

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Liebermann Korolenko
Sachs Poe de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



The publishing house **tredition** has created the series **TREDITION CLASSICS**. It contains classical literature works from over two thousand years. Most of these titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades.

The book series is intended to preserve the cultural legacy and to promote the timeless works of classical literature. As a reader of a **TREDITION CLASSICS** book, the reader supports the mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion.

The symbol of **TREDITION CLASSICS** is Johannes Gutenberg (1400 – 1468), the inventor of movable type printing.

With the series, **tredition** intends to make thousands of international literature classics available in printed format again – worldwide.

All books are available at book retailers worldwide in paperback and in hardcover. For more information please visit: www.tredition.com



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, **tredition** offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. **tredition** is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

**The Twin Hells; a thrilling
narrative of life in the Kansas and
Missouri penitentiaries**

John N. Reynolds

Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: John N. Reynolds

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8491-5133-1

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

THE TWIN HELLS

**A Thrilling Narrative of Life in the
Kansas and Missouri Penitentiaries**

**By
John N. Reynolds**

ATCHISON, KANSAS.

TO
MY DEAR OLD MOTHER AND TO THE MEMORY OF MY
SAINTE WIFE THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDI-
CATED BY THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

A KANSAS HELL

CHAPTER I. MY INITIATION AND CRIME

CHAPTER II. THE COAL MINES

CHAPTER III. THE COAL MINES (Continued)

CHAPTER IV. THE PUNISHMENTS OF THE PRISON

CHAPTER V. SUNDAY IN THE PRISON

CHAPTER VI. SCENES IN THE HOSPITAL

CHAPTER VII. ESCAPES FROM PRISON

CHAPTER VIII. THE PRISONERS

CHAPTER IX. FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IN HELL

CHAPTER X. STOLEN HORSES

CHAPTER XI. CANDIDATE FOR THE STATE SENATE

CHAPTER XII. A DARK HOUR

CHAPTER XIII. FREEDOM

A MISSOURI HELL

CHAPTER XIV. THE CONVICT'S HOME

CHAPTER XV. THE WORK OF THE CONVICT

CHAPTER XVI. THE MISSOURI PRISONERS

CHAPTER XVII. THE MISSOURI PRISONERS—(Continued)

CHAPTER XVIII. PRISON DISCIPLINE

CHAPTER XIX. NOTED CONVICTS

CHAPTER XX. THE EX-CONVICT

PREFACE

The following pages treat of hell—A Kansas hell and a Missouri hell. Those who desire to peruse works that tell about Heaven only, are urged to drop this book and run. I was an inmate of the Kansas penitentiary for sixteen months, and make mention of what came under my own observation in connection with what I experienced. While an inmate of this prison I occupied cells at various times with convicts who had served terms in the Missouri prison. From these persons I gathered much useful material for my book. After my release I visited the Missouri penitentiary, and verified the statements of those criminals, and gathered additional material from the prison records and the officials. I have written chiefly for the youth of the country, but all ages will be deeply interested in the following pages. A large majority of the convicts are young men from sixteen to twenty-five years of age. They had no idea of the terrible sufferings of a convict life, or they surely would have resisted temptation and kept out of crime. The following pages will impart to the reader some idea of what he may expect to endure in case he becomes entangled in the meshes of the law, and is compelled to do service for the State without any remuneration. Every penitentiary is a veritable hell. Deprive a person of his liberty, punish and maltreat him, and you fill his life with misery akin to those who wander in the darkness of "eternal night," I think, when the reader has perused the following pages, he will agree with me, that the book has the proper title. That this volume may prove an "eye-opener" to the boys who may read it, and prove interesting and instructive to those of mature years, is the earnest wish of the author.

A KANSAS HELL

CHAPTER I. MY INITIATION AND CRIME

Guilty! This word, so replete with sadness and sorrow, fell on my ear on that blackest of all black Fridays, October 14, 1887.

Penitentiary lightning struck me in the city of Leavenworth, Kansas. I was tried in the United States District Court; hence, a United States prisoner.

The offense for which I was tried and convicted was that of using the mails for fraudulent purposes. My sentence was eighteen months in the penitentiary, and a fine of two hundred dollars. I served sixteen months, at the end of which time I was given my liberty. During the period I was in prison I dug coal six months in the penitentiary coal mines, and was one of the clerks of the institution the remainder of the term. Getting permission to have writing material in my cell, I first mastered short-hand writing, or phonography, and then wrote my book: "A Kansas Hell; or, Life in the Kansas Penitentiary." My manuscript being in short-hand, none of the prison officials were able to read it, and did not know what I was doing until I obtained my liberty and had my book published.

