

"Where are you going to?"

"Why, to Westbeach, sure."

"And how far may that be?"

"Well, a matter of seven miles from here, I'd reckon."

"And how far are we from Scarmouth?"

"Nigh upon eight by now. You'd better be getting down, I'm thinking."

"Let me stop a bit, guv'nor, I'll get down at the next milestone."

"They're looking for you there," Job said, with a motion of his head towards Scarmouth.

"They may look," the boy answered, with a grin, "they won't be so quick at finding me."

"What have you been after?"

"I aint been doing nothing," the boy answered, rubbing a dirty knuckle into one eye, and speaking in a whimpering tone; "they're always a-pushing and a-shoving one about, and a-telling one to move on. I'd like to know how they'd like it. I never did nothing to them."

No answer suggested itself to Job's mind, so he went on for some time in silence, the boy still sitting on the edge of the cart, whistling and swinging his feet. At last Job said, "It will be dark long afore you get back to Scarmouth."

The boy shrugged his shoulders.

"Won't anyone be a-wondering where you've got to?"

"Not them," was the answer.

"Ain't you got no mother?" The boy shook his head.

"Nor father?" Again a shake of the head.

"Where's your home, then?"

"Ain't got none."

This was very puzzling to Job. "Where be you going to to-night, then?"

"Don't know," said the boy. "I'll get a beating if I go to where the other coves are, 'cause I ain't got nothing to-day, and have had the Bobbies after me."

Job in his simplicity did not know what a Bobby was, but he went on, "Who'll beat you?"

The boy looked sharply up at him. "What's that to you? It ain't no business of yours."

After this rebuff, Job walked on in silence. They passed several milestones, but still the boy sat there. At last, through the darkness, the lights of Westbeach began to show dimly in front, and Job said, "Now, youngster, get down; we're close on Westbeach."

"Let me stop till you get there," the boy answered. "I'm terrible tired and hungry, and I ain't had nothing all day."

Job began to wish he had made the boy get down sooner, but he was too kind-hearted to insist, and so the boy still sat there, as the cart went on past the church, dimly seen in the darkness; past the cluster of low cottages, in whose windows darkness was spreading more and more, as the inhabitants put out their lights, and went to their honest rest; down by the shore where the boats lay, pulled up out of reach of the tide, and the nets lay spread out to dry on the beach, and at last stopped by Job's little solitary