

PRISON LIFE IN THE BIG ROTARY OF THE COUNTY JAIL

TO THE student of human character in all of its varying moods and tones no place offers quite the same opportunity for careful observation as that to be found in a penal institution. Within the four walls of a prison house is

every type of criminal from the incorrigible street gamin, who is on the road to the reformatory, to the murderer whose bloody deeds only await the process of law to send him to the gallows.

Salt Lake is not a bad town. On the contrary, it is among the most peaceful and law abiding to be found between the two oceans that wash our eastern and western shores. Nevertheless it has its social problems to solve and the same as other municipalities. Just the same as other municipalities. While many of those who offend against the commonwealth call this city against their home it is a matter of fact that the great majority of recorded fact that the cities and counties there are from the cities and counties of other states. There is just one plain reason for this. Salt Lake is famed, far and wide, for its numerous attractions. These, like the fisherman's net, draw every kind of fish from the great sea of human life. When the good come here they invest their money and make their homes with us. When the bad come they get in trouble and forthwith the officers find "homes" for them, too. The length of their stay depends entirely upon what they have done and what they will do. While they are usually cared for quite as well as the same kind of people elsewhere, still they do not wish to come back, and when once they depart they never return except when they are compelled to do so.

These observations are largely the result of a visit to the county jail yesterday by a representative of the "News." At present there are just 40 prisoners detained there, although there are accommodations for twice that number. The institution bears evidence of painstaking care and discipline. Cleanliness and good order are seen on every hand.

On entering the jail the first thing that attracts the stranger is the big rotary in which the worst prisoners are kept. This immense automatic device is circular in form and two stories high, with an ellipse on the lower and an equal number on the upper floor. Each cell accommodates two prisoners. The whole contrivance revolves on a pivot and looks for all the world like a huge rat trap. Out of its iron gratings you see its imprisoned tenants stinking back into the shadows or crouching close to the floor to avoid being seen, though occasionally an inmate is encountered who will walk up to the bars and talk as glibly as though he were the freest man in the world.

THE MAMMOTH ROTARY.

A marvelous piece of mechanical ingenuity is this mammoth rotary. Escape from its liberty-forbidding precincts is practically impossible. When once within its confines there is but one thing to do—stay there until released. In all, it contains 20 V-shaped compartments, the point of the triangle reaching the center and the wider portion radiating at the outer circle of the enclosure. Each cell has its independent opening for entrance or exit, and when a prisoner is wanted on the outside for any purpose, a pull at a hand lever brings the rotary round to a point directly opposite the iron barred passage through which every person who enters or leaves the jail, must pass. Beginning on a given day in the month cell No. 1 will be opposite this passage. The next day cell No. 2 will be there and ten days from the beginning, cell No. 10 will be there, when the revolution will be complete. This constant movement is what gave the invention its name of "rotary." The jail equipping company that makes it has realized a fortune out of it. Being ever on the move and always opposite a new place the old trick of sawing the bars is never resorted to by a rotary prisoner. He knows it is no use, so he never tries it.

IN THE CELLS.

In addition to the cells in the rotary there are side cells which line the outer walls in which forty prisoners can be held if necessary. These are all provided with a cot, stationary wash basin and lavatory. The same condition obtains in the rotary cells except that hammocks take the place of cots. At first there is a strong disinclination to sleep in a hammock all night. The novelty is all right for an hour or two, but it gets monotonous. Still it is preferable to sleeping on a cement or steel floor and soon the prisoner learns to woo his slumber in his swinging bed.

MANY VISITORS.

The county jail has many visitors. Some go there because they have relatives in it; others—lawyers—go to see their clients and not a few go out of sheer curiosity. All, of course, are interested. The "rotary" commands instant attention. But in a very few minutes the lifeless monster loses its "charm," and the jailor will be pelted with questions concerning this prisoner or that. The graver his offense, the more notorious his case, the more determined the disposition to find out about him. The prisoner who takes first place in this class of interrogatories is Peter Mortensen, the carpenter and contractor who is awaiting trial in the district court to answer to the charge of murdering his neighbor, James R. Hay.

