

# THE PILLAR of LIGHT

By ...  
**Louis Tracy,**  
Author of  
"The Wings of the Morning"  
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## SYNOPSIS OF PREDICING CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I—At daybreak an assistant keeper of the lighthouse, pacing 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 goes aboard. He finds the body of a dead man and a strange bundle beneath the deck. The lighthouse keeper, lowers a basket and hauls Brand and the strange bundle safely up. The bundle contains a live baby of whose father Brand assumes the care. A part of the child's clothing are the initials "E. T." The little one is placed in the care of the nurse who has charge of Stephen Brand's child in Penzance. They call the child Brand Trevillion. His eighteen years old cousin, Brand, and her adopted sister, Brand Trevillion, and her adopted brother, Brand Trevillion, are in the lighthouse with an old fisherman, Ben Follard, in a saloon named "Hazy." They are caught in a storm, during which they hear the signal for help coming from the rock. They try to get to the lighthouse in safety, but find that two of the men, Jackson and Bates, have been hurt. Brand sends the men back with Ben Follard. Brand starts for Penzance. The lighthouse is met by Lieutenant John Percival, who is devotedly in love with Enid. He has started out for the light house in answer to the signal for help. On meeting the lighthouse keeper he turns back to assist with the injured men. A boat approaches the lighthouse. It is the "Lapwing," owned by a man named Lapwing. The signals for them to load, and Brand returns to the lighthouse. Brand makes out a ship in great distress. "Vill—Charles A. Pyne," a name which Brand has never seen before, is the name of the ship. Vill—Charles A. Pyne, is a name which Brand has never seen before. Vill—Charles A. Pyne, is a name which Brand has never seen before. Vill—Charles A. Pyne, is a name which Brand has never seen before.

## Chapter IX—Continued.

"Not unless I am in the way," pleaded the other. "I was choking in there. The air here, the space, are so grateful." So Constance passed her. Mrs. Vansittart noted the dainty manner in which she picked up her skirts to mount the stairs. She caught a glimpse of the tailor made gown, striped silk undershirt, well fitting, low heeled, wide welted expensive boots. Trust a woman to see all these things at a glance, with even the glimmer of a storm proof lantern to aid the quick appraisal.

As the girl went out of her sight a reminiscence came to her. "No wonder I was startled," she murmured. "That suit's coat she wears helps the resemblance. Probably it is her father's." Then the loud silence of the lighthouse appalled her. The singing had ceased or was sung off by a closed door. One might as well be in a tomb as surrounded by this tangible darkness. The tremulous granite, so cold and hard, yet alive in its own grim strength, the murmuring commotion of wind and waves swelling and dying in ghostlike echoes, suggested a grave vault close sealed from the outer world, though pulsating with the faraway existence of heedless multitudes. Thus, brooding in the gloom, a tortured soul within form and void, she awaited the return of her messenger.

Constance, after looking in at the hospital, went on to the service room. Her father was not there. She glanced up to the trimming stage, expecting to see him attending to the lamp. No. He had gone. Somewhat bewildered, for she was almost certain he was not in any of the lower apartments, she climbed to the little door in the glass frame. Ah! There he was on the landward side of the gallery. What was the matter now? Surely there was not another vessel in distress. However, being relieved from any doubt as to his whereabouts, she went back to the service room and gave herself the luxury of a moment's rest. Oh, how tired she was! Not until she sat down did she realize what it meant to live as she had lived and to do all that she had done during the past four hours.

Her respite was of short duration. Brand, his cheeks gleaming with wet, came in. "Hello, sweetheart! 'What's up now?' he cried in such cheerful voice that she knew all was well. "That was exactly what I was going to ask you," she said. "The Falcon is out there," he replied, with a side nod toward Mount's bay. Constance knew that the Falcon was a sturdy steam trawler, a bulging little ship, built to face anything in the shape of gales. "They can do nothing, of course," she commented. "No, I stood between them and the light for a second, and they evidently understood that I was on the lookout, as a lantern dipped several times, which I interpreted as meaning that they will return at daybreak. Now they are off to Penzance again."

