halsey and Alex to guard the house.

Liddy came to me on Wednesday morning with her black silk apron held up like a bag and her eyes big with virtuous wrath. It was the day

Bridge," I read aloud. Then, aware of Alex's stare, I turned on Liddy.

"Some one is to play bridge to-night at nine o'clock," I said. "Is that your business, or mine?"

Liddy was aggrieved. She was about to reply when I scooped up the pieces and left the conservatory.

"Now then," I said, when we got outside, "will you tell me why you choose to take Alex into your confidence? He's no fool. Do you suppose he thinks any one in this house is going to play bridge to-night at nine o'clock, by appointment? I suppose you have shown it in the kitchen, and instead of my being able to slip down to the bridge to-night quietly, and see who is there, the whole household will be going in a procession."

"Nobody knows it," Liddy said humbly. "I found it in the basket in Miss Gertrude's dressing room. Look at the back of the sheet." I turned over some of the scraps, and, sure enough, it was a blank deposit slip from the Traders' bank. So Gertrude was going to meet Jack Bailey that night by the bridge! And I had thought he was ill! It hardly seemed like the action of an innocent man—this avoidance of daylight, and of his fiancée's people. I decided to make certain, however, by going to the bridge that night.

After luncheon Mr. Jamieson suggested that I go with him to Richfield, and I consented.

"I am inclined to place more faith in Dr. Stewart's story," he said, "since I found that scrap in old Thomas' pocket. It bears out the statement that the woman with the child, and the woman who quarreled with Armstrong, are the same. It looks as if Thomas had stumbled on to some affair which was more or less creditable to the dead man, and, with a certain loyalty to the family, had kept it to himself. Then, you see, your story about the woman at the card-room window begins to mean something. It is the nearest approach to



anything tangible that we have had yet."

Warner took us to Richfield in the car. It was about 25 miles by rail-road, but by taking a series of atrociously rough short cuts we got there very quickly. It was a pretty little town, on the river, and back on the hill I could see the Morton big country house, where Halsey and Gertrude had been staying until the night of the murder.

Elm street was almost the only street, and number 14 was easily found. It was a small white house, dilapidated without having gained anything picturesque, with a low window and a porch only a foot or so above the bit of a lawn. There was a baby-carriage in the path, and from a swing at the side came the sound of conflict. Three small children were disputing vociferously, and a faded young woman with a kindly face was trying to hush the clamor. When she saw us she untied her gingham apron and came around to the porch.

"Good afternoon," I said. Jamieson lifted his hat, without speaking. "I came to inquire about a child named Lucien Wallace."

"I am glad you have come," she said. "In spite of the other children, I think the little fellow is lonely. We thought perhaps his mother would be here to-day."

Mr. Jamieson stepped forward.

"You are Mrs. Tate?" I wondered how the detective knew.

"Yes, sir."

"Mrs. Tate, we want to make some inquiries. Perhaps in the house—"

"Come right in," she said hospitably. And soon we were in the little shabby parlor, exactly like a thousand of its prototypes. Mrs. Tate sat uneasily, her hands folded in her lap.

"How long has Lucien been here?" Mr. Jamieson asked.

"Since a week ago last Friday. His mother paid one week's board in advance, the other has not been paid."

"Was he ill when he came?"

"No, sir, not what you'd call sick. He was getting better of typhoid, she said, and he's picking up fine."

"Will you tell me his mother's name and address?"

"That's the trouble," the young woman said, knitting her brows. "She gave her name as Mrs. Wallace, and said she had no address. She was looking for a boarding house in town. She said she worked in a department store, and couldn't take care of the child properly, and he needed fresh air and milk. I had three children of my own, and one more didn't make much difference in the work, but—I wish she would pay this week's board."

"Did she say what store it was?"

"No, sir, but all the boy's clothes came from King's. He has far too fine clothes for the country."

There was a chorus of shouts and shrill yells from the front door, followed by the loud stamping of children's feet and a throaty "whoa, whoa!" Into the room came a tandem team of two chubby youngsters, a boy and a girl, harnessed with a clothes-line, and driven by a laughing boy of about seven, in tan overalls and brass buttons. The small driver caught my attention at once; he was a beautiful child, and, although he showed traces of recent severe illness, his skin had now the clear transparency of health.

"Whoa, Flinders," he shouted. "You're going to smash the trap."

Mr. Jamieson coaxed him over by holding out a lead pencil, striped blue and yellow.

"Now, then," he said, when the boy had taken the lead pencil and was testing its usefulness on the detect-

ive's cuff, "now then, I'll bet you don't know what your name is!"

"I do," said the boy. "Lucien Wallace."

"Great! And what's your mother's name?"

