

# THE PILLAR of LIGHT

... By ...  
**Louis Tracy,**  
 Author of  
 "The Wings of the Morning"  
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 Edward J. Clode

## SYNOPSIS OF PLEDGING CHAPTERS

**CHAPTER I**—At daybreak an assistant keeper of the lighthouse, peering the gallery, discovers in the distance a ship in distress. Stephen Brand agrees to swim to it. Upon reaching the ship he comes in contact with a shark, fights and kills it and saves a man. He finds the body of a dead man and a strange bundle beneath the hull. Jones, the lighthouse keeper, gives a basket and hauls Brand and his strange bundle safely ashore. The bundle contains a living baby. The little one is the child of the nurse who has charge of Stephen Brand's child in Providence. They call the child Frances. Eighteen years later Constance Brand daughter of Stephen Brand and her adopted sister, End Trevillion, go to the lighthouse with an old fisherman, Ben Tolland, in a sailboat and a crew. They are caught in a storm, during which they hear the signal for help coming from the rock. They reach the lighthouse in safety and find that two of the men, Jackson and Bates, have been hurt. Brand and Constance go to the aid of the men. Jackson and Bates are lowered into the boat and Tolland starts for Providence. Brand is met by Lieutenant Stanhope, who is devotedly in love with End. He has started out for the light house in answer to the signal for help. On meeting the lady he turns back to assist with the injured men. From a lighthouse window End spies a boat approaching the rock. It is the boat of the nurse who has named Lawson. Brand discovers that it is the boat of the nurse who has named Lawson. Brand discovers that it is the boat of the nurse who has named Lawson.

**CHAPTER VII**—Continued.  
 "What is it, dad?" she asked as her father came to her.  
 "The end of the ship," he said. "The captain has gone with her."  
 "Oh, dear, why wasn't I saved?"  
 "I think he refused to desert his ship. His heart was broken, I expect. Now, Connie, duty first."  
 Indeed, she required no telling. As each of the shipwrecked men entered the lantern she handed him a glass of spirits, asked if he was injured and told him exactly how many flights of stairs he had to descend. But cocoa and biscuits would be brought soon, she explained. Greatly amazed, but speechless for the most part, the men obeyed her directions.  
 One of the last to claim her attention was the young American, Mr. Pyne. Her face lit up pleasantly when she saw him.  
 "I was wondering what had become of you," she said. "My sister has asked me several times if you had arrived, and I imagined that I must have misled you by some chance."  
 Now, all this was Greek to him, or nearly so. Indeed, had it been intelligible Greek, he might have guessed its import more easily.  
 Holding the glass in his hand, he looked at her in frank, open-eyed wonder. To be hailed so gleefully by a good looking girl whom he had never to his knowledge set eyes on was somewhat of a mystery, and the puzzle was made all the more difficult by the fact that she had discarded the weather-proof accoutrements needed when she first ventured forth on the gallery.  
 "I'm real glad you're pleased. My name is Charles A. Pyne," he said slowly.  
 It was Constance's turn to be bewildered. Then the exact situation dawned on her.  
 "How stupid of me," she cried. "Of course you don't recognize me again. My sister and I happen to be alone with my father on the rock tonight. We were with him on the balcony when you acted so bravely. You see, the light shone clear on your face."  
 "I'm glad it's shining on yours now," he said.  
 "You must go two floors below this," said she severely. "I will bring you some cocoa and a biscuit as quickly as possible."  
 "I am not a bit tired," he commented, still looking at her.  
 "That is more than I can say," she answered, "but I am so delighted that we managed to save so many poor people."  
 "How many?"  
 "Seventy-eight. But I dare not ask you how many are lost. It would make me cry, and I have no time for tears. Will you really help to carry a tray?"  
 "Just try me."  
 At the top of the stairs Constance called to her father:  
 "Anything you want, dad?"  
 "Yes, dear. Find out the chief officer and send him to me. He can eat and drink here while we talk."

