

During the waving of handkerchiefs and exclamations of joy, as friend recognized friend, the great ship was at last still, and the gangway thrown down.

Jack was for a moment bewildered, but soon regaining his wits, (also his spirits), his first impulse was to throw his sailor cap into the air and cheer, for the world looked so beautiful. But he restrained himself and put on quite a serious face, as he sat down on a box near by, and tried to plan a way of getting home. He knew he had not enough money to pay his way, so he said, to himself, "Well I'll have to foot it then, so here goes."

By this time it was near evening, and had stopped snowing. The air was quite sharp, but our hero pulled his coat collar up put his hands in his pockets, and off he started, whistling, "Home, Sweet Home."

Just at the outskirts of the town stood an inn, and as Jack passed, he noticed a stage standing at the door. He looked around him, and seeing no one near, he concluded to steal a ride.

He was quite small, and easily slipped under the seat.

In about five minutes, the driver with his passengers (three old gentlemen) came out of the inn, and after some disputing about the price, they boarded the stage and started.

Fortunately, as Jack peeped out, he saw that they were going in the direction of his home, so he made himself as comfortable as possible, and awaited events.

Something did happen, and somewhat sooner than our brave boy expected.

The three old gentlemen were carrying on an animated discussion on politics, which was not at all interesting to our little friend, who soon became restless. As he was endeavoring to put one of his feet into a more comfortable position, the noise attracted the attention of one of the old gentlemen, and, in the midst of a long harrangue by one of his friends, said, "We three are not the only passengers, for there is something under the seat, sure as guns," whereat to Jack's discomfiture, they proceeded to investigate.

They of course, found our hero, and immediately wanted an explanation, which, when given, excited their pity. But the driver was merciless, and said Jack must get out.

The old gentlemen each gave Jack a shilling, which he pocketed with many thanks.

After the stage had gone, leaving our sailor boy in the middle of the road, he looked around in quest of a light, and seeing one in the distance, he made his way, through the snow, in the direction of it.

Presently he came to a comfortable farmhouse, at the door of which he rapped, and was admitted by a kind motherly-looking woman.

She seemed astonished, as she might be, as she said "You poor little boy, where did you come from, on such a cold night?"

She brought him in, and soon made him happy, by first giving him his supper, and then sitting down to talk to him. As he related his adventures, her husband, who was reading, also became interested, and Jack felt quite at home.

Being very tired he was soon asleep, in a cosy little bed, dreaming of turkey and plum pudding.

Next morning he found that he was not far from home, and with many kind words from his benefactors he started out.

It was a beautiful day, clear, frosty—just the kind of Christmas morning we all delight to see.

Jack forgot the walk through the deep snow, and everything in the enjoyment of the bracing air. Numerous were the conjectures by the passers by, as to who the little boy in blue was, but the subject of conversation, utterly ignorant of the interest taken in him, plodded on.

Bye-and-bye the dear old home comes in sight, and he says to himself, "Oh, I am afraid I will not be there in time to have my Christmas dinner with them," but hurries on.

As he nears the house, he sees his little sister and playmate at the window, and then she disappears.