PETER MORTENSEN.

When he was seen by the "News" man yesterday he stepped promptly to the front of his cell and smiled cheer-

fully as he looked through the bars and answered the questions put to him. He said he was feeling well and hopeful. He doubtless spoke the truth for his appearance was that of a man who eats heartily, sleeps soundly and lets the "other fellow" worry.

"Peter disposes of three hearty meals a day, exercises liberally in the corridor behind the rotary, talks lightly to the other prisoners and takes life as easily as many a man on the outside," explained the jailor who continued:

A "GOOD LIVER."

"He is a good liver, too—that is he likes good things; and having the same privilege as any other prisoner under like circumstances, he buys his own meals which are served to him in his cell. In this way he is kept separate and apart from them during meal time.

How Peter Mortensen, J. J. Riley His Cell-Mate, Roy Kaighn, Arthur J. Van Kuran, A. W. Clapp and Other Characters Prominent in The Criminal Annals of the County, Spend Their Time in the Custody of Sheriff Naylor—Offenses Comprise Almost Every Species of Wrong-Doing From Petit Larceny to Murder—African Aversion to Mongolian Companionship—Music as a Dissipator of Prison Blues.

takes him some little relish or article of which he is fond. Her visits never fail to buoy him up. Whatever her suspicions may be concerning him certainly she has done more to lighten his burden than all of his other relatives put together. His cell, too, bears the marks of gentle hands in more ways than one. She sees that he lacks for nothing that she can provide within the

even on the gallows. Peter Mortensen is no common man.

He does considerable writing these days and is still working on his books, which he keeps in a little desk of his own that has been moved into his cell for his convenience. It was at this desk he was caught by the "News" photographer as shown in the cut on this page. The man who stands leaning

him very few admirers among the fair sex.

BLACK CAT STORIES.

Clapp who something over a year ago succeeded in enlisting the attention of a number of Salt Lakeers in an advertising scheme that cost them a lot of cash and then fled to Los Angeles, where he made love to an heiress and

heard prior to this affair that the days of the law were proverbial as well as exceedingly tiresome. Now I know it. I am thankful for one thing, however, I have recovered from the effects of my hospital sickness occasioned by the operation for appendicitis, and am doing as well as can be expected."

A CHINESE CUT THROAT.

In the rotary is a Chinese opium fiend who attempted to cut a countryman's head off during the recent celebration of Chinese new years in this city. He is driven frantic by the refusal to supply him with "yen hop" (opium), which he demands in season and out. He gets very little of it, but when it is furnished him he executes a demoniacal war dance, and his glee passes all understanding. His name is Wah Kin, and his Salt Lake home is on Plum Alley.

A few days ago a young colored man was taken to the county jail. On the way to his cell he saw the Chinaman, and made three or four bounds down the corridor. His progress was only cut short by the stone wall. He was called upon to stop, being informed by the guard that he could not escape.

"I know dat, Massa; I know dat, but—"

"Come back here," yelled the guard, "or I'll throw you in there with that Chinaman."

"Oh, dat's just what I is afraid of. But for de good Lawd's sake, Massa,

without delay. His philosophy was something wonderful when taken away. He said: "I knowed I had sumpin like dis dat I be taken away; yass, dat's why I had de measles. If you had put me in dat cell you might just as well have sent for de undertaker and de grave digger right away."

OTHER PRISONERS.

Other prisoners of note are Frank Blanchard, wanted on two continents for forgery, and in several cities on both; the young Chinese burglar and robber, whose last exploit was to appropriate a horse, in order to advertise it and get reward money from its owner; Dan Reynolds, a 12-year-old incorrigible, who wants to go to the reformatory school; C. E. Henry, the embezzler, who sent his employer into bankruptcy; Thomas Hendrickson, who is serving three months in jail for refusing to support his children; George Moore, a grizzled Union soldier 72 years of age, who says he stole a clock to keep from starving; George Beck, who palmed himself off on the community a few weeks ago as a charity worker in soliciting funds for the widows and orphans of Scotland; Lucile Keri and Willie Black, the two women implicated in the robbery of an Oregon tenderfoot, from whom it is claimed they got \$1,100 on Commercial street last week; John Wilkinson, a youth who came near dying two or three days ago from the excessive use of cigarettes, and who is doing time for robbing a woman of \$10; Joe Harris, a 29 pound darkey tramp who fills the jail with old plantation melodies to the music of guitar and mandolin, which chases away the blues of prison life.