**CHAPTER VIII**  
 PLEASE be careful. These stairs are very steep," said Constance, swinging the lantern close to her companion's feet as they climbed down the topmost flight.  
 "If I fall," he assured her, "you will be the chief sufferer."  
 "All the more reason why you should not fall. Wait here a moment. I must have a look at the hospital."  
 The visiting officer's room, which also served the purposes of a library and recreation room in normal times, now held fourteen injured persons, including two women, one of them a stewardess, and a little girl.  
 Most of the sufferers had received their wounds either in the saloon or by collision with the cornice of the lighthouse. The worst accident was a broken arm, the most alarming a case of cerebral concussion. Other injuries consisted for the most part of cuts and bruises.  
 Unfortunately, when the ship struck, the surgeon had gone aft to attend to an engineer whose hand was crushed as the result of some frantic lurch caused by the hurricane. Hence the doctor was lost with the first batch of victims. End discovered that among the few stowaways saved was a man who had gained some experience in a field hospital during the campaign in Cuba, and he placed his hands and feet in the water and bandages, and reactions supplied with the medicine chest of the lighthouse, the ex-hospital orderly had done wonders already.  
 "All I want, miss," he explained in answer to Constance's question, "is some water and some linen for bandages. The lint outfit in the chest is not half sufficient."  
 She vanished, to return quickly with a sheet and a pair of scissors.  
 "Now," she said to Mr. Pyne, "if you come with me I will send you water with a pail of water."  
 She took him to the kitchen, where End, aided by a sailor, pressed into service, was dispensing cocoa and biscuits. Pyne, who remained in the stairway, went off with the water and Constance's lantern. The interior of the lighthouse was utterly dark. To move without its light and with no prior knowledge of its internal arrangements

sympathy. "Don't you know that all of you owe your lives to his daring? He asked me to say he was all right, and that he hoped you were not utterly collapsed."  
 The addendum was a kindly one. No doubt Mr. Pyne had meant her to convey such a message. Mrs. Vansittart, it was evident, had received a shock. Perhaps she was a timorous, shrinking woman, averse to the sudden stare of others.  
 "I know nothing," she murmured. "It was all so horrible. O God, shall I ever forget that scene in the saloon? How the people fought. They were not human. They were tigers, fierce tigers, with the howls and the hateful eyes of wild beasts."  
 This outburst was as unexpected as her staccato question. Constance bent over and placed a gentle hand on her forehead.  
 "You must try to forget all that," she said soothingly. "Indeed, it must have been very terrible. It was dreadful enough for us, looking down at things through a mist of foam. For you—But there! You are one of the few who escaped. That is everything. God has been very good to you."  
 She was stooping low and holding the lantern in her left hand.  
 Suddenly Mrs. Vansittart's eyes gleamed again with that lambent light so oddly at variance with her smile. The slightest sign of excitement yielded to a ghastly pallor. With surprising energy she caught the girl's arm.  
 "Who are you?" she whispered. "Tell me, child, who are you?"  
 "My father is the lighthouse keeper," said Constance. "I am here quite by chance."  
 "But your name! What is your name?"  
 "Constance Brand."  
 "Brand did you say? And your father's name?"  
 "Stephen Brand. Really Mrs. Vansittart, you must try to compose yourself. You are overwrought, and—"



