

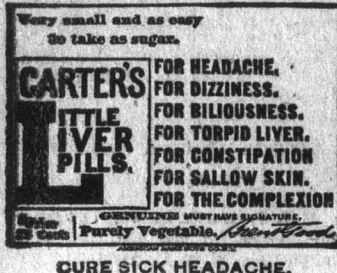
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London, Hamilton and Toronto.

Minard's Liniment Cures Diphtheria.

# Moran of the Lady Letty

By  
**FRANK NORRIS,**  
Author of "The Octopus," "The Pit," Etc.

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The schooner was beating out to sea through the middle channel. Once clear of the Golden Gate, she stood over toward the Cliff House, then on the next tack cleared Point Bonita. The sea began building up in deadly earnest. They were about to cross the bar. Everything was battened down, the hatches were awash, and the hawse holes spouted like fountains after every plunge. Once the captain ordered all men aloft, just in time to escape a gigantic dull green roller that broke like a Niagara over the schooner's bows, smothering the decks knee deep in a twinkling.

The wind blew violent and cold, the spray was flying like icy small shot. Without intermission the Bertha Miller rolled and plunged and heaved and sank. Wilbur was drenched to the skin and sore in every joint from being shunted from rail to mast and from mast to rail again.

The cordage sang like harp strings. The schooner's forefoot crashed down into the heaving water with a hissing like that of steam, blocks rattled, the captain bellowed his orders, rope ends flogged the hollow deck till it reverberated like a drumhead. The crossing of the bar was one long half hour of confusion and discordant sound.

When they were across the bar the captain ordered the cook to give the men their food.

"Git for'd, sonny," he added, fixing Wilbur with his eye. "Git for'd. This is tawble dee hote, savvy?" Wilbur crawled forward on the reeling deck, holding on now to a mast, now to a belaying pin, now to a stay, watching his chance and going on between the inebriated plunges of the schooner.

He descended the fo'c'stle hatch. The Chiamen were already there, sitting on the edges of their bunks. On the floor, at the bottom of the ladder, punk sticks were burning in an old tomato can.

Charlie brought in supper—stewed beef and pork in a bread pan and a



Recalling the chocolate and stuffed olives, wooden kit and the Chiamen ate it in silence with their sheath knives and from tin plates. A liquid that bore a distant resemblance to coffee was served. Wilbur learned afterward to know the stuff as black jack and to be aware that it was made from bud barley and was sweetened with molasses.

# Had to Give up and go to Bed.

Several Doctors Attended  
But Did No Good.

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lasses. A single reeking lamp swung with the swinging of the schooner over the center of the group, and long afterward Wilbur could remember the grisly scene—the punk sticks, the bread pan full of hunks of meat, the horrid close and oily smell and the circle of silent, preoccupied Chinese, each sitting on his bunk ledge, devouring stewed pork and holding his panikin of black jack between his feet against the rolling of the boat.

Wilbur looked fearfully at the mess in the pan, recalling the chocolate and stuffed olives that had been his last luncheon.

"Well," he muttered, clenching his teeth, "I've got to come to it sooner or later." His panikin was in the pocket of his waistcoat, underneath his skin coat. He opened the big blade harpoon of a cube of pork and devoured it on his tin plate. He ate it slowly and with savage determination. But the black jack was more than he could bear.

"I'm not hungry enough for that just now," he told himself. "Say, Jim," he said, turning to the Chiaman next him on the bunk ledge—"say, what kind of boat is this? What you do—where you go?"

The other moved away impatiently. "No sabe, no sabe," he answered, shaking his head and frowning. Throughout the whole of that strange meal these were the only words spoken.

When Wilbur came on deck again he noted that the Bertha Miller had already left the whistling buoy astern. Off to the east, her sails just showing above the waves, was a pilot boat with the number 7 on her mainsail. The evening was closing in, the Farallones were in plain sight dead ahead. Far behind, in a mass of shadow just bluer than the sky, he could make out a few twinkling lights—San Francisco.

Half an hour later Kitchell came on deck from his supper in cabin aft. He glanced in the direction of the mainsail, now almost out of sight, then took the wheel from one of the Chiamen and commanded, "Ease off 'r fore an' main sheets." The hands eased away, and the schooner played off before the wind.

The stayvial was set. The Bertha Miller headed to southwest, bowing easily ahead of a good eight knot breeze.

Next came the order, "All hands aft," and Wilbur and his mates betook themselves to the quarter deck. Charlie took the wheel, and he and Kitchell began to choose the men for their watches, just as Wilbur remembered to have chosen sides for baseball during his school days.

"Sonny, I'll choose you. You're on my watch," said the captain to Wilbur, "and I will assume the responsibility of your nautical education."

"I may as well tell you at once," began Wilbur, "that I'm no sailor." "But you will be soon," answered the captain, at once soothing and threatening. "You will be, Mister Lilee of the Valise. You kin lay to it as how you will be one of the best sailor men along the front, as our dear friend Jim says. Before I git tho' with you you'll be a sailor man or shark bait, I can promise you. You're on my watch. Step over here, son."

The watches were divided, Charlie and three other Chiamen on the port, Kitchell, Wilbur and two Chiamen on the starboard. The men trooped forward again.