THE THIEVE GALLOWS.

In making a tour of inspection the gallow which were constructed during the regime of Sheriff Lewis, on which Thiede paid the penalty for the murder of his wife, was seen on the floor of the basement near the dark cells into which prisoners are put when they have violated some prison rule that merits such punishment. It was an ugly reminder of that deed and is being kept for future use.

THE OFFICERS.

The chief jailer, of course, is Sheriff Naylor, who lives in the front part of the jail with his family. The day jailer is Thomas F. Thomas, who is on duty each day until 3 p. m., when he is relieved by John Shea, who in turn is succeeded at 11 p. m. by ex-Sheriff Lewis, who is the night jailer.

Overcome by Gas.

Telluride, Colo., Feb. 28.—Michael Lard and Charles Anderson, miners, were overcome by poisonous gases in the Cincinnati mine of the Tom-Boy group and were dead when found by fellow miners. Anderson was the first victim, and Lard lost his life in trying to rescue Anderson.

Aged Couple Murdered.

Ridgeway, Pa., Feb. 28.—Bartel Sweeney, an aged farmer, and his daughter, Mary, were found last night in their home at Wilcox with their skulls crushed and the bodies were much decomposed. Sweeney was quite well to do, and the supposition is that robbery was the motive.

Poisoned from Eating Sausage.

Siox City, Ia., Feb. 28.—Five members of the family of D. Wenke, a German farmer, living near Wausa, Neb., were poisoned by eating sausage, from the effects of which a daughter, Lizzie, aged 18, is dead, and a son will probably die. The mother and two sons are at the Samaritan hospital in this city. The father and a hired man are seriously ill. The sausage is said to have been insidiously cooked.

Spanish Mining Regions Stirred Up.

