

# THE PILLAR of LIGHT

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

**CHAPTER I.**—At daybreak an assistant keeper of the lighthouse, discovers in the distance a ship in distress. Stephen Brand agrees to swim out to it. In so doing he comes in contact with a shark which he kills and boards the ship. He finds on board the body of a dead man and a strange bundle under a sail. Jones the lighthouse keeper lowers a basket and hauls Brand and his strange bundle safely up. II.—The bundle contains a live baby of which Jones assumes charge. Letters "E T" are found on child's clothing. Baby is placed in charge of nurse who has charge also of Stephen Brand's children. Child is named "Enid Trevillion." III.—Eighteen years later, Constance, daughter of Brand, and Enid go to the lighthouse with an old fisherman named Ben. They are caught in a storm and as they near the lighthouse hear the danger signal from the rock. They land safely and find that two men have been hurt. Brand sends the injured men back with Ben.

To each of them Stephen Brand was equally a kind and devoted father. He never allowed Enid to feel that she was dependent on his bounty. Only the other day, when she hinted at the adoption of an art career as a future means of earning a livelihood, he approved of the necessary study, but laughed at the reason.

"With your pretty face and saucy ways, Enid," he said, "I shall have trouble enough to keep you in the nest without worrying as to the manner of your leaving it. Work at your drawing, by all means. Avoid color as the bane of true art. But where Connie and I live you shall live, until you choose to forsake us."

No wonder these girls thought there was no other man in the world like "dad." Their delightful home was idyllic in its happiness, their only sorrow that Brand should be away two months out of three on account of the pursuit in which he passed his hours of leisure during recent years.

Neither dared to look at the other. They could not trust themselves even to speak. There was relief in action, for thought was torture.

The docile Daisy steadily forged through the waves. The spasmodic clang of the bell came more clearly each minute. Pollard, kneeling in the bows, peered into the gloom of the swirling snow. He listened eagerly to the bell. With right hand or left he motioned to Constance to bring the boat's head nearer to the wind or permit the sail to fill out a little more.

Enid, ready to cast the canvas loose at the first hint of danger, consulted her watch frequently. At last she cried:

"Twenty minutes, Ben."

"What a relief it was to hear her own voice. The tension was becoming unbearable.

"Right y' are, missy. No need to slack off yet. 'Tis clearin' a bit. We'm beave to alongside the rock in less'n no time."

The fisherman was right. His trained senses perceived a distinct diminution in the volume of snow. Soon they could see fifty, a hundred, two hundred yards, ahead. On the starboard quarter they caught a confused rushing noise, like the subdued murmur of a mill race. The tide had covered the rock.

"Luff it!" roared Ben suddenly. "Steady now!"

Out of the blurred vista a ghostly column rose in front. Smooth and sheer were its granite walls, with dark little casements showing black in the weird light. The boat rushed past the Trinity mooring buoy. She held on until they heard the sea breaking.

"Lower away!" cried Ben, and the yard fell with a sharp rattle that showed how thoroughly Enid had laid to heart Pollard's tuition.

Constance brought the Daisy round in a wide curve, and Ben got out the oars to keep her from being dashed against the reef.

Enid's eyes were turned toward the gallery beneath the lanterns.

"Lighthouse aho!" she screamed in a voice high pitched with emotion.

There was no answering clang of the door leading from the room on a level with the balcony. Not often had the girls visited the rock, but they knew that this was the first sign they might expect of their arrival being noted if there were no watchers pacing the "promenade."

"Help us, Ben," cried Constance, and their united shouts might be heard a mile away in the prevailing stillness. A window halfway up the tower was opened. A man's head and shoulders appeared.

It was Stephen Brand.

"Thank God!" murmured Constance. Enid, on whose sensitive soul the storm, the signal, the hissing rush of the boat through the waves, had cast a spell of indefinite terror, bit her lip to restrain her tears.

Brand gave a glance of amazement at the three uplifted faces, but this was no time for surprise or question.

"I am coming down," he shouted. "Providence must have sent you at this moment."

He vanished.

"What can it be?" said Constance, outwardly calm now in the assurance that her father was safe.

"Must ha' bin a accident," said Ben. "That signal means 'Bring a doctor.' An' there ain't a blessed tug in harbor, nor won't be till the tide makes."