"Who are you?" she whispered.  
 "Listen! Listen to that. The thumping ram of ocean applied to a thin shaft of stone. Surely it must be pounded into fragments."  
 But a light flashed in the rolling orb of the man who was already on the stairs. Astonished, he drew back. Constance stood in their midst, a mere girl, radiant, smilingly unconcerned, addressing them in calm words broken only by the fatal noises.  
 "Sorry your quarters—so very unpleasant. Only last a couple of hours. Twenty-five years—far worse gales. Want any more cocoa?"  
 "Thank you kindly, miss, we're quite comfortable." This from the man who wished to do with his eyes open.  
 "Please, miss, may we smoke?" said he who couldn't stand it.  
 Constance hesitated. Blithely unconscious that a whirl of nutting had swept through the storm tossed fold, she considered the problem. She saw no harm in it.  
 "Yes," she said. "Smoke by all means. I will ask my father, and if it should be dangerous I will come back and let you know. In a few hours it will be daylight and if the sea falls he will come and open the door."  
 By sheer inspiration she had uttered the formula destined to annihilate the necromantic bluster of the hammering waves. Open the door! She would look after her. You have a great deal to do, I am sure.  
 Constance realized that the advice was good. She could not attend to one and neglect many.  
 Telling the women of the plan to dry their underclothing in sections, she asked them to help her by arranging matters so that their garments should be divided into lots. Then she went to the second bedroom and made the same suggestion. The case of the sufferers in the hospital required more drastic measures. The little girl she strapped with her own hands and clothed her in one of Brand's flannel shirts and a commandeered reefed jacket.  
 Two of Brand's old suits and a couple of blankets enabled the two injured women, who were able to walk, to get rid of their wet garments in the crowded room beneath, and the lockers of Jackson and Bates made it possible for the men who most needed material to be made comfortable by the invaluable hospital orderly.  
 Constance was kept busy flying up and down to the kitchen, while End, having met all immediate demands in the matter of a hot beverage and something to eat, supplemented her labors.  
 Pyne worked like a Trojan. As each pile of sodden garments was delivered to him he squeezed out as much water as possible with his hands and then applied himself to the task of baking them dry. He did this, too, in a very efficient way, speedily converting the kitchen into a miniature Turkish bath.  
 At the end of an hour he had succeeded so well that more than one-half of the females were supplied with tolerably dry and warm underclothing. With their heavier garments of course nothing could be done.  
 Once, on the stairs, End detained Constance for a moment's chat.  
 "Mrs. Vansittart is odd," she said.  
 Constance, so taken up was she with many errands, had forgotten the lady.  
 "How thoughtless of me," she cried.  
 "Is she better?"  
 "Yes, but when I went in just now to give her her clothes she said to me, 'Are you the sister of the other—of Constance Brand?' It was no time for explanations, so I just said 'Yes.' She gave me such a queer look and then smiled quite pleasantly, apologizing for troubling me."  
 Constance laughed.  
 "Perhaps she knew dad years ago," she said.  
 "What do you think Mr. Pyne said about her?"  
 "How can I tell? Did you speak of her to him?"  
 "I told him she had fainted when you delivered his message. He said, 'Guess she can faint as easy as I can fall off a house.' Isn't he funny?"  
 "I think he is splendid," said Constance.  
 The wreck was now wholly demolished. The first big wave of the retreating tide enveloped the lighthouse and smote it with thunderous noise. Screams came from the women's quarters.  
 "Go, End," said Constance. "Tell them they have nothing to fear. They must expect these things to happen for nearly two hours. Tell them what I said. Twenty-five years, you know."  
 Brave hearts! What infinite penetration inspired the man who first said, "Noblesse oblige!"  
 Constance looked in at the kitchen. Pyne loomed through a fog of steam.  
 "Pay no heed to these"—she was interrupted by another mighty thump and cataract roar—"these blows of Thor's hammer," she cried.  
 "Play me for an arvil," he returned. She descended to the depths to reassure the men. Talking with shrill cheerfulness at each doorway was easy. It helped her to go down, down, feeling stone and iron trembling as every surge was hurled against her above her head. At last she stood on the lowest floor. Beneath her feet was naught but granite and iron bars. Here was solidity. How grateful to know of this firm base, rooted in the very world. Her heart leaped to her mouth and with not fear. She was proud of the lighthouse, strong in the knowledge of its majestic strength.  
 Nevertheless in this place, the source of her own sense of security, she found uneasiness among the men. They were all sailors in the lowest habitable region. Their preconceived ideas had been rudely reversed. The ship, the noble structure which defied the storm by yielding to its utmost fury, had by them no terrors. But the stark pillar

