

THE PILLAR of LIGHT

By Louis Tracy,
Author of "The Wings of the Morning"
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CHAPTER XVII.

STEPHEN BRAND and the two girls passed silently down the broad stairs of the hotel unaccompanied by any of the others. There was nothing incomprehensible in this or any savor of discourtesy.

In the first place, Mr. Traill was so profoundly shocked by the lighthouse keeper's revelation that he collapsed into a chair and remained there, bowed and wordless, for many minutes. Both Pyne and Stanhope did move toward the door, but Enid, watchful, self-sacrificing, eager to save those she loved from further pain, telegraphed an emphatic order to Stanhope to remain where he was, and Pyne murmured to him:

"Guess she's right, anyhow. We'll all feel a heap better in the morning." The person who exhibited the clearest signs of distress was Lady Margaret. Her position was one of extraordinary difficulty. Three of the actors in the breathless scene which had been sprung on her with the suddenness of an explosion were absolute strangers in her life before that evening.

Brand she knew indeed, but only by sight. She had met Constance and Enid occasionally, at arm's length, so to speak, regarding them truly as dangerous young persons where marriageable sons were concerned. Enid had justified her suspicions, and her ladyship had yielded so far as to give her approval to an engagement she could not prevent.

Circumstances had conspired to force her hand. Stanhope, being an outspoken young man, had made no secret of his desperate resolve to rescue Enid, so the newspapers supplied the remainder of the romance, and even Lady Margaret herself had contributed to it under the magnetic influence of the hour.

It was one thing, however, to be thrilled by the adventures of the rock bound people, but quite another to figure prominently in connection with a social scandal of the first magnitude. She knew Penzance too well to hope that the incident would sink into oblivion. Obviously the matter could not rest in its present stage. She must expect disagreeable disclosures, significant head shakings of those who knew little and wanted to know more. All the tea table artillery of a small town would be focused on her defensive position were she loyal to the girl whom her son had chosen as his helpmate.

This same son, too, after he had recovered from the amazement of Mrs. Vansittart's dramatic departure and Brand's admission, betrayed a composure that was distinctly irritating.

"You won't mind if I smoke, mother," he said. "The situation requires tobacco. Don't you feel like that, Pyne?"

"If Lady Margaret doesn't object, I admit that different sorts of poison might act as tonics," answered Pyne. "Here, Uncle; try a brandy and soda. Lady Margaret, a glass of champagne. I've been expecting a disturbance, but didn't look for it tonight."

"Why do you say that, Charlie?" asked Mr. Traill, rising and stretching his limbs as a man who tests his bones after a heavy fall.

"It was hanging around, just as one prophesies a storm after an electrical feeling in the air. Mrs. Vansittart recognized Brand and made her calculations accordingly. Let us give her the credit due to her. As soon as she discovered him, the marriage project was off."

"I had that kind of impression myself. Glad I mentioned it to you now." "Of course you are. I'll bet any reasonable man that Mrs. Vansittart intended to leave Penzance tomorrow as soon as she had made you understand that she could not, under any circumstances, become my aunt."

A ghost of a smile flitted across Mr. Traill's face. His nephew's way of putting things was delightfully unequivocal.

"What we are apt to lose sight of," continued Pyne, "is the manner in which Brand received what must have been a staggering blow. He met his wife tonight after a separation of more than twenty years. And how he took it! When he spoke it was really in her behalf. The thing is too amazing. Of course, now that the thunder and lightning have started, the sky will clear all the sooner."

"Unhappily, such affairs do not arrange themselves so readily," snapped Lady Margaret. She was becoming more angry with each wave of reflection. "Young men like you do not realize the effect of such—such unpleasant exposures of family life. How will the early history of her parents affect the future of Constance Brand? As for the other girl!"

Her ladyship threw up her hands in helpless abandonment. To her mind the adoption of poor Enid, the sea wall, assumed a darker appearance now that Brand's matrimonial adventures revealed sinister features.