This, no doubt, will be the proper place to give some of my antecedents, as well as a few of the details of the crime for which I was sent to the penitentiary. I spent my youth and early manhood at Indianola, Iowa, from which place I removed to Nebraska. After residing for some time in Columbus, of that State, I was appointed by the governor to assist in organizing the Pawnee Indian Reservation into a county. When organized it was called Nance County, being named for Hon. Albinus Nance, then governor of the State. I held the position of county clerk of that county for four consecutive years. During this time I organized the Citizens' Bank. I was its cashier at first, and, later on, its president. I had a lucrative business and was doing well. My wife's health failed her; she became consumptive. My family physician advised a removal to the South. I closed out my business at a great sacrifice, and came to Atchison,

Kansas. Here I located, and made it my future home. Soon after my arrival I commenced the publication of a daily newspaper, known as the "Times." In the county in which I located I found one of the worst and most corrupt political rings on the face of the earth. This combination had controlled the politics of the county for almost a quarter of a century. Soon I became involved in a terrific newspaper war with the members of this political organization. An election of county and State officials was soon to take place. In order to test the strength of the contending elements, in my newspaper, I presented the name of Hon. W. D. Gilbert as a candidate for district judge in opposition to the ring candidate. A sharp fight ensued. Mr. Gilbert was elected by an overwhelming majority. This was the first time for twenty-five years that this ring had been defeated. The members of it were very sore. Looking upon me as the principal spirit, I was the object toward which they directed all their shafts of spite.

Some time before this an insurance company had been organized in the city of Atchison. I was invited to become its president. I examined the books of the corporation, and found it to be organized according to the laws of Kansas; that the company had a charter from the State, and also certified authority to issue policies of insurance, granted by the State insurance commissioner. I accepted the presidency on condition that the company was simply to have the use of my name, and that I was not expected to give any of my time to the company, as I was otherwise engaged. I was editor of a daily newspaper, and could not attend to anything else. While this company was doing business a printed circular was used, stating that the corporation had one hundred thousand dollars PAID up capital. This circular was sent out through the mails over the State advertising the business. It was charged this circular was fraudulent; that the company did not have that amount of capital paid in. My name was attached to this printed circular. For this, I was indicted in the United States District Court, on the charge of using the mails for fraudulent purposes. The advertised capital of this corporation was SUBSCRIBED, but not all paid in, as it was not needed in the business of the company. After indictment I was arrested, and gave bonds for my appearance at the next term of court, which was held soon after.

Not being able to secure the attendance of all my witnesses, my attorney wrote the prosecuting attorney asking his consent that my case be continued. The request was granted. When the case was called, my attorney appeared and introduced a motion to continue the case, filing affidavits necessary in such cases. The prosecuting attorney having given his consent, there was no doubt in the minds of those interested as to the continuance of the case. For some cause best known to himself, the judge would not grant the continuance, and forced me to trial without having a single witness. It was my intention to have some fifty witnesses subpoenaed, to prove that the insurance company of which I was president was not a fraud. Not being allowed to have my witnesses, I was, under the instructions of the court, which were, indeed, exceedingly pointed, found guilty, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of two hundred dollars. The political ring now triumphed for a brief period. In order to prove conclusively to the reader that this was a piece of spite work, I have only to state that I was the only one of all the officers of that company that was ever tried for running a bogus insurance company. Why was it that I was the only one sent to the penitentiary when there was the secretary, treasurer, and six directors equally as guilty as myself?

To prove more conclusively that it was political spite work that sent me to prison, let me inform the readers that about the time the insurance company at Atchison was organized, a similar one was organized in Topeka. They were similar in EVERY RESPECT. I was president of the one at Atchison, while a distinguished gentleman by the name of Gen. J. C. Caldwell was president of the one at Topeka. Both of these companies failed. The president of the Atchison company was sent to the penitentiary, while the president of the Topeka company was appointed by the governor of the State to the responsible position of chairman of the State Board of Pardons. Many persons have asked why this difference in the treatment of the presidents of these two companies. The only answer that can be given is that General Caldwell stood in with the Kansas political ring, while I did not. Every sensible man must admit that if it was just for me to serve a term in prison for the offense charged against me, General Caldwell should have been prescribed for in the same manner. I have no fight to make upon Mr. Caldwell. He is an excel-

lent gentlemen. He was in luck. The fates were against me. Had I been a State instead of a United States prisoner, no doubt Mr. Caldwell, as chairman of the Board of Pardons, would have used his influence to secure for me my liberty. That I was sent to prison is wholly due to politics. It is unnecessary, therefore, for me to inform the reader that I am now "out of politics." Having served out my term I returned to my home in Atchison. As to the ring that sent me to prison, some of them are dead, others have left Atchison to make their homes in other places, others have failed financially, and still others have fallen so low that they have scarcely friends enough to bury them should they happen to die.

