

The Price of Labour

Narrator: The Kingdom of Heaven is like this: Once there was a man who went out early in the morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard.

Hermann: (Yawning) A very good morning to you. Schuster's the name. Hermann H. Schuster of Schuster's champagne, Schuster's schparkling wines, Schuster's sherries and Schuster's special reserve. Man of property, entrepreneur par excellence and a fair-minded employer to boot. Just at this moment employment is my problem. Work I've got, workers I haven't. And things could be so busy in the vineyards. Not that you'll catch me complaining. In fact you could say that I 've got nothing to whine about. But I do need labour and plenty of it. Hence my presence here at the local job centre.

Man 1: Yes, guv?

Hermann: Hermann H. Schuster of Schuster's champagne, Schuster's schparkling wines Schuster's sherries not to mention Schuster's special reserve.

Man 1: You just did.

Hermann: Yes, quite. Are you looking for work?

M1: That depends.

Hermann: It pays £100 for a day's work. That's the plan.

M1: I'm your man. (Shakes hands)

Narrator: And so the work began up at the vineyard. (Now and whenever workers are added they mime work activities in the background) But more labour was still needed. 9 o'clock rolled around.

Hermann: It's me Hermann H. Schuster again. Still looking

for labour. It's just so difficult to find these days. Now how about you, sir?

M2: Yes, squire? Can I be of service?

Hermann: I certainly hope so. I need hoe-ers and growers.

M2: I could be your man. How about the lolly?

Hermann: Err...pardon?

M2: The brass.

Hermann: Come again?

M2: The ready...the bread...the spondoolux.

Hermann: Sorry I didn't do Chinese at school.

M2 (Exasperated) How much does the job pay?

Hermann: Oh, why didn't you say so? £100 a day. That's the plan.

M2: I'm your man.

Narrator: And so Mr Schuster went on collecting his workers all day. He went out at 12, he went out at 3 and finally he went out at 5 pm. (Collects bigger and bigger group)

Hermann: Phew, I don't know who's working harder- me or them. Well, not much time to go now and so much work left to do. Now, this fellow looks a likely type. Excuse me, sir.

M3: Who me?

Hermann: Yes, sir-how do you feel about some work?

M3: Ah... work...did you say work?

Hermann: Yes I've got 256 acres of vineyards in desperate need of hoeing. Hermann Schuster's the name-of Schusters schparkling wines, Schuster's champagne...and all that.

M3: Well, I don't know. I've got this bone in my arm and I speak with a limp. And in any case, work's against my religion.

Hermann: Really?

M3: Yes, I'm a devout shirker. And then there's my back trouble.

Hermann: Oh, really?

M3: Yes, I can't get it off the bed.

Hermann: There's money in it.

M3: How much?

Hermann: £100 that's the plan.

M3: I'm your man.

Narrator: Well, that was 5 o'clock. At 6 the work's hooter blew and it was pay-out time at Schuster's wines.

Hermann: Thank you, one and all for your unstinting work. Thanks to you my vineyards are in fine shape-or should I say vine shape. Now it's pay time. Form a queue, please.

(He pays £100 to each man, beginning with M3 and working back)

M1: Just a minute Schuster! What's the game? Are you a shyster?

Hermann: No, a Schuster.

M1: These men you hired last only worked 1 hour.

M2: Yes, and we put in a whole day's work in the blazing hot sun.

M1: And you've paid us the same as them. This will have to go to arbitration. It's exploitation of the working masses- that's what it is.

Hermann: Listen, friend. I haven't cheated you. After all you agreed to do a day's work for £100. Now take your money and go home. I want to give this man who was hired last the same as you. Don't I have the right to do as I wish with my own money? Or are you jealous because I'm generous?

Narrator: Jesus said: Those who are last will be first and those who are first will be last.