The tiny world of the schooner had lapsed to quiet. The Bertha Miller was now clear of the land, that lay like a blur of faintest purple smoke, ever growing fainter, low in the east. The Farallones showed but their shoulders above the horizon. The schooner was standing well out from shore, even beyond the track of the coasters and passenger steamers, to catch the trades from the northwest. The sun was setting royally, and the floor of the ocean shimmered like mosaic. The sea had gone down and the fury of the bar was a thing forgotten. It was perceptibly warmer.

On board, the two watches mingled forward, smoking opium and playing a game that looked like checkers. Three of them were washing down the decks with kalar brooms. For the first time since he had come on board Wilbur heard the sound of their voices.

The evening was magnificent. Never to Wilbur's eyes had the Pacific appeared so vast, so radiant, so divinely beautiful. A star or two burned slowly through that part of the sky where the pink began to fade into the blue. Charlie went forward and set the side lights—red on the port rigging, green on the starboard. As he passed Wilbur, who was leaning over the rail and watching the phosphorus flaring just under the surface, he said:

"Hey, you got talker-talk one piecey hogs, savvy boss—chin chin."

Wilbur went aft and came up on the poop, where Kitchell stood at the wheel, smoking an inverted clay pipe.

"Now, son," began Kitchell, "I satchly love you so that I'm goin' to do you a real favor, do you twig? I'm goin' to allow you to berth aft in the cabin, 'long o' me an' Charlie, an' beside, you can make free of my quarter deck. Mehbes you ain't used to the ways of sailor men just yet, but you

can lay it to that those two are real concessions, savvy? I ain't a mush head, like me-dear friend Jim. You ain't no water front swimmer. I can guess that with one hand tied beehind me. You're a swell, that's what you are, an' your lines has been laid for swells. I ain't askin' you no questions, but you got brains, an' I agger on gettin' more outa you by lettin' you have y'r head a bit. But mind, now, you get gay once, sonny, or try to flimflam me, or forget that I'm the boss of the bathtub, an', strike me blind, I'll cut you open, an' you can lay to that, son. Now, then, here's the game: You work this boat 'long with the cooles an' take my orders an' walk chalk, an' I'll teach you navigation an' make this cruise as easy as how-do-you-do. You don't, an' I'll man-handle you till y'r bones come throo y'r hide."

"I've no choice in the matter," said Wilbur. "I've got to make the best of a bad situation."

"I re-marked as how you had brains," muttered the captain. "But there's one thing," continued Wilbur: "I'm to have my head a little, as you say, you'll find we can get along better if you put me to rights about this whole business. Why was I brought aboard, where are there only Chinese along, where are we going, what are we going to do, and how long are we going to be gone?"

Kitchell spat over the side and then sucked the nicotine from his mustache.

"Well," he said, resuming his pipe, "it's like this, son: This ship belongs to one of the Chinese trading companies of San Francisco, Charlie here is one of the shareholders in the business. We go down here twice a year off Cape San Lucas, Lower California, an' fish for blue sharks, or white, if we kin ketch 'em. We get the livers of these an' try out the oil, an' we bring back that same oil, an' the Chiamen sell it all over San Francisco as simon pure cod liver oil, savvy? An' it pays like a nitrate bed. I come in because it's a custom house regulation that no cooly can take a boat out of Frisco."

"And how do I come in?" asked Wilbur.

"Meer dear friend Jim put a knock-me-out drop into your Manhattan cocktail. It's a capsule filled with a drug. You were shanghaied, son," said the captain blandly.

About an hour later Wilbur turned in. Kitchell showed him his bunk with its "donkey's breakfast" and single ill smelling blanket. It was located under the companionway that led down into the cabin. Kitchell bunked on one side, Charlie on the other. A hacked deal table, covered with oilcloth and ironed to the floor, a swinging lamp, two chairs, a rack of books, a chest or two and a faring picture cut from the advertisement of a ballet was the room's inventory in the matter of furniture and ornament.

Wilbur sat on the edge of his bunk before undressing, reviewing the extraordinary events of the day. In a moment he was aware of a movement in one of the other two bunks and presently made out Charlie lying on his side and holding in the flame of an alcohol lamp a skewer on which some brown and sticky stuff boiled and sizzled. He transferred the stuff to the bowl of a huge pipe and drew on it noisily once or twice. In another moment he had sunk back in his bunk nearly senseless, but with a long breath of an almost blissful contentment.

"Beast!" muttered Wilbur, with pre-fund disgust.

He threw off his oilskin coat and felt in the pocket of his waistcoat, which he had retained when he had changed his clothes in the fo'c'stle, for his watch. He drew it out. It was just 9 o'clock. All at once an idea occurred to him. He fumbled in another pocket of the waistcoat and brought out one of his calling cards.

For a moment Wilbur remained motionless, seated on the bunk ledge, smiling grimly, while his glance wandered now to the sordid cabin of the Bertha Miller and the opium drugged cooly sprawled on the "donkey's breakfast" and now to the card in his hand on which a few hours ago he had written:

"First wait—Jo."

(To Be Continued.)

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