The big wheel of life keeps on revolving. Those who are up to-day may be down to-morrow, and vice versa. But to continue my narrative. Immediately after my conviction and sentence I was taken to the Leavenworth County jail. Here I remained until the following Tuesday in the company of a dozen or more prisoners who were awaiting trial. On Sunday, while in this jail, my wife, who died during my imprisonment of a broken heart, and an account of which is given in a subsequent chapter, came to see me. I can never forget this visit. She remained with me during the entire day. During the conversation of the day I said to her that, it seemed that the future appeared very gloomy. That it would be a miracle if I ever was able to survive the disgrace that had been so cruelly placed upon me. That all ambition and hope as to the future had fled, and that I could not blame her if she should now free herself by means of divorce, as my conviction of crime was a legal ground for divorce in Kansas. In reply to this, the noble little woman, her face aglow with the radiance of womanly devotion, said, that for twenty years of married life our home had been one of sunshine; that I had been kind to her and made her life one of happiness, and that now, when misfortune came, it was not only a duty, but the highest pleasure, to prove her fidelity. She kept her word. She was true to the last. When dying, her last words were a petition for the blessings of God upon her husband who was far away behind frowning prison walls. On Tuesday morning a deputy United States marshal came to the jail and gave me notice that in a few moments we would leave for the penitentiary. This officer was a gentleman, and did not seek to further humiliate me by placing irons on my person. I have often

thought of this act of kindness on the part of this humane official. We took the train at Leavenworth, and in a very few moments were at my future place of residence. Lansing, the small village where the penitentiary is located, is about five miles from the city of Leavenworth. The entrance to the prison is from the west. Under the watchful care of the officer who had me in charge, I passed under a stone archway, to the left of which was a small office, where a guard was on duty during the day time. We were halted by this officer, who inquired if we had any firearms. No one visiting the penitentiary is allowed to carry fire-arms within the enclosure. The marshal who had me in custody handed over a large navy revolver. Between this archway and the western wall of the prison is a beautiful lawn. The walks are lined with fragrant flowers; beautiful fountains send aloft their silvery sprays. Passing up the roadway leading to the entrance door, and looking about me upon the rich carpet of green, the flowers and fountains, I came to the conclusion that the penitentiary was not so bad a place as I had imagined. I changed my mind, however, as soon as I had seen inside the walls.

The prison enclosure contains about ten acres of ground. This is surrounded by a stone wall some fifteen feet high, and six feet thick at the base. It is not more than four feet at the top. At each of the four corners may be found a tower rising some ten feet above the wall. A guard is on duty in each of these towers during the day. He carries a double-barreled shotgun loaded with buckshot. In case a prisoner tries to escape he is liable to get a dose of lead, provided the officer on duty is a good marksman. The western wall is almost entirely made of a large stone building with its two long wings. The main building is four stories. The wings stretching to the north and south, each two hundred and fifty feet, contain the cells. On the first floor of the main building are the offices of the warden, clerk, deputy warden and turnkey. The upper rooms are used by the warden's family.

I was first conducted into the clerk's office and introduced to Mr. Jones, the clerk. He is a very pleasant gentleman, and spoke kindly to me, which I can assure all was very acceptable, for just about that time I was feeling very badly. His remark was: "I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Reynolds, but sorry to meet you under these sad circumstances." On his invitation I took a chair and sat down to

await the next part of the programme. As I sat there and thought of the kind words spoken to me by the clerk, I quickly reached the conclusion that if all the officers of that institution were as kind as Mr. Jones, it would not be as bad a place as I had anticipated. I had no experience then that would justify any other conclusion. Soon a side door of the office opened and in came the deputy warden, Mr. John Higgins. Mr. H. is the sourest appearing man I ever met in my life. At least, it seemed so to me on that day. He can get more vinegar on the outside of his face than any other person in the State of Kansas. He did not wait to be introduced to me. He never craves an introduction to a criminal. As soon as he came into the room he got a pole with which to measure me. Then, looking at me, in a harsh, gruff voice he called out: "Stand up here." At first I did not arise. At the second invitation, however, I stood up and was measured. My description was taken by the clerk. In this office there is to be found a description of all the criminals that ever entered the Kansas penitentiary. I was asked if I was a married man, how many children I had, and how much property I possessed. These questions were easily answered. After the deputy warden had discharged his duty he retired. I soon discovered that it was according to the rules of the prison for the officers to talk in a harsh and abrupt manner to the prisoners. This accounted for the way in which I was greeted by the deputy warden, who is the disciplinarian of the prison. I may say, in passing, that all the harsh manners of Mr. Higgins are simply borrowed for the occasion. Away from the presence of prisoners, over whom he is to exert his influence, there is not to be found a more pleasant and agreeable gentleman. In came a second official, and, in the same gruff manner, said to me, "Come along." I followed him out to the wash-house, where I took a bath. A prisoner took my measure for a suit of clothes. After he had passed the tape-line around me several times, he informed the officer that I was the same size of John Robinson, who had been released from the penitentiary the day before. "Shall I give him John Robinson's clothes?" asked the convict. In the same gruff manner the officer said, "Yes, bring on Robinson's old clothes." So I was furnished with a second-hand suit! The shoes were second-hand. I am positive about this last statement, judging by the aroma. After I had been in the penitentiary some four months, I learned that John Robinson, whose clothes I had secured, was a colored man. Being arrayed in this suit of