Jack Stanhope caught her by the shoulder. "Mother," he cried, "before you say another word let me tell you something you ought to know. Enid is Mr. Traill's daughter!"

Now, this good woman loved her son dearly. All her thoughts were of him

and for him. Her look of blank incredulity yielded to the confirmation she saw written on all three faces.

She burst into tears. "Apparently I am the last person to be taken into anybody's confidence," she sobbed.

"Madam," said Mr. Traill, bending over her, "in this instance at least you have no cause to feel aggrieved. Neither the girl herself, nor her sister by adoption, nor Mrs. Vansittart, to whom, until the past half hour, I considered myself to be engaged, is aware of the undoubted fact which your son has just told you. Let me say that I, as her father, am proud to think she has won the affections of such a man as Stanhope. There is no reason why you, his mother, should not be equally satisfied with the pedigree and prospects of my daughter."

His calm assumption of a rank equal if not superior to her own was convincing to a woman of her temperament. Assuredly that evening was a memorable one to her ladyship. The repose of Vere de Vere was rudely shocked for once. Nevertheless the knowledge that her lifelong ambition had been realized in a way little dreamed of by any of those most concerned was in itself consoling. Mr. Traill, quite unconsciously, loomed large in the social eye of Penzance, and the widowed lady had not been so long withdrawn from the wealth worshipping world of London as to be wholly unlearned with the worship of the golden calf.

So it was with quickened interest that she set herself to listen to the story of Enid's parentage, and, if her fear of local gossip mongers shrank as her perception of Enid's real social position increased, much may be forgiven to the motherly sentiment that no wife can be too good for an excellent son.

Meanwhile Brand and the sorrow laden girls, ushered by obsequious servants to the entrance hall, were constrained to comfort themselves with true British phlegm in view of the interest caused by their appearance.

The hour was not late, about 9:30. Even while the hall porter was summoning a cab the news spread, within and without, that the lighthouse keeper and his daughters, whose exploits filled the minds of all men, were standing near the door.

Several people, complete strangers, came to them and offered warm congratulations. A smart journalist pressed forward and wove his own complimentary utterances into an interview. A crowd gathered quickly on the pavement. Policemen, those marshals of every English demonstration, cleared a path for them through the throng. So, with smiling words on their lips and anguish in their hearts, they made a triumphal exit. How little they could the friendly enthusiasts who cheered them realize that these three had been atrophied by the deadly malevolence of fate in the very hour when a great achievement had ended happily.

Enid suffered almost as keenly as Brand and his daughter. Their joys and sorrows were hers. The startling nature of Brand's avowal rendered it difficult for either Enid or Constance to piece together certain fragmentary memories of Mrs. Vansittart's odd behavior during her enforced sojourn on the rock. So thoroughly had she shattered those dimly outlined impressions by the quietly vivacious charm of her manner at dinner that they both experienced a jumble of sensations. A married woman, in wet and torn clothing, cowering in the gaunt interior of a stormy lighthouse, is a very different being when attired in expensive garments and surrounded by the luxuries of a first class hotel.

It was a relief to drift to their cottage in silence, yet so easily moulded is our human clay, it was a greater relief when the tension of the noisy rattle of the cab was relaxed. It cost some effort to assure Mrs. Sheppard, a blunder, motherly soul of sixty or thereabouts, that they could not possibly eat any supper. The effort was forthcoming. They pleaded weariness, and at last they were alone.

Constance knelt by her father's side when he dropped listlessly into the armchair placed in his accustomed corner.

"Now, dad," she said, bravely unemotional, "there will be no more tears. Tell me all that I ought to know." Enid drew a haddock to his feet and seated herself there, clasping her hands about her knees.

"Whatever she did I am sorry for her," said the girl decisively. "And she cannot have been a really bad woman, dad, or you would not have loved her once."

Brand sighed deeply. His strong will had deserted him for a little while. He shrank from the ordeal before him. Why should he be called on to sully the mirror of his daughter's innocence by revealing to her the disgrace of her mother?

Constance caught something of the dread in his soul.