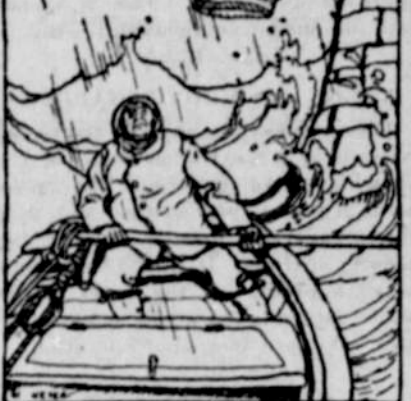
"That will mean delay," cried Enid. "Five or six hours at least, missy."

The main door at the head of the iron ladder clamped to the stones swung back, and Brand leaned out. He had no greeting for them, nor words of astonishment.

"When will the tug reach here, Ben?" he asked.

The fisherman told him the opinion he had formed.

"Then you girls must come and help me. Jackson scalded his hands and arms in the kitchen, and Bates was



"Dang me, but they're two plucky 'uns."

hurrying to the storeroom for oil and whitening when he slipped on the stairs and broke his leg. We must get them both ashore. Ben, you can take them?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Now, Constance, you first. Hold tight and stand in the skip. Your boat cannot come near the rock."

He swung the derrick into place and began to work the windlass. Constance, cool as her father, whispered to the excited Enid:

"Let us divide the parcels and take half each."

"Oh, I should have forgotten all about them," said Enid, stooping to empty the lockers.

Constance, without flickering an eyelid, stepped into the strong basket with its iron hoops and, having arranged some of the plethoric paper bags at her feet, told her father to "hoist away."

She arrived safely. Enid followed her, with equal sang froid, though a lift of forty odd feet while standing in a skip and clinging to a rope is not an everyday experience.

"Dang me," said Ben, as Enid, too, was swung into the lighthouse, "but they're two plucky 'uns."

The great bell tolled away, though the snow had changed to sleet, and the heights beyond the Land's End were faintly visible, so its warning note was no longer needed. The sky above was clearing. A luminous haze spreading over the waters heralded the return of the sun. But the wind was bitterly cold; the fisherman watching the open door, with one eye on the sea lest an adventurous wave should sweep the Daisy against the rock, murmured to himself:

"'Tis a good job the wind's in the nor'ard. This sort o' thing's a weather breeder or my name ain't Ben Pollard."

And that was how Enid came back to the Gulf Rock to enter upon the second and great epoch of her life.

Once before had the reef taken her to its rough heart and fended her from peril. Would it shield her again—rescue her from the graver danger whose shadow even now loomed out of the deep? What was the bell saying in its wistful monotony?

Enid neither knew nor cared. Just then she had other things to think about.

## CHAPTER IV.

HERE comes a time in the life of every thinking man or woman when the agony of existence, floating placidly on a smooth and lazy stream, gathers unto itself speed, rushes swiftly onward past familiar landmarks of custom and convention, bolts furiously over resisting rocks and ultimately, if not submerged in an unknown sea, finds itself again meandering through new plains of wider horizon.

Such a perilous passage can never be foreseen. The rapids may begin where the trees are highest and the meadows most luxuriant. No warning is given. The increased pace of events is pleasant and exhilarating. Even the last wild plunge over the cascade is neither resented nor feared. Some frail craft are shattered in transit, some wholly shaken, some emerge with riven sails and tarnished embellishments. A few not only survive the ordeal, but there-

1906 DECEMBER 1906

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by fit themselves for more daring exploits, more soul stirring adventures.

When the two girls stood with Stephen Brand in the narrow entrance to the lighthouse, the gravity of their bright young faces was due solely to the fact that their father had announced the serious accidents, which had befallen his assistants. No secret monitor whispered that fate in her bold and merciless dramatic action had roughly removed two characters from the stage to clear it for more striking events.

Not once in twenty years has it happened that two out of the three keepers maintained on a rock station with-in signaling distance of the shore have become incapacitated for duty on the same day. The thing was so bewilderingly sudden, the arrival of Constance and Enid on the scene so timely and unexpected, that Brand, a philosopher of ready decision in most affairs of life, was at a loss what to do for the best now that help, of a sort undreamed of, was at hand.

The case of Jackson, who was scolded, was simple enough. The board of trade medicine chest supplied to each lighthouse is a facsimile of that carried by every seagoing steamship. It contained the ordinary remedies for such an injury, and there would be little difficulty or danger in lowering the sufferer to the boat.

But Bates' affair was different. He lay almost where he had fallen. Brand had only lifted him into the storeroom from the foot of the stairs, placing a pillow beneath his head, and appealing both to him and to Jackson to endure their torture unmoved while he went to signal for assistance.

