

The clerk stepped forward, and took the verdict, and read :

"We, the jury, find the defendant guilty and fix his punishment at imprisonment for seven years, without hard labor."

Dead silence followed the words. There were those who had thought the prisoner would be freed, and those whose opinion was he would be found guilty, with the death penalty attached; but such a sentence none had anticipated. The prisoner sat unmoved; after having lived through the horrors of that other night, seven years of prison life had no alarm for him. His lawyer glared savagely at the jurymen, seeing which, his opponent smiled broadly, though, at first, he had run his fingers through his soft brown hair, perplexedly. The Judge looked grave, but the twelve men who had passed their sentence on a fellow-creature, showed no concern at the reception accorded that judgment. It was then, down the darkened aisle, came a fierce voice, and at its first sound the prisoner started to his feet, and threw up his manacled, clasped hands.

"This is the justice we had to wait for!" it shouted. "This is the justice the law, as represented by judge and jury, gives!"

"Clear the room!" commanded the Judge, in thunder tones.

The constable rose to obey, but half way down the aisle, he saw a dark figure slip back into the shadows and disappear through the portals. Then the Judge addressed a few words to the prisoner and thanked the jury for their services, and again dismissed the Court. And afterwards it was known how for fifteen mortal hours Harry Earle had hung that jury, how he had brought eleven men from a

unanimous sentence of death, down, by gradations, to the one rendered and how, before he consented to that, the penalty of hard work was removed. It was a victory, but he never quite forgot the struggle it cost.

That very night, the high fever of the wounded minister began to abate, and as the soldiers were leading the prisoner back to his cell, he fell into a quiet sleep from which he awoke, conscious, to take up life again, with all the realities of the past and the conjectures of the future.

CHAPTER VII.

The sheen of a June morning was over the land. Under it, the moaning cedars showed less gloomy, while the foliage-covered hills were rich in beauty. Nature here is capricious, wilful. Ask her to yield to cultivation and she does so niggardly, repaying man's unceasing labor with the hand of a miser; leave her to work her own sweet pleasure and she proves how great and artistic she can be in her generosity. But an acre of corn means more to man than the beauty of a thousand shrub-clad hills; and little wonder if the disappointed farmers yearn for possessions in the rich, if unpicturesque Blue Grass Belt.

On the low, roughly-fashioned porch, that served as a dining-room in summer, and that commanded a full view of the road and Judith's home, sat Mrs. Logan, her hawklike eyes fixed on the house below, well defined against its back-ground of orchard trees. Though the hard, high, straight-backed chair had never been intended for anything comfortable, the natural restlessness of the woman made her rock it to and fro, and the rhythmic fall of the front and back feet on the