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"Why didn't you say so?" she snapped, being in reality very angry with herself for her flippancy. She gave him a full pail, and he quitted her.  
 Constance, having delivered her father's message to Mr. Emmett, was greeted with a tart question when she re-entered the kitchen.  
 "Why on earth didn't you tell me that young man was attending to the injured people? Is he a doctor?"  
 "I think not. What happened?"  
 "He came for a second supply of water and nearly bit my head off."  
 "Oh, End! I am sure he did not mean anything. Didn't you recognize him? It was he who climbed the mast and fang the rope to us."  
 "There," said End, "I've gone and done it! Honestly, you know, it was I who was rude. He will think me a perfect cat."  
 "That isn't what people are saying," explained Mr. Pyne, whose approach was denuded by the outer noise.  
 "There's a kind of general idea floating round that this locality is an annex of heaven, with ministering angels in attendance."  
 In the half light of the tiny lamps he could not see End's scarlet face. There was a moment's silence, and this very self possessed youth spoke again.  
 "The nice things we all have to tell you will keep," he said. "Would you mind letting me know in which rooms you have located the ladies?"  
 Constance, as major domo, gave the information asked for.  
 "They are in the two bedrooms overhead. Poor things! I am at my wits' end to know how to get their clothing dried. You see, Mr. Pyne, my sister and I have no spare clothes here. We only came to the rock this afternoon by the merest chance."  
 "That is just what was troubling me," he answered. "I am sort of interested in one of them."  
 "Oh," said Constance, "if I could help; but, indeed, my own skirts are wringing wet."  
 "From what I can make out, then, my prospective step-aunt will catch a very bad cold."  
 The queer phrase puzzled the girls, but Constance, rarely for her, jumped at a conclusion.  
 "Your prospective step-aunt. You mean, perhaps, your fiancée's aunt?" she suggested.  
 "I don't know the lady. No, ma'am. I was right first time. Mrs. Vansittart is going to marry my uncle, so I keep an eye on her stock to that extent."  
 "How stupid of me!" she explained, while a delighted giggle from End did not help to mend matters. So Constance became very stately.  
 "I will ask Mrs. Vansittart to come out and speak to you"—she began.  
 "No, no! I don't wish that. You might tell her I am all right. That is the limit. And—may I make a suggestion?"  
 "Pray do."  
 "It will help considerably if the women folk take it in turn to get into the beds or bunks. Then some of their linen could be dried at the stove. I will take charge of that part of the business if I may; otherwise some of them will die."  
 The girls agreed that this was a capital idea. Constance went upstairs. In the first row she inquired:  
 "Is Mrs. Vansittart here?"  
 "Yes," said a sweet-but rather querulous voice.  
 A lady who had already appropriated the lower bunk raised herself on an elbow.  
 The little apartment, like every part of the building save the rooms reserved by Brand's directions, was packed almost to suffocation. This, if harmful in one respect, was beneficial in another. The most anxious warms of so many human beings was grateful after the freezing effect of the gale on people literally soaked to the skin.  
 The girl, not unmoved by curiosity, held the light so that it illumined Mrs. Vansittart. A woman of forty, no matter how good looking and well preserved she may be, is in sorry plight under such conditions. Constance saw a beautiful face, gleaming white and bald, yet animated and clearly chiseled. The eyes were large and lustrous, the mouth firm, the nose and chin those of a Greek statue. Just now there were deep lines across the face, and a new interest in her features, allied to a transient hawklike gleam in the prominent eyes, gave a momentary glimpse of a harsh, perhaps cruel disposition. A charming smile promptly dispelled this frowning impression. Instantly Constance was aware of having seen Mrs. Vansittart before. So vivid was the fanciful idea that she became tongue tied.  
 "Do you want me?" asked the stranger, with a new interest in her hand. Constance found herself wondering if the smile were not cultivated to hide that faintly caught suggestion of the bird of prey. But the question restored her mental poise.  
 "Only to say that Mr. Pyne"—she began.  
 "Charlie—is he saved?"  
 Mrs. Vansittart certainly had the faculty of betraying intense interest. The girl attributed the nervous start, the quick color which tinged the white cheeks, to the natural anxiety of a woman who stood in such approximate degree of kin to the young American.  
 "Oh, yes," said the girl, with ready

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