

the berth of second mate of a full-rigged ship that was then discharging sugar at Liverpool, and had obtained five days of leave in which to gladden the hearts of his parents and sisters and brothers.

He did not remain at the vicarage until the termination of his leave, however, and the effect of his visit upon the hearts of his family was of a shocking rather than a gladdening nature. At the end of three days he packed his box and drove away in a carrier's cart. He paused at the Blue Swan long enough to consume a bottle of rum, and to beat a gentleman farmer from the other side of the county into a state of heavy unconcern ; and since then not a whisper had been heard of him until the elderly stranger in the broken hat had said that incredible thing to Charles Beauchamp.

Charles returned to his hotel and sat down by the open window of his room to smoke a pipe. He even unpacked the manuscript of a half-written story, arranged it on a marble-topped table, and picked several flakes of tobacco out of the nib of his fountain-pen ; but all in vain. He could not get his mind off his Uncle Peter.

He finished his pipe, and stared at page fifty-six of his story until his eyes watered.

" This is no place to work in ! " he exclaimed. " I must get out and look for decent diggings. Confound Uncle Peter ! "