"They turned safely then?" "Shipped a sea or two, no doubt. The wind is dropping, but the sea is running mountains high." He had taken off his oilskins. Constance suddenly felt a strong disinclination to rise. Being a strong willed young person, she sprang up instantly. "I came to ask you if you can see Mrs. Vansittart?" she cried, with a genuine surprise that thrilled her with a pleasure she assuredly could not account for. "Yes, she asked if she might have a word with you."

He threw his hands up in comic despair. "Tell the good lady I am up to my eyes in work. The oil is running low. I must be in to the pump at once. I have my journal to fill. If there is no sun I cannot heliograph, and I have a host of signals to look up and get ready. And a word in your ear, Connie, dear. We will be 'at home' on the rock, for the next forty-eight hours. Give the lady my very deep regrets and ask her to allow me to send for her when I have a minute to spare some hours hence." She kissed him. "You dear old thing," she cried. "You will tire yourself to death, I am sure." He caught her by the chin, "mused Brand. "Mark my words," he laughed. "You will feel this night in your bones longer than I. By the way, no matter who goes hungry, don't prepare any breakfast until I come to you. I suppose the kitchen is your headquarters?"

"Yes, though Enid had had far more of Mr. Pyne's company. She is cook, you know." "Is Pyne there too?" "He is laundry man, drying clothes." "I think I shall like him," mused Brand. "He seems to be a helpful sort of youngster. That reminds me. Tell him to report himself to Mr. Emmett as my assistant—if he cares for the post, that is."

He did not see the ready spirit of mischief that danced in her eyes. She

## CHAPTER X.

PRIMROSE light in the east heralded a chilly dawn. The little world of the Gulf Rock nestled itself in its damp misery at the news. The fresh watch, delighted by the prospect of activity, clattered up and down the iron stairs, opened all available windows, unclamped the door when Brand gave the order and bustled itself exceedingly with decorative jobs which offered to so many willing hands.

It was now by the nautical almanac dead low water on the reef, but the strong southwesterly wind, hurling a heavy sea completely over the rocks, showed that the standard of war and peace differ as greatly in the matter of tides as in most other respects.

As the light increased it lost its first warm tinge. Steel gray were sky and water, somber the iron bound land, while the whereabouts of the sun became a scientific abstraction. Therefore the heliograph was useless, and Brand, helped by some of the sailors, commenced to flash his flag signals to the watching telescopes on the faroff promontory of the Land's End. The Falcon, strong hearted trawler, was plunging toward the rock when the first line of gay bunting swung clear into the breeze. And what a message it was—in its jerky phrases—its profound uncertainties—for communication by flag code is slow work, and Brand left much to an easier system of talk with the approaching steamer.

Chinook—New York to Southampton—struck reef during hurricane—propeller shaft broken—33 survivors in lighthouse—captain, 21 passengers, officers and crew—lost with ship. The awful significance of the words sank into the hearts of the signalers. For the first time the disaster from which, by God's providence, they had emerged safely became crystallized in their speech. Seventy-eight living out of 290 who might have lived! This was the curt intelligence which leaped the waves to fly over the length and breadth of the land, which sped back to the States to replace the expected news of a safe voyage, which thrilled the civilized world as it had not been thrilled for many a day.

Not a soul in the lighthouse gave thought to this side of the affair. All were anxious to reassure their loved ones, but in the present moribund condition they could not realize the electric effect of the incident on the wider world which read and had hearts to feel.

While Stephen Brand was signaling to the Falcon with little white flags quickly explicated as soon as she neared the Trinity buoy, newspaper correspondents were busy at the telegraph office and their associates on the trawler were eagerly transcribing the lighthouse keeper's words wherewith to feed to fever heat the sensation which the night had provided for the day.

Brand, forgetting the importance of clearness and brevity, had already written out a full draft of his detailed message. Faithful to his promise, Stapleton was acting as signaler in chief on board the Falcon, so Brand might manipulate his flags as quickly as lay in his power, with Chief Officer Emmett reading the words at his elbow. There was no fear that any mistake would be made by the receiver.