"Mother, of course. What's your mother's name?"

And he pointed to me! I am going to stop wearing black; it doubles a woman's age.

"And where did you live before you came here?" The detective was polite enough not to smile.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

I Could See the Mortons' Pig Country House.

ive's cuff, "now then, I'll bet you don't know what your name is!"

"I do," said the boy. "Lucien Wallace."

"Great! And what's your mother's name?"

"Mother, of course. What's your mother's name?"

And he pointed to me! I am going to stop wearing black; it doubles a woman's age.

"And where did you live before you came here?" The detective was polite enough not to smile.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM

Sunday School Lesson for Aug. 28, 1910
Specially Arranged for This Paper

LESSON TEXT.—Matthew 21:1-17. Memory verses 10, 11.
GOLDEN TEXT.—"Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."—Matt. 21:9.

TIME.—Sunday, April 2, A. D. 30, the day after the Jewish Sabbath, five days before the crucifixion. Passion week.

PLACE.—On the west slope of the Mount of Olives, toward Jerusalem from Bethany; then in the streets of Jerusalem and in the court of the temple.

Suggestion and Practical Thought. The Triumphal Entry of the King Into the Capital of the Nation.—Va 1-11. "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, Lom Jericho to Bethany (John 12: 1), where he arrived Friday evening; the supper on Saturday evening at the close of their Sabbath; and the leaving Bethany on their way to Jerusalem Sunday morning, the day after their Sabbath. "And were come to Bethphage," (house of figs, or fig-town), a village not far from Bethany (house of dates), toward Jerusalem on the northern road over "the mount of Olives," which was the "Park" of Jerusalem, the gardens and pleasure grounds for the city.

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion," one hill of Jerusalem, representing the city. "Behold, thy King cometh." Jesus was the Messiah, the true king of the kingdom of God, which was now about to be established.

"And a very great multitude." Rather, "the most part of the multitude," for there were some cold and scowling critics (Luke 19: 39, 40). There were crowds of pilgrims from all parts of the country coming up to the Passover festival. By a census taken in the time of Nero, it was ascertained that there were 2,700,000 Jews present at the Passover. "Spread their garments in the way." "This was a recognized act of homage to a king.

"Others cut down branches." The imperfect tense denotes continued action. "As Jesus advanced, they kept cutting branches and spreading them, and the multitude kept crying."

"Cried, saying, Hosanna." "Hosanna" is a rendering into Greek letters of the Hebrew words, "Save, we pray!"

"To the son of David, the natural heir to the throne, the inheritor of the promises to David (2 Sam. 7: 12-16; 1 Chron. 17: 10-14). "Cometh in the name of the Lord." Sent by God, indorsed by God as his representative.

"Hosanna in the highest." In the highest degree; in the highest strains; in the highest heavens.

A Note of Sadness. One touching incident, by the way, is related by Luke only (19: 41-44). At one point in the descent, when the procession was amid wheat fields, flowers, and olive-trees, at a turn of the road, the great city of Jerusalem suddenly burst upon their vision.

Here Jesus wept over the city which was soon to reject their king, the only Saviour who could prevent its destruction, and the fall of the nation.

Jesus went into the temple, his father's house, and went about his father's business. He found the courts of the temple turned into a market place for the sale of animals for sacrifice, and for the exchange of money.

With this excuse traders made the house of prayer a place of business and a den of thieves; for those who for gain will defraud religion of its worship are likely to defraud man of his dues.

For the dealers, the spirit of worship was lost. Instead of praying, they were bargaining. Instead of worshipping, they were making money.

Dishonesty in connection with religion does much more harm than elsewhere. It creates unbelievers. It undermines the power of religion. It turns men away from the truth.

The court of the Gentiles was the place of prayer and worship for Gentiles. It was the only place where they could worship in the temple. It was missionary ground. It was the place for reaching the masses. All this was destroyed by the noise and confusion, and distractions of the market place. Worship was out of the question; prayer was interrupted. And the very object of the temple was sacrificed to the greed of gain.

Kingly Work for and Through the Children, vs. 15-17. The children, boys, . . . saying, Hosanna to the son of David." They caught the enthusiasm from their elders, and entered with great zest into the praises of the Messiah." They, "the chief priests," "were sore displeased." Perhaps they dreaded lest the Roman garrison in the adjoining castle of Antonia should hear them and fear lest the praises of the Son of David as king should be regarded as treason against Rome.

Hence they asked Jesus to put a stop to these loud praises (Luke 19: 39, 40). His reply was that the very stones would cry out if these held their peace.

