

3/17/1894 Sal

HE PREFERRED DEATH.

L. R. McMerrell, Accused of Crime, Suicides.

HE WAS AN EMBEZZLER.

Two Indictments Were Returned Against Him by the Grand Jury—History of His Peculations.

L. R. McMerrell has suicided.

He took his own life rather than suffer the penalty of his peculations.

When the grand jury was brought into court yesterday morning four sub rosa indictments were reported. Two of these were against L. R. McMerrell, a traveling man of this city, charging him with embezzling an aggregate of \$221 from his employers, Richardson & Mosey, proprietors of the Richardson Bottling Works. McMerrell has for some time been traveling for the Netscher Bottling Works, and it was expected that he would arrive home last night. Accordingly Sheriff Guthrie, Prosecutor Douglass and Officer Hayes repaired to the union depot to arrest him, but he failed to appear. The officers frequently visited McMerrell's home on West Bloom street, where they were assured that their man had not returned to the city.

This forenoon Prosecutor Douglass became satisfied that McMerrell had been informed of the indictments and he prepared to send Sheriff Guthrie to Shreve (McMerrell's old home) in the hope of finding him there. As a matter of precaution, however, he first telegraphed L. R. Troutman, president of a Shreve bank, asking him if the traveling man had been in the village. At noon Mr. Douglass received the following explanatory telegram from Mr. Troutman:

"L. R. McMerrell was found dead in bed at this place this morning."

The dead man leaves a wife and two children living on West Bloom street, to whom his sudden demise will prove a severe blow.

The story of McMerrell's crime is quite lengthy. In his embezzlement he displayed superior ability. About a year ago he removed from Shreve to this city and secured the position of traveling salesman for the Richardson Bottling Works. McMerrell had previously represented the Netscher Bottling Works and was well qualified in every way for the position. For a time he proved to be an excellent salesman. About three months ago, however, the firm began to notice that McMerrell's accounts were not straight and he reported no orders one week. This aroused the suspicions of the proprietors and they proceeded to make an investigation. They found that McMerrell had failed to account for \$150. When confronted with proof of his guilt McMerrell weakened and gave the firm security for the amount, after which he was discharged.

Later another investigation was made and it was found that the dishonest salesman had defrauded his employers out of about \$140 more. This he also made good.

A member of the company then took the road to sell goods, when he found that, while McMerrell was traveling on the money of the Richardson Bottling Works, he had been selling the goods of a rival concern. It was also found that the salesman had collected every cent due the firm and in this manner had secured \$221, for the embezzlement of which he was indicted. McMerrell was given an opportunity to settle, but his brother-in-law at Shreve, who had helped him out of his former trouble, refused to have anything to do with him.

It is not known what route McMerrell selected in taking passage to the beyond, but it is supposed that he called laudanum or morphine to his assistance. S. L. Nash received a letter from McMerrell under date of "Shreve, March 16th," in which he said that he was dying as he wrote the letter. Mr. Nash went to Shreve today to investigate the suicide.

No arrangements have yet been made for the funeral, but the remains will probably be interred at Shreve.

McMerrell also had dealings with the Netscher Bottling Works, J. J. Maguire and Terrence Donohoe, all of whom lost money on him.