"Don't tell me if it hurts you, dad. I am content to bear more than I have borne tonight if it lessens your sufferings," she whispered. He placed an arm around each of them.

"It is God's will," he said. "That I

should have to face many trials at a period when I expected nothing but some few years of quiet happiness."

"Nothing in this world can part us from you," said Constance.

"Oh, nothing," agreed Enid solemnly, nestling closer. Her earnestness was helpful. He smiled wistfully.

"You forget, Enid, that there is a grave chance of you, at any rate, leaving me for another," he said.

She blushed. "That is the worst of girls getting married," she protested. "They are



He placed an arm around each of them.

supposed to be delighted because they are going to live with strange people. Girls who are of that mind cannot be happy at home. If I thought that being married to Jack implied separation from you and Constance—

"You would give him up and weep your eyes out," he pressed her pointing lips together as he went on: "Now, my dear ones, I wish both of you to be prepared for very unexpected changes. Two most important events in your lives have taken place within a few hours. Constance, if you saw your mother tonight, Enid also saw her father. I have known for two days that Enid's father is Mr. Traill."

"For an instant, it must be confessed, Constance and Enid alike feared that the mental and physical strain he had undergone had temporarily deranged him. It was not sheer incredulity, but real terror, he saw in their eyes. Somehow, their self effacement in his behalf touched him more keenly than anything else had done during this troubled period.

He bowed his head. A strong man in agony cannot endure the scrutiny of loving eyes.

"Enid," he said brokenly, "my words to you must be few. Good fortune needs but slight explanation. The proofs of my statement I do not possess, but Mr. Traill's letter to me could not have been written by such a man if he were not sure of his facts. Here it is. Read it aloud."

He handed her his father's plain opaque communication. Constance, incapable of deeper depths of amazement than those now probed, looked over her sister's shoulder. Together they deciphered the somewhat difficult handwriting of a man whose chief task for years had been to sign his name.

This drawback was good in its result. They persevered steadily to the end. Then Enid, the comforter, broke down herself.

"It cannot be true, dad!" she cried. "I have been one of your daughters all my life. Why should I be taken from you now?" "I believe it is quite true," said Brand quietly, and the need there was to console her was beneficial to himself. "Mr. Traill speaks of proofs. You have met him. I exchanged barely a word, a glance, with him, but it is not believable that he would make these solemn statements without the most undeniable testimony."

"Indeed, Enid," murmured Constance, "it sounds like the truth, else he would never have spoken so definitely of my father's first claim on your affections."

Brand stroked the weeping girl's hair.

(To be Continued)

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CONFERENCE CLOSED.

After Splendid Meeting—Delegates Gone.

The 44th annual conference of the M. E. church, South, which convened in Corvallis, Thursday morning at nine o'clock, came to an end yesterday and the delegates left on the eleven o'clock train for their respective homes. There was no set program arranged in advance for the meetings and lack of space forbids a detailed account of the various sessions.

At the opening meeting Thursday morning reports were listened to and the "machinery" of the conference set in motion.

Thursday's night session was full of interesting things, with an able sermon on the parables of the mustard seed and leaven by Dr. A. J. Lamar.

The conference was opened Friday morning by Bishop Atkins, after prayer by Rev. W. E. Vaughn; the bishop gave an exposition of the 11th chapter of Matthew and brought out in strong light the inclusive teaching of Jesus Christ concerning the relation of Children to the Kingdom of God. The evangelization of the world is to be accomplished by reaching the children.

Dr. W. R. Lambuth addressed the conference on missions. The church raised \$623,755 for foreign missions during the year, and including home missions, \$953,723. It has 250 missionaries distributed in the six fields—Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Japan, Corea and China—and has an increase of 12.7 per cent.

Saturday was a busy day at the conference, with addresses by various speakers present, and Sunday the different pulpits of local churches were ably filled by the visiting clergymen from the conference.