The problem that confronted him now was one of judgment. Was it better to await the coming of the doctor or endeavor to transfer Bates to the boat? He consulted Ben Pollard again. The girls were already climbing the steep stairs to sympathize with and tend to the injured men.

"Do you think it will blow harder, Ben, when the tide turns?" he asked.

The old fellow seemed to regard the question as most interesting and novel. Indeed, to him some such query and its consideration provided the chief problem of each day. Therefore he surveyed land, sea and sky most carefully before he replied:

"It may be 'most anything afore night, Misser Brand."

At another time Brand would have smiled. Today he was nervous, distraught, wrrenched out of the worn rut of things.

"I fancy there is some chance of the doctor being unable to land when he reaches the rock. Do you agree with me?"

His voice rang sharply. Ben caught its note and dropped his weatherwise ambiguity.

"I'll blow harder, an' mebbe snaw ag'in," he said.

"I shall need some help here in that case, so I will retain the young ladies. Of course you can manage the boat easily enough without them?"

Pollard grinned reassuringly. "We'm run straight in w' thickey wind," he said.

So they settled it that way, all so simply.

A man sets up two slim masts a thousand miles apart and flashes comprehensible messages across the void. The multitude gapes at first, but soon accepts the thing as reasonable. "Wireless telegraphy" is the term, as one says "by mail."

A whole drama was flowing over a curve of the earth at that moment, but the Marconi station was invisible. There was no expert in telegraphic sensation present to tell Brand and the fisherman that their commonplace words covered a magic code.

Jackson, white and mute, was lowered first. The brave fellow would not content himself with nursing his agony amid the cushions aft. When Bates, given some slight strength by a stiff dose of brandy, was carried with infinite care down three flights of steep and narrow stairs and slung to the crane in an iron cot to be lowered in his turn, Jackson stood up. Heedless of remonstrances, he helped to steady the cot and adjust it amidships clear of the sail.

"Well done, Artie," said Brand's clear voice.

"Oh, brave!" murmured Enid. "We will visit you every day at the hospital," sang out Constance.

Jackson smiled—yes, smiled—though his bandaged arms quivered and the seared nerves of his hands throbbed excruciatingly. Speak aloud he could not. Yet he bent over his more helpless mate and whispered hoarsely:

"Cheer up, old man. Your case is worse'n mine. An' ye did it for me."

Pollard, with a soul as gnarled as his body, yet had a glimpse of higher things when he muttered:

"D'ye think ye can hold her, mate, whiles I hoist the cloth?"

Jackson nodded. The request was a compliment, a recognition. He sat down and hooked the tiller between

arm and ribs. Ben hauled with a will. The Daisy, as if she were glad to escape the cascades of green water swirling over the rock, sprang into instant



"D'ye think ye can hold her, mate?"

animation. The watchers from the lighthouse saw Ben relieve the steersman and tenderly arrange the cushions behind his back. Then Brand closed the iron doors, and the three were left in dim obscurity.

They climbed nearly a hundred feet of stairways and emerged on to the cornice balcony after Brand had stopped the clockwork which controlled the hammer of the bell.

What a difference up here! The sea, widened immeasurably, had changed its color. Now it was a sullen blue-grey. The land was nearer and higher. The Daisy had shrunk to a splash of dull brown on the tremendous ocean prairie. How fierce and keen the wind! How disconsolate the murmur of the reef!

Brand, adjusting his binoculars, scrutinized the boat.

"All right aboard," he said. "I think we have adopted the wiser course. They will reach Penzance by half past 2."

His next glance was toward the Land's End signal station. A line of flags fluttered out to the right of the staff.

"Signal noted and forwarded," he read aloud. "That is all right, but the wind has changed."

Enid popped inside the lantern for shelter. It was bitterly cold.

"Better follow her example, Connie," said Brand to his daughter. "I will draw the curtains. We can see just as well and be comfortable."

Indeed, the protection of the stout plate glass, so thick and tough that sea birds on a stormy night dashed themselves to painless death against it, was very welcome. Moreover, though neither of the girls would admit it, there was a sense of security here which was strangely absent when they looked into the abyss beneath the stone gallery. Constance, balancing a telescope, and Enid, peering through the fieldglasses, followed the progress of the Daisy in silence, but Brand's eyes wandered uneasily from the barometer, which had fallen rapidly during the past hour, to the cyclonic nimbus spreading its dark mass beyond the Seven Stones lightship. The sun had vanished seemingly for the day, and the indicator attached to the base of the wind vane overhead pointed now south-west by west. It would not require much further variation to bring about a strong blow from the true southwest, a quarter responsible for most of the fierce gales that sweep the English channel.