The church should take the best care that the children should join in the services of praise. They should arrange their services, and build their edifices, so that the children can thus have part. They should encourage children's meetings where the young are trained in the work they will be called to do for the church of God. The older people will find that thus praise is perfected. The Gospel preached in so direct and simple a manner, that children can be uplifted by them, will most help the largest number of people.

A TRAIN LOAD OF TOBACCO.

Twenty-four Carloads Purchased for Lewis' Single Binder Cigar Factory.

What is probably the biggest lot of all fancy grade tobacco held by any factory in the United States has just been purchased by Frank P. Lewis, of Peoria, for the manufacture of Lewis' Single Binder Cigars. The lot will make twenty-four carloads, and is selected from what is considered by experts to be the finest crop raised in many years. The purchase of tobacco is sufficient to last the factory more than two years. An extra price was paid for the selection. Smokers of Lewis' Single Binder Cigars will appreciate this tobacco.
—Peoria Star, January 10, 1909.

Tuberculosis in the Prisons.

The fact that 100,000 prisoners are discharged from the jails and prisons of the country annually, and that from 10 to 15 per cent. of them have tuberculosis, makes the problem of providing special places for their treatment while they are confined a serious one. So important is the problem that the Prison association of New York in cooperation with the State Charities Aid association, is preparing to inaugurate a special campaign for the prevention of tuberculosis in the penal institutions of the state, and will seek to enlist the co-operation of all prison physicians and anti-tuberculosis societies in this work.

Deduction in a Street Car.

The Heavyweight—Pardon me, did I step on your foot, sir?
Coogan—If yez didn't, begorry, then the roof must hav fell on it.—Puck.

A perfect love, even when lost, is still an eternal possession, a pain so sacred that its deep peace often grows into an absolute content.—Hitchcock.

Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate and invigorate stomach, liver and bowels, sugar-coated, tiny granules. Easy to take as candy.

And some people never appreciate a rose until they encounter the thorn.



Hot Sun—Dusty Roads
By the time you reach town and light you'll be hot and tired and your throat dry with dust and dirt. Stunt up a soda fountain and treat yourself to a Glass or a Bottle of

Coca-Cola
Just as cooling as the bottom step in the spring house. You'll find it relieves fatigue too, and washes away all the dust and thirst as nothing else will. It touches the spot.
Delicious - Refreshing - Wholesome
3c Everywhere
Our Free Booklet
"The Truth About Coca-Cola" tells all about Coca-Cola—what it is and why it is so delicious, wholesome and beneficial. It gives analysis made by scientists and chemists from coast to coast, proving its purity and wholesomeness. Your name and address on a postal will bring you this interesting booklet.
The Coca-Cola Co., Atlanta, Ga.
When you see an arrow think of Coca-Cola

DYSPEPSIA

"Having taken your wonderful 'Cascarets' for three months and being entirely cured of stomach catarrh and dyspepsia, I think a word of praise is due to 'Cascarets' for their wonderful composition. I have taken numerous other so-called remedies but without avail, and I find that Cascarets relieve more in a day than all the others I have taken would in a year."
J. S. Mercer St., Jersey City, N. J.
Pleasant, Palatable, Potent, Taste Good, Do Good, Never Sicken, Weaken or Grippe. 10c, 25c, 50c. Never sold in bulk. The genuine tablet stamped C.C.C. (guaranteed to cure or your money back.)

STOCKERS & FEEDERS

Choice quality; reds and roans, white faces or Angus bought on orders. Tens of Thousands to select from. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Correspondence Invited. Come and see for yourself.

National Live Stock Com. Co.

At either
Kansas City, Mo. St. Joseph, Mo. S. Omaha, Neb.

Saint Katharine's School For Girls

EPISCOPAL
Davenport, Iowa

Academic, preparatory, and primary grades. Certificate accepted by Eastern colleges. Special advantages in Music, Art, Domestic Science and Gymnasium. Address The Sister Superior.

Nebraska Directory

JOHN DEERE PLOWS

Are the Best. Ask your local dealer or
JOHN DEERE PLOW CO., Omaha, Neb.

KODAKS and KODAK FINISHING

Mail orders given special attention. All kinds amateur supplies strictly fresh. Send for catalog.
LINCOLN PHOTO SUPPLY CO., Lincoln

TYPEWRITERS ALL MAKES

Sold and rented everywhere. Write for bargain list.
H. F. SWANSON, CO., ST. LOUIS, MO.
Established 1894. 143 N. 13th St., Lincoln

M. Spiesberger & Son Co. Wholesale Millinery

The Best in the West OMAHA, NEB.

Nebraska School of Business

The best in all Commercial Courses. Free catalogue explains all. Address
No. 11 Hall Building Lincoln, Neb.

Beatrice Creamery Co.

Pays the highest price for

CREAM