The story, if condensed, was complete. Beginning with an explanation of the liner's disablement, it dealt with her desperate but unavailing struggle to weather the reef, described Pyne's gallant and successful effort to get in touch with the lighthouse, the rescue of a fourth of those on board, the names of the survivors, and, finally, their predicament in the matter of food and water.

All this took long to tell. Within the lighthouse, Charles A. Pyne, appointed supernumerary assistant keeper, was burnishing brass work by his instructions received. He little knew the use which was being made of his name by the tiny bits of linen tossed about on the exterior gallery. In such wise, helped by a compositor and dignified by headlines, does a man become a hero in these days of knight-hood conferred by the press.

when that young lady reared upward from the kitchen to catch a glimpse of the reported vessel, she dropped her glasses for a moment. "Jack is on board," she announced. "Of course he would be there. And there is such a lot of other men—half Penzance, I think."

Enid joined her. Pyne, too, thought he could polish a burner up there as well as on the floor of the service room. Stanhope's stalwart figure, clad in oilskins, was shortly defined as he stood alone on the port side of the Falcon's small bridge, reading off the signals and sending back spasmodic twitterings of the flags which he also had procured to indicate that each word was understood.

"Who is the skipper of the tug?" inquired Pyne quietly. "Both girls laughed. 'You mean Jack,' cried Enid. 'He is not the captain. He is an officer of the royal navy, our greatest friend.' 'Jack in his front name, I suppose,' went on Pyne, breathing on the copper disk in his hands to test its clearness. 'We will introduce you, even at this distance,' said Constance airily. 'Mr. Pyne, this is Lieutenant John Percival Stanhope, only son of the late Sir Charles and Lady Margaret Stanhope of Tregarthen Lodge, Penzance, one of the best and dearest fellows who ever lived.'"

"It must be nice to be a friend of yours, Miss Brand, if you always talk about the favored person in that way," said Pyne, rubbing industriously. Enid, to whom the mere sight of the steamer had restored all her vitality, giggled joyously. "You know, Mr. Pyne, we all love Jack, as the song says. It was a mere accident that he did not accompany us to the rock yesterday. Constance would not let him come."

"Ah," said Pyne. "I'm glad to hear that," explained Constance, "because he has only three days' leave from his ship, and I

thought he should give the first afternoon to his mother instead of playing pool for Enid."

"How dare you call Jack a pooler!" was the indignant exclamation. "Allow me," drawled Pyne. "I'm very glad your sister classified him."

Constance suddenly felt her face and neck aflame. Pyne was standing on her left, Enid on her right. The quiet jubilation of Pyne's voice was so unmistakable that Enid for one instant withdrew her eyes from the distant ship. A report was struck on her lips, until she thought her that the American's statement might have two meanings.

Being tactful withal, she chose her words while she bubbled forth: "He promised to take us for a drive today. That is the dot and dash alphabet father and he are using. If dad requires all the dots I'm sure Jack is monopolizing the dashes. He must be furious about this gale."

Constance, who wanted to pinch Enid severely, had reverted to her normal healthy hue by this time. She dropped her glasses. "We are shamefully wasting precious minutes here," she said. "Enid, you and I ought to be in the kitchen."

Enid, with a fortissimo accent on the penultimate syllable. "For where there's a will there's a way. Tomorrow the sun will be shining, although it is cloudy today."

But Constance was not to be drawn a second time. Her clear brain was troubled by a formless shadow. It banished her from her mind all thought of a harmless flirtation with the good looking youngster who had brought a blush of momentary embarrassment to her fair face.

How dreadful it would be to meet hunger and poverty! The world there were worse things in the world than the midnight order of an angry sea.

Indeed, when Pyne did join them in accord with his intention, he soon perceived the extent of the new danger. The stress of the night had only enhanced the need of an ample supply of food. Everybody, even the inmates of the hospital, was outrageously hungry, and the common allotment was half a cup of tea and half a ship's biscuit.

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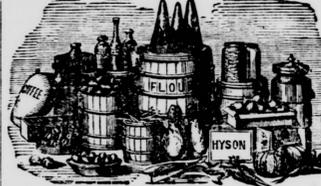
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