

The Rockwood Review.

round searchingly for any signs of Sam.

The skipper locked up the cabin and then calling on one of the shore-hands to keep an eye on the fore-castle, left it open for the convenience of the small passenger. Harry, Charlie and the cook stepped ashore. The skipper and mate followed, and the latter, looking back from some distance, called his attention to the desolate little figure sitting on the hatch.

"I suppose he'll be all right," said the skipper, uneasily; "there's food and a bed down the fo'c's'le. You might just look round to-night and see he's safe. I expect we'll have to take him back to London with us."

They turned up a small road in the direction of home and walked on in silence, until the mate, glancing behind at an acquaintance who had just passed, uttered a sharp exclamation. The skipper turned, and a small figure which had just shot round the corner stopped in mid-career and eyed them warmly. The men exchanged uneasy glances.

"Father," cried a small voice.

"He—he's adopted you now," said the skipper, huskily.

"Or you," said the mate. "I never took much notice of him."

He looked around again. Master Jones following, briskly, about 10 yards in the rear, and twenty yards behind him came the crew, who, having seen him quit the ship, had followed with the evident intention of being in at the death.

"Father," cried the boy again, "wait for me."

One or two passers-by stared in astonishment, and the mate began to be uneasy as to the company he was keeping.

"Let's separate," he growled, "and see who he's calling after."

The skipper caught him by the arm, "shout out to him to go back," he cried.

"It's you he's after, I tell you," said the mate. "Who did you want, Billy?"

"I want my father," cried the

youth, and, to prevent any mistake indicated the raging skipper with his finger.

"Who do you want?" bellowed the latter, in a frightful voice.

"Want you, father," chirruped Master Jones.

Wrath and dismay struggled for supremacy in the skipper's face, and he paused to decide whether it would be better to wipe Master Jones off the face of the earth or to pursue his way in all the strength of conscious innocence. He chose the latter course, and, a shade more erect than usual, walked on until he came in sight of his house and his wife, who was standing at the door.

"You come along o' me, Jem, and explain," he whispered to the mate. Then he turned about and hailed the crew. The crew, flattered at being offered front seats in the affair, came forward eagerly.

"What's the matter?" inquired Mrs. Hunt, eyeing the crowd in amazement as it grouped itself in anticipation.

"Nothing," said her husband, off-handedly.

"Who's that boy?" cried the innocent woman.

"It's a poor little mad boy," began the skipper; he came aboard—

"I'm not mad father," interrupted Master Jones.

"A poor little mad boy," continued the skipper, hastily, "who came aboard in London and said poor old Sam Brown was his father."

"No—you, father," cried the boy, shrilly.

"He calls everybody his father," said the skipper, with a smile of anguish; "that's the form his madness takes. He called Jem nere his father."

"No, he didn't," said the mate bluntly.

"And then he thought Charlie was his father."

"No, sir," said Mr. Legge, with respectful firmness.

"Well, he said Sam Brown was," said the skipper.