Nevertheless this quick darting about of the scale breeze did not usually betoken lasting bad weather. At the worst the girls might be compelled to pass the night on the rock. He knew that the tug with the two relief men would make a valiant effort to reach the lighthouse at the earliest possible moment. When the men joined him the girls could embark. As it was the affair was speeded with adventure. Were it not for the mishap to the assistant keepers the young people would have enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The new alert of the wind, too, would send the Daisy speedily back to port. This in itself justified the course he had taken. On the whole a doubtful situation was greatly relieved. His face brightened. With a grave humor apt altogether artificial he cried:

"Now, Constance, I did not take you aboard as a visitor. Between us we ought to muster a good appetite. Come with me to the storeroom. I will get you anything you want and leave you in charge of the kitchen."

"And poor me!" chimed in Enid.

"Oh, you, miss, are appointed upper housemaid, and, mind you, no followers."

"Mercy! I nearly lost my situation before I got it."

"How?"

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"We met Jack Stanhope and asked him to come with us."

"You asked him, you mean," said Constance.

"And you met him, I meant," said Enid.

"I don't care a pin how you treated Stanhope so long as you didn't bring him," said Brand, "though, indeed, he would have been useful as it turned out."

When lunch was ready they summoned him by the electric bells he had put up throughout the building. It gave them great joy to discover in the living room a code of signals which covered a variety of messages. They rang him downstairs by the correct call for "Meal served."

It was a hasty repast, as Brand could not remain long away from the glass covered observatory, but they all enjoyed it immensely. He left them, as he said, "to gobble up the remains," but soon he shouted down the stairs to tell them that the Daisy had rounded Carna di. He could not tell them, not knowing it, that at that precise moment old Ben Pollard was frantically signaling to Lieutenant Stanhope to change the course of the small steam yacht he had commandeered as soon as the murmur ran through the town that the Gulf Rock was flying the "help wanted" signal.

The officials did not know that Brand was compelled by the snowstorm to use rockets. All the information they possessed was the message from Land's End and its time of dispatch.

Jack Stanhope's easy going face became very strenuous indeed when he heard the news.

The hour stated was precisely the time the Daisy was due at the rock if she made a good trip. Without allowing for any possible contingency save disaster to the girls and their escort, he rushed to the mooring place of the ten ton steam yacht Lapwing, impounded a couple of lounging sailors, fired up, stoked and steered the craft himself and was off across the bay in a quarter of the time that the owner of the Lapwing could have achieved the same result.

His amusement was complete when he encountered the redoubtable Daisy bowling home before a seven knot breeze. He instantly came round and ranged up to speaking distance. When he learned what had occurred he readily agreed to return to Penzance in order to pick up the relief lighthouse keepers and thus save time in transferring them to the rock.

In a word, as Enid Trevillion was safe, he was delighted at the prospect of bringing her back that evening, when the real skipper of the Lapwing would probably have charge of his own boat. There was no hurry at all now.

If they left the harbor at 3 o'clock, there would still be plenty of light to reach the Gulf Rock. Ben Pollard, glancing over his shoulder as the Daisy raced toward Penzance side by side with the Lapwing, was not so sure of this. But the arrangement he had suggested was the best possible one, and he was only an old fisherman who knew the coast, whereas Master Stanhope plinned his faith to the Nautical Almanac and the rules.

The people most concerned knew nothing of these proceedings.

When Constance and Enid had solemnly decided on the menu for dinner, when they had inspected the kitchen and commended the cleanliness of the

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[TO BE CONTINUED.]

cook, Jackson; when they had washed the dishes and discovered the whereabouts of the "tea things," they suddenly determined that it was much nicer aloft in the sky parlor than in these dim little rooms.

"I don't see why they don't have decent windows," said Enid. "Of course it blows hard here in a gale, but just look at that tiny ventilator, no bigger than a ship's porthole, with a double storm shutter to secure it if you please, for all the world as if the sea rose so high!"

Constance took thought for awhile. "I suppose the sea never does reach this height," she said.

Enid, in order to look out, had to thrust her head and shoulders through an aperture two feet square and three feet in depth. They were in the living room at that moment—full seventy feet above the spring tide high water mark. Sixty feet higher the cornice of the gallery was given its graceful outer slope to shoot the climbing ways across of an Atlantic gale away from the lantern. The girls could not realize this stupendous fact. Brand had never told them. He wished them to sleep peacefully on stormy nights when he was away from home. They laughed now at the fanciful notion that the sea could ever so much as toss its spray at the window of the living room.