

were waiting, and, receiving permission, took the seat Flanagan had left. His first act, as soon as the door had closed behind the boarding-boss, was to quietly tear off the top sheet from the blotter and put it in his pocket, next he scrawled some heavy characters over two or three pieces of note-paper, and dried them on the clean pad. I was on the point of asking him what he was doing this for, when he signed to me to be silent, and fell to writing a letter in real earnest. In about an hour a boy appeared at the door and announced that Mr. Flanagan had gone aboard one of the ships, and had sent him to conduct us to our lodgings.

"We were soon ready to accompany our guide, and on reaching the house were admitted by a slovenly-looking servant, who shewed us into a rather well-furnished parlor; telling us the 'missus' said we were to make ourselves at home.

" 'Well then, my dear,' said Greenwood, 'kindly give us a light, and shew us to our room, so that we can get a wash.'

"The girl did not at all object to his familiar manner of addressing her, but smilingly said she would do so at once.

"We found we were to sleep in a double-bedded room, rather better than some I have since seen in sailors' boarding-houses, but for all that it was none too large, nor too well furnished.

"When the girl had gone, I at once tackled my chum about his strange behavior in regard to the blotting-paper, asking what on earth he intended doing, and declaring that I did not think it was at all honorable of him to pry into another man's correspondence.

" 'Possibly not!' he replied coolly, 'but I distrust that joker, and you want to find out if he deserves it.'

Placing the lamp on the dressing-table, he carefully smoothed out the piece of paper and holding it up to the

looking-glass, read its contents on the reflection.

" 'Come here, Foggerty!' he whispered. 'It's worse than I expected, but perhaps I can think of a plan to out-wit him.'

"I leaned over his shoulder and read the letter, but it did not make me much wiser, although I could plainly see some rascality was intended. As nearly as I remember, it ran something like this:—

" 'I am sending you two boarders, and you must be very careful not to scare them. Look sharp after the shortest one: he's up to tricks, but I think I can ship them to-night. Put the shanghai medicine in the left-hand corner of the sideboard (they drink Scotch whiskey), and put a little in a decanter on the right-hand side. Don't put too much—about four drinks or so in each. On second thoughts, you had better not see them: you might talk too much, and one of them is sharp.'

" 'Well, what is shanghai medicine?' I enquired.

"My friend stared at me as he asked: 'Don't you know what it means to be shanghaed?'

"I confessed that although I had often heard the term used, I did not exactly know what it meant.

"He then explained that if our worthy friend intended to shanghai us, he would get two crimps to sign a ship's articles, most probably in our names, draw a month's pay in advance, and when the time came for them to be aboard, we should be drugged and shipped instead; a few rags put in a bag would be sent with us as our clothes, the rascally land-shark keeping possession of all our belongings.

" 'That's all very well,' said I, 'but if that happened to me, I would take precious good care to get back to this or any other port at which it occurred, and prosecute the rascals for abduction.'

" 'And for all the good you would get out of it,' retorted Greenwood, 'you might as well leave it alone'