The appointments were given out yesterday morning and are as follows: Willamette District, C. L. McCausland; Portland, E. H. Mowre; Kavanaugh and Lewisville, R. A. Reagan; Lebanon, T. P. Haynes; Corvallis, G. H. Gibbs; Tangent, E. B. Jones; Albany, W. H. Martin; Harrisburg, W. N. Lyon; Junction City, P. D. Gardner; Peoria and McFarland, J. A. Ellison; Roseburg, C. A. Rexroad; Coquille, H. M. Brenham; Myrtle Point, W. B. Smith; Myrtle Creek, A. J. Starmer; Grants Pass, George M. Gardiner; Williams, H. N. Rosser; Medford, W. T. Golder; conference missionary secretary, P. D. Gardner; transferred to the Mississippi conference, H. C. Brown; to the Pacific conference, H. C. Allen.

Additional Local.

I. M. Morgan returned from a business trip to Roseburg last week. Miss Rose Chipman left Saturday for The Dalles to remain.

Edwin Rose went to Portland, Sunday, where he is to be employed in the Sheagreen box factory.

Mrs. Shire and daughter, Miss Florence, returned to their home in Portland yesterday, after a visit with their daughter and sister, Mrs. Mosier.

Robert E. Spear will speak in the Armory Thursday morning at nine o'clock. Mr. Spear is secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of New York City. He is one of the most prominent speakers before the American public today. He has a national reputation before Mr. Moody's great conferences at Northfield, Mass.; also at other student conferences in the United States. He is a graduate of Princeton and was captain of the football team, never losing a game while holding the position. The public is invited to attend the meeting at the Armory Thursday morning and hear this noted speaker.

Bishop Atkins of Waynesborough, North Carolina, and Dr. Lambuth of Nashville, Tenn., addressed the student body at the college chapel yesterday morning. Bishop Atkins also spoke to the Y. W. C. A. Sunday afternoon. The speech of Dr. Lambuth was received with storms of applause by the students, as the gentleman is one of the ablest speakers in the Southern Methodist field today.

Prof. C. M. McKellips has sold his handsome residence property on college hill to Mr. Veal, who will take possession immediately. The deal was closed

yesterday. Prof. and Mrs. McKellips will occupy the Pernot property just vacated by Rev. Green.

Mrs. Leslie Lilly of Douglas county is visiting at the S. N. Lilly home. She arrived Saturday and leaves in a few days for Pullman, Wash., to visit her sister, Mrs. Murray Henry.

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Porter left yesterday for Portland on a few days' business and pleasure trip.

Miles Young has sold his property in Grants Pass, where he has resided for some time, and is to return to Corvallis in the near future.

Closed Its Sessions.

Rev. T. S. Handsaker of this city participated in the convention of the Oregon Christian Missionary Society at Albany the last of the week, concerning which meeting the Herald of Saturday said:

The second day of the sessions of the Central District Organization of the Oregon Christian Missionary Convention opened yesterday morning at nine o'clock with a good attendance and much interest being shown. The devotional exercises were led by R. G. Callhoun of Jasper, and at the conclusion Rev. T. S. Handsaker, of Corvallis, who was presiding, delivered an address which was listened to with a great deal of attention.

Reports from the different churches were then heard. An address on the subject of "Growth," by J. S. McCallum of Eugene, concluded the morning session.

Commencing at 2 o'clock there was a praise service for fifteen minutes and then a short business session, with reports of the committees and election of officers. Albyn Esson of Silverton spoke on the "District Possibilities." Following Rev. Esson, J. N. McConnell, the evangelist, delivered an address on the subject, "Come, for All Things Are Now Ready."

The sessions of the convention were closed last night with a song service followed by an address by Rev. Davis Errett of Salem. F. E. Billington, corresponding secretary, spoke on the state and district work, emphasizing the need for more labor on the part of those in the Central district. The convention then concluded its sessions. Some of the delegates left last night on the late train, and the remainder will leave today.

School Apportionment.

County School Superintendent George Denman, apportioned \$13061.38 on October 1. The amount sent out will enable almost every district in the county to have more school money immediately. Following is the apportionment:

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