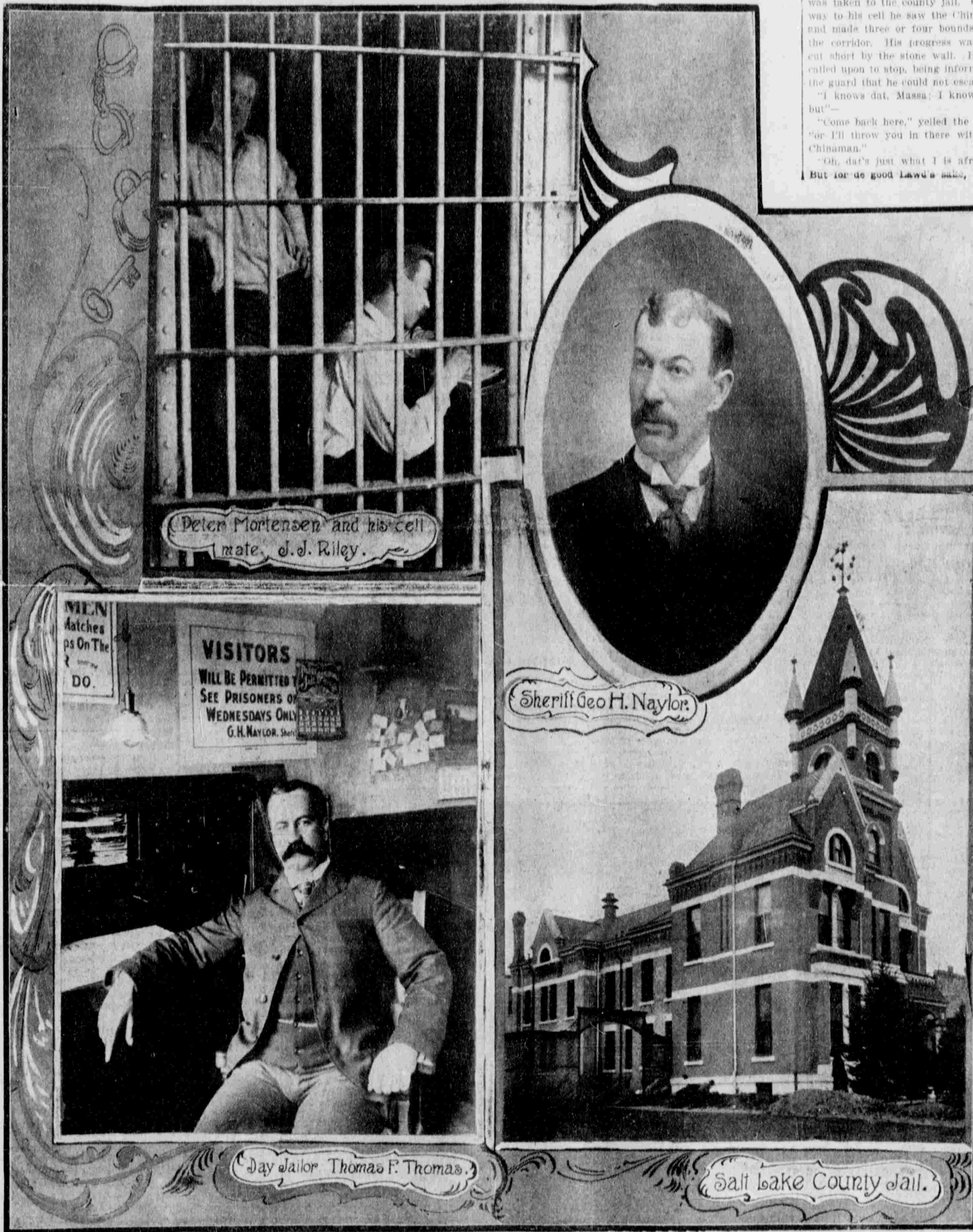
Madrid, Feb. 28.—The mining regions are in a ferment of agitation. At Albuñon and Madrideros rioters have set fire to the oil refineries and burned the documents they contained. There has been another outbreak of disorder at Barcelona. Meetings are being held frequently with the object of declaring another general strike. The metal workers are constantly assaulting their comrades who have returned to work and refuse to resume their tasks until all the imprisoned workmen are released.

POMP AND PATHOS.

Columbus, Ohio.—With the faces of the past governors of Ohio looking down upon him from their gilded frames on the convent-like walls of the rotunda of the capitol, Gov. George K. Nash, the other morning took the oath of office for his second term as the chief executive of the state and was formally inducted into that office. All through the solemn ceremonies ran the minor note of pathos and sadness, and this feeling was intensified by the brief inaugural address of the governor as he turned from the justice of the supreme court and spoke in low and hesitating tones the words of gratitude and promise that are due upon occasions of this character.

Two years ago, on inauguration day, when Gov. Nash was awaiting the hour to assume his high prerogatives, he drove to Greenlawn cemetery alone and went to the snow-covered mounds beneath which lie the remains of his wife and daughter, both of whom were taken from life before his ambition was realized. His keener sorrow was that they were not permitted to live and share his glory.

This morning the governor revisited the cemetery, leaving his home at an early hour once again to kneel beside the beloved of his heart, and in spirit commune with them on this the crowning day of his political career. It was not known that he had gone until after his return, when he was met at his residence by the official committee to escort him to the statehouse. Only those who sought for the delicate note of heart interest saw in the glittering pomp and panoply of political show this somber coloring to the picture. The chief executive bore himself with dignity and lent some of his bearing to the proceedings, which were splendid in all that this word means.—Cincinnati Enquirer.



and apparently enjoys it very much." When conviction comes, if it does, this courtesy on the part of the sheriff will be cut off; for such privileges are not accorded to condemned men. But he will not be kept at the county jail all then. He will be sent to the state prison as a charge of Warden Dow until the infliction of the final penalty shall have been disposed of.

MORTENSEN'S CELL-MATE.

