

THE PILLAR OF LIGHT

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

BRAND'S attention was attracted by the sound of the door. For one thing, Mr. Brand had been told by the stewardess that the stewardess had been seen in the kitchen. He had been told by the stewardess that the stewardess had been seen in the kitchen. He had been told by the stewardess that the stewardess had been seen in the kitchen.

After the scurry caused by the rain had passed, the stewardess came back. "We must not be too anxious. There is a chance now. I won't deny that, but the sea is treacherous." "This reef here creation. At Bar Harbor, in Maine, where a mighty big sea can kick up in a very few hours, I have seen it go down again like magic under a change of wind."

"That is quite reasonable. Any ordinary commotion has room to spread itself in the tideway. Here the tide is broken up into ocean rivers, streams with boundaries as definite as the Thames. The main body sweeps up into the bottle neck of the channel. Another arbitrary comes round the north of the belly, and runs into the tidal stream again exactly at this point. The result often is that while little pleasure boats can safely run out into the bay from Penance, there is a race over the rock that would break up a stranded battleship."

"Do you like this kind of life?" "I have given my best years to it." "You are smoking a pipe, one which Brand had seen. The tobacco was a capital substitute for food, especially as he had established a private understanding with Elsie and Mamie that they were to waylay him when possible and nibble a piece of biscuit he carried in his pocket."

"This arrangement was to be kept a strict secret from all, especially from Miss Constance and Miss Elsie, while the little ones themselves did not know that the ship, during the summer, was to be used as a refuge for their parents. The fact was that the ship was to be used as a refuge for their parents. The fact was that the ship was to be used as a refuge for their parents."

"Do you mind my saying that you are a good bit of an enigma?" he inquired between puffs. "Just so. I was never so happy as when I took a trip as fourth engineer on a tramp in the Gulf of Florida. But that didn't signify being tied to a long boom over for the remainder of my days."

"Are you a marine engineer?" inquired Brand, with some show of interest. "I held a certificate just for fun. I had a mechanical twist in me and gave it up. But I am an idler by profession." "The lighthouse keeper laughed so naturally that the younger man was gratified. Polite disbelief may be a compliment."

"An idler, eh? You do not strike me as properly classed." "It's the fact, nevertheless. My grandfather was pleased to invest a few dollars in real estate on the sheep farm where Manhattan avenue now stands. My uncle has half; my mother had the other half."

"Are both of your parents dead?" "Yes, years ago; lost at sea, too, on my father's yacht." "What a terrible thing!" "It must have been something like that. I was only six years old at the time. My uncle lost his wife and child, too, when the Emerald went down. It nearly killed him. I never thought he would marry again, but I suppose he's tired of being alone."

Brand forbade further talk. Fyne must rest now and relieve him at 3 o'clock. The youngster nodded no feathery quick. There is a supple-headed humor which keeps people awake at night with a fall harder in the house. The crude article differs from the cultured one so greatly that the man who hangs of necessity cannot sleep too much.

Thus far the inhabitants of the light-house had been given quite enough nutriment to maintain life. There was no reason why any, even the most delicate, should be in real danger during the next forty-eight hours. But scientific reasoning and the animal instincts of mankind clash at times; in that lay the danger whose sullen shadow was deepening the lines in the corners of Brand's eyes.

Every hour the officer on duty and some men of the watch visited him to report that all was well below. Some of the less drunken mutineers were pitifully sober now; the others were maudlin. Beyond the few words exchanged on this and hundred topics he was left alone with his thoughts throughout the silent watch. Fyne slept heavily. Glancing at times at the youngster's stalwart figure and firm, handsome face, Brand found himself reviewing the buried years. He thought of the days when he, too, looked forth on the world with the stern enthusiasm of triumphant youth.

Long forgotten ghosts were resurrected, shattered ideals built up again. He wondered, if the decades rolled back, would he decide a second time to abandon the sea career which lay at his feet and withdraw his grief and his talents to the seclusion of lonely rocks and silent headlands.

He had been happy, as men count happiness, during the decades. No child had arisen to rear the complete content of his life. The blossoming of the girl into delightful womanhood was an increasing joy to him, and it was passing strange that his little household should be plunged into whirlpool of events in the very hour when their domesticity seemed to be most assured. The changeable moods of the elements found no counterpart in his nature. He, knowing the sea, did not expect it to remain fixed in one aspect. Whether in calm or storm, the contrary would surely happen ere many days had passed. But life was a different thing. How came it that at the very close of so many years of association with the fierce ocean she should play such a trick on him and his daughters, unfold them with perils, snatch them from the quiet pleasures of the life they had planned for the future and thrust upon them, even if they escaped with their lives, a publicity which he at any rate, abhorred and abhorred?

He harbored no delusions on this point. He knew that the drama of the Gulf Hook was now filling the columns of newspapers all over the world. He and his beloved girls would be written about, discussed, described in fulsome language, pictured by black and white artists and eulogized by wide-awake editors eager to make much of a topic dear to the public mind.

On the rock they were undoubtedly in grave danger. Death confronted them—death at once extraordinary and ghastly. No tyrant of the middle ages, with all his paraphernalia for wringing truth or lies out of cringing wretches, had devised such a fate as threatened if the inconstant sea should choose to render the reef altogether unapproachable for many days. Yet it help came he and those dear to him were already steeped in unavoidable vague disabilities which he had striven to avoid for over twenty years.

And all this because some far-seeing gale out of the north had endorsed sprang into being at a moment when his mates were incapacitated and his daughters happened to pay him a surprise visit.

