

fresh air boys over at that farm-house 'tother side the hill."

"Um! yes, I believe I darn-hope! So Perkins speak of takin' some street boys for a week. Crazy idee, I thought it."

For some minutes he watched the boy dubiously, then the uncertainty left his face, and he leaned back comfortably against the tree.

"Mighty sorry with his fingers, an' careful as one of my own boys," he thought, approvingly. "But the work goes as fast as I can, it is he a twice. 'Um! makin' of another good farmer lost in him, I s'pose." Here his eyes closed, and they had not opened when the boy came back on his second row. A sharp scolding and then Bob turned to the third row and again weeded his way slowly across the field. As he rose from the sixth row he heard the sharp clang of a bell. Going to the old man he touched him lightly on the shoulder.

"I guess likely that your dinner bell, mister," he said.

"Dinner bell! sho! sho! 'Taint none o'clock yet, an' only just shot my eyes a minute." He glanced up at the sun, and then down at the newly weeded onions, and his face lengthened into incredulous astonishment.

"You don't mean you've weeded six rows? Why, that's much as my obstinate old back'll let me do in a whole day." Again the dinner bell sounded. "Yes, that's for me, sure enough. Won't you come in an' eat with me?"

"No, Miss Perkins! I wonder where I've gone. But if you don't mind I'll come back soon's I've eat. I'd like to try them onions again."

"Mind! I should think not. I'm always more than glad to run across such hands."

It was nearly half a mile to Solomon Perkins, but when the old man returned to his onion field he found Bob already there and well down his seventh row.

They worked until dark, then the old man took out his pocket-book. Bob shook his head and grimed.

"I don't want no money, mister; but if you'll let me come again to-morrow I'd be much obliged."

"Come all you want to. There's plenty o' work, an' we can settle when we're through. But it seems sort o' hard for you to come down here on a vacation, an' then work all the time."

"Oh, that's all right; 'tis farm-thing," and with a quick spring he flew over the fence and running across the field.

It took three days to weed the onions, and when they were finished, the old man again brought out his pocket-book, but again Bob shook his head. The old man looked perplexed.

"Come, come, boy; take the money," he said. "I don't want nobody to work for me for nothin'. You've earned it, every cent."

Bob shuffled his feet and looked at the old man sideways. "I didn't come for money," he said, "but there's something else. Had-had my work suited?"

"Yes, good work I ever had. I'd like to hire you for a year."

The boy's eyes sparkled.

"An' would you be willin' to hire a man, too?" he asked, eagerly. "One who could work lots better than me."

"No, I haven't work for two hands."

The eager countenance fell.

"I thought maybe you would," and

Bob began to climb over the fence dejectedly. "We wouldn't ask much wages, and we'd work like every thing."

"Is he some of your folks?"

"My dad."

"Um! Well, there'd be no trouble about work, I guess. Good hands are scarce, an' your father could get plenty to do in the neighborhood. Perkins hires folks an' so does Brown an' Thompson. I've got an old horse that I'll rent you cheap, an' you can move in any time you like an' go to work. I'll keep you steady—an' he mighty glad to git rid o' onion weeding," grimly.

But Bob's face did not brighten as he expected.

"I don't believe Dad would come, 'cept he was sure of gettin' work," he said. "We went out in the country last summer an' tried lots of farms, but nobody would hire him. Dad said he wouldn't try again."

Then, in answer to a look of incredulity, he added, with a sudden flash coming into his face, "You see, it's just this way. Dad's the best man in the world, an' he's a splendid worker; but he's that way like an' pleasant he won't say no to nobody. He didn't drink any more mother shod, an' he often goes weeks without it now—he did when I was sick last summer. Him an' me is all there is, an' sometimes he tries to give it up on my account; but most folks like him, an' there's ten whiskey shops in sight of our door. 'Taint easy for a

man to go past 'em all. Dad says he just can't do it, if we lived 'way off in the country there might be some show."

"If he only drinks now an' ag'in," said the old man reflectively, "it seems sort o' strange that he can't git work somehere. I know a good many hired men who drink a little."

Bob flushed and looked embarrassed. "You see, he—he can't stop when he once gets started," he explained, "he's so awful easy an'—an' good-natured."

"Um! drunk most o' the time, hey?"

Bob remained silent, but shuffled his feet uneasily over the rails. "No, I don't want him," said the old man, decidedly. "I ain't retortin' drunkards."

"He ain't no drunkard," cried Bob fiercely. "He's easy, an' we've all ways lived among rum shops. He smells whiskey just as soon as he steps on the street, an' there's plenty of men to give him a drink. He can't stop, but I tell you he ain't no drunkard. He ain't! He ain't! He ain't! I guess I know, for I'm most always with him. I sit up with him nights, an' I foller him when he goes out. I wouldn't be here now, only he went off with a lot o' men for two weeks an' I couldn't go long. I thought maybe there'd be a chance for us out here, an' I worked for you just as hard as ever I could, an' hoped you'd be willin' to help me give him a show. He ain't no drunk-

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