Mortensen has had a cell-mate for some time in the person of J. J. Riley, a soldier hold-up, who was recently arrested by the police with a man named Williams and taken to Fort Douglas, where the military authorities "bob-tailed" him—that is—gave him a dishonorable discharge from the service, after which they turned him over to the civil officers. He is a very quiet chap, with a grim kind of humor. That pleases Mortensen greatly. It is said the men have formed a strong friendship for each other.

MRS. HENRY MORTENSEN.

The only relative that has appeared at the jail recently to see him is his sister-in-law, Mrs. Henry Mortensen. She calls on him frequently and always

pounds of prison regulation. When seen by the "News" man he was clean-shaven and wore clothes as good as those donned on the outside by any man of his station. Even his feet were encased in slippers as easy as he ever wore at home.

FROM IRON TO STEEL.

Winifer had scarcely set in when the blight fell on Mortensen's life that has made him the most notorious man in the state. It will be remembered how suspicion first pointed its awful finger at him: how he was arrested and how it was said he was breaking down and arriving at the point where he would confess. For a time the terrible strain did wear on him and there were signs of breaking down up to a few weeks ago. But it is nearly spring now and he appears to have walked completely out from under the strain and now looks better and will probably weigh more than he ever did in his life. If his will was of iron strength before it is of steel now, and the man or woman who expects any confession from him will be doomed to disappointment. It is extremely doubtful if he would confess

against the bars and who gazed steadily at the camera is Riley, his cell-mate previously spoken of.

KAIGHN AND CLAPP.

Two rotary prisoners of interest are Roy Kaighn, the youthful slayer of Haynes the traveling man, and A. W. Clapp, alias Marcott. The chance of prison life threw them together, but warm friends as well. Kaighn's jail life has worked wonders for him. He no longer has the wild, haggard, hysterical appearance that he had the day he walked into the Knutsford hotel and deliberately lay in wait for poor Willard Haynes until the opportunity came to fire the fatal bullet into his body. At that time the young man was winding up a reckless period of dissipation, and half drunk and drug crazed. Today he is healthy and strong with an appetite equaling that of any farm hand. The cigarette habit that was sapping his life out of him has been largely overcome and he no longer has access to opium or other like drugs. When out of jail he was known as a "lady's man." His incarceration on the charge of murder seems to have lost

secured considerable money from her. has turned his literary ability in the direction of short stories and is now a regular contributor to a number of eastern magazines, among them, the Black Cat. More than that, he is probably making more money out of the products of his pen than he would if he were at liberty. The young lady who was said to be his sister, and the sister of several men not related to him, has taken to the stage and is now somewhere in the northwest.

ARTHUR J. VAN KURAN.

In a pleasant side cell on the upper floor is Arthur J. Van Kuran, the treasurer of the Oregon Short Line, sentenced to two years and a half imprisonment in the Penitentiary, but who has not yet been sent to that institution for the reason that his case is on appeal in the supreme court. Meanwhile he has been in jail a year and two weeks already. Much of his term of imprisonment might have been served, but he is making the fight of his life for a discharge by the superior court. To a "News" man he said: "I am bearing it as patiently as possible. But I can do nothing but wait. I often

don't do dat; please don't do dat; I would radder die first."

By this time the Mongolian was glaring fiercely out of his cage and gestulating wildly. Once he reached through the bars in the direction of the young African, whereupon that gentleman fell to the floor, frightened into absolute helplessness. Looking up, he said, "Say, Massa, if it is death or dat Chinaman, den I dies, for sho' I do."

When told that there was no intention to put him into the Chinaman's cell he arose and made a salaam that would have done credit to an oriental savant.

A day or two later signs of sickness appeared and he complained bitterly, and created such a commotion that the jailor found it necessary to call his attention to the Chinaman again.

"Oh, yass, yass; I will be de best little black boy in Utah if you don't do dat again."

It was found that the little colored lad had the measles. He was pretty sick, too, but he never whimpered after that. Dr. Mayo, the county physician, was called, and made him as comfortable as possible, and also made arrangements to have him removed from the jail