"It is an insane freak of fortune," he muttered, "so inconceivable, utterly out of focus with common events, that if I were a superstitious man I should regard it as betokening the approach of some great epoch in my life. Surely, a merciful Providence would not bring my girls here to subject them to the lingering torture of hunger and thirst. I must not think of it further. That way lies madness."

There was at least one other troubled soul on the rock which divided some sinister portent in the storm. Mrs. Vansittart, even at this moment, was staring into the black void with questioning eyes.

He resolutely threw back his head as if he would hurl into the outer darkness the gibbering phantom which whispered these words of foreboding. Although the lamp needed no attention just then, he clambered to the trimming stage, moved to find relief in mechanical action. He carefully examined the adjustment, and, to judge how the gallery was shaking, went out into the gallery to look at the distant lights.

The three quiet flashes of the Seven Sisters lighthouse were very clear. That was a good sign. The wind came from that quarter, and, blustering though it was, driving gale-force waves before it into the lead embrace of the reef, it maintained the good promise of the last few hours.

Seeking the comparative shelter of the east side, he gazed steadily at the light. Its two fixed electric lamps, nearly in line with the Gulf Hook, were dull and watery. A local squall of rain was sweeping down from the land. Changeable, threatening, unsettled—the meteorologist might apply any of these terms to the prevalent conditions.

Far out in the channel he saw the twinkling masthead lights of several steamers. How high or low, masts were not visible and vessels past to sea. On such a night at other times he would remember the lighthouse with a cheery sense of its comfort and beneficent aspect. Now he dreaded the brilliant light of the service room. His patient aspect all dimmed with the pallid misery the weather could impose. The lighthouse keeper which contained the lighthouse was which contained the lighthouse.

He had had a bad time with a woman once in his life, he mused. "It must have been Constance's mother, and that is why he doesn't believe in heredity. Well, I guess he's right."

He waited, but perchance the other man should take the cue that offered, but Brand, for the twentieth time, was poring over the records of the days which followed the hurricane reported by a former keeper. The American pursued his life.

"They are rare," said Brand. "I suppose so. Indeed, it used to be a mere ideal of mine, built up from books. But they exist, and they are worth looking for."

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He straightened his stiff limbs and sat up. He was about to feel in a pocket for his pipe—he experienced the worst pang of hunger after waking in such fashion—when he saw a woman's head and shoulders emerging out of the stairway.

At first he thought it was Constance, and he wondered why she had muffled her face in the deep collar of a cloak, but the visitor paused irresolutely when her waist was on a level with the floor. She uttered a little gasp of surprise. "You, Charlie?" she cried. "I thought you slept in the kitchen?"

"No, Mrs. Vansittart," he said. "I am assistant keeper, and I am here most all the time with Mr. Brand. But what in the name of goodness?"

"I was restless," explained the lady hurriedly. "If I had remained another minute among those women I should have screamed aloud. How peaceful you are here! Where is Mr. Brand?"

"Mrs. Vansittart pressed her left hand to her breast. With the other she kept the high collar over her mouth and cheeks. Fyne could only see her eyes, and the alarmed light that leaped into them increased his astonishment at her unexpected presence.

"It seems to me," he answered, "that if you just wait up four more steps and sit down you can ask him all those things yourself."

"Where you speaking of me to him?" "I did happen to mention you." "And he said he knew me?" "No, ma'am. He said nothing of the sort. But, for mercy's sake, what mystery is there about it?"

"Mystery? None whatever. I was mistaken. I have never met him. I came now to explain that to him. Oh—"

She divined suddenly as the gallery door opened, Brand caught a fleeting glimpse of her vanishing form.

ing on her knees outside her bedroom door, he might have found cause for more disturbing reflections. She was crying softly, with her face hidden in her hands.

"Oh, I dare not; I dare not!" she moaned. "I am the most miserable woman in the world. It would have been better if I had gone down with the vessel. The Lord saved me only to punish me. My heart will break. What shall I do? Where shall I hide?"

And her sobbing only ceased when the noise of ascending footsteps drove her into the company of sorrowful women, who would nevertheless have forgotten some of their own woes did they but realize her greater anguish.

Method of Spending Vacations Urged by Chicago Employer.

Plans to Introduce Innovation to Enforce His Employees to Enforce It During Their Holidays—Prevents Against "Willie Boy" Outings—Desires All Her Workers.

In the final week of summer vacations for Chicago workers a local manufacturer and employer proposes to introduce an innovation in the matter of vacation granting, says the Chicago News. He plans to induce his young men clerks to "pass up" the summer hotel during their fortnight of pleasure and to devote themselves to roughing it in camp life. He declares that the "spory" life at the typical resort units new for strenuous work when they return and that outdoor living and vigorous exercise would have an opposite effect.

"The regulation summer hotel or resort 'cottage' life is ruinous to young men," was the statement recently made by the man whose huge chin-chin-struts strain the spirit of the enterprise. "My young men clerks, as a rule, are a bunch of chaps as can be gathered anywhere, are addicted to the annual habit. They return to work at the end of their two weeks with an indifference to the firm's welfare that justifies my notes."

"The eggs in the office machine that ran faultlessly through the winter and spring suddenly became in need of oil in the shape of harsh call downs. Letter files get out of whack, card index systems go wrong, and the complaint book soon gets lines under his eyes. The same I place on the summer hotel system."

"As a matter of saving dollars and cents I contemplate starting a sort of miniature summer resort bureau, through which I hope to encourage my young men to get out into the wilderness just as I do. I'd like to see them bucking kindling for a campfire and tramping with heavy packs through regions which the foot of the steam roller never has penetrated. As a matter of inducement I may hold out half rate railway fares and loans from my personal stock of fishing tackle and camp equipment."

