

"Harry, I believe you know enough to run this vineyard for a month. Don't you think you do?" Harry forgot the good opinion of himself which he had been forming for some time past, and stammered out: "I don't know, Mr. Eller."

"Well, if you don't know," continued Mr. Eller, "the only way for you to find out is to try and see. I have got to go East for a month or six weeks, and have decided to leave the vineyard in your charge as superintendent. I'll pay you one hundred dollars a month. Now sit down, and I will show you what you will have to do."

The next day, after calling the men together and telling them that during his absence they were under Treuton's orders, Mr. Eller started on his journey.

After thinking over his conversation of the night before, Harry came to the conclusion that, on the whole, a superintendent's duties were neither arduous nor unpleasant. All he had to do was to drive to town once a day, oversee the men, and keep the books of the vineyard.

But he did not foresee the many little annoyances and jealousies with which he would have to contend, and it was not long before he found his position, in some respects far from pleasant.

He was one of the youngest hands on the vineyard, had been there but a year, and now discovered that several of the other men resented his authority and thought Mr. Eller showed favoritism in choosing him. They would not admit, though it was the fact, that he owed his new position to his own hard work and intelligence.

One of the hands in particular chafed under Harry's authority, and took no pains to conceal his irritation.

He was a man named Ballard, who had worked for Mr. Eller nearly five years, and had been, in many respects, a good hand. But he looked upon Harry as a boy, and took the new arrangement in very bad humor.

He was so surly that Harry more than once had half a mind to discharge him, but did not feel that his authority was quite enough for that.

The man counted on his security from discharge. He was impertinent, and openly tried to lead other hands to join him in insubordination.

One Sunday Ballard and two other men broke into the wine-cellar, which was always kept locked, became intoxicated and started for the town.

The next day a constant stream of complaints poured in on the young superintendent, from people whose property the three men had injured, in various ways, during their spree.

Harry made up his mind that the time for action had come. It was a fixed rule of the vineyard that no employé should enter the wine-cellar without permission, and if these offenders were allowed to go unpunished, the whole vineyard would be in a state of intoxication.

On Monday Ballard was not at his work, so Harry went to the men's quarters, and there he found him, lying in his bunk, idly smoking.

"Get up?" said Harry.

"What for?" demanded Ballard, coolly.

"Get up, and get out?" Harry shouted.

"Not for any whipper-snapper like you," was the reply, and the man was evidently not yet sober.

"Look here, Ballard," said Harry, in a voice that was not to be mistaken, "I'll give you just one hour to pack your belongings and go. If I catch you around here after an hour's time, I'll throw you off the premises."

Ballard leered impudently into the young fellow's face, but he must have seen something there that impressed him, for the leer changed to a scowl and he muttered under his breath.

Harry stood for a moment and looked at him; then, with a sharp "I mean it," turned on his heel and went to find Ballard's two companions. He dismissed them with the same warning, and his mind was more at ease.

During the rest of the day he saw nothing of either of the three discharged men, and came to the conclusion they had gone.

That evening, after supper, he had to drive to town, and did not return until late. All the men had gone to bed in the bunk-house, a quarter of a mile away, and as he drove up to the barn, apparently not a soul was stirring. He had put the horse in the stall and hung the harness on its hook, when,

in turning to leave the building, he caught sight of a dark figure crouching against the wall.

"Who's there?" he cried.

No answer came; but as Harry advanced, the figure quickly straightened up. It was Ballard.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Harry, sternly.

"None of your business!"

"Leave this place instantly."

"Not for you."

The last words were hardly spoken when Harry sprang toward Ballard, who at the same instant caught up a pitchfork. He had no time to use it. No sooner had he laid hold on it, than Harry wrenched it from him, and sent it rattling to the other end of the barn. The next moment he had caught Ballard by the coat-collar and was shaking him well.

The surprised man struggled violently, but it did no good, and when Harry had finished shaking him he threw him heavily. It was a hard throw, and Ballard's head struck the floor with a thwack.

"Now," said Harry, "get up and walk ahead of me out of this barn. No treachery, mind. If I have to take hold of you again you won't get off with a shaking. Now then, forward, march!"

Ballard scowled, and for a moment hesitated, but he thought better of it, and walked peaceably ahead. When the door was almost reached, he suddenly sprang forward, dashed out of the barn, slammed the door and snapped the padlock.

Harry was a prisoner!

He pounded on the door, and angrily demanded to be set free. A derisive laugh was the only answer.

He was wild with anger; not so much at being shut into the barn, as at having been tricked by his antagonist. However, it was useless to be angry, and feeling sure that any appeal to Ballard would simply invite further insult, he said nothing.

For a short time Ballard amused himself by taunting the foe who was unable to reach him; then the sound of his footsteps grew fainter as he moved away, and soon all was silence.

In the barn it was quite dark. No light came in, except what could find its way through the groups of parallel slits that served for windows over the stalls.

This was no ordinary barn. It had been built to resist the encroachments of horse-thieves, of whom the country was full. The door was as solid and as securely fastened by the padlock outside, as if the building were a jail. It is even harder to keep a thief out than to keep him in, so every precaution had been taken.

For a time Harry called and shouted, and rattled the heavy door, in the hope that some one of the men might be about. The horses, unused to such a disturbance, aided him with their neighs and snorts, but the noise was of no avail. All the men were sound asleep in the bunk-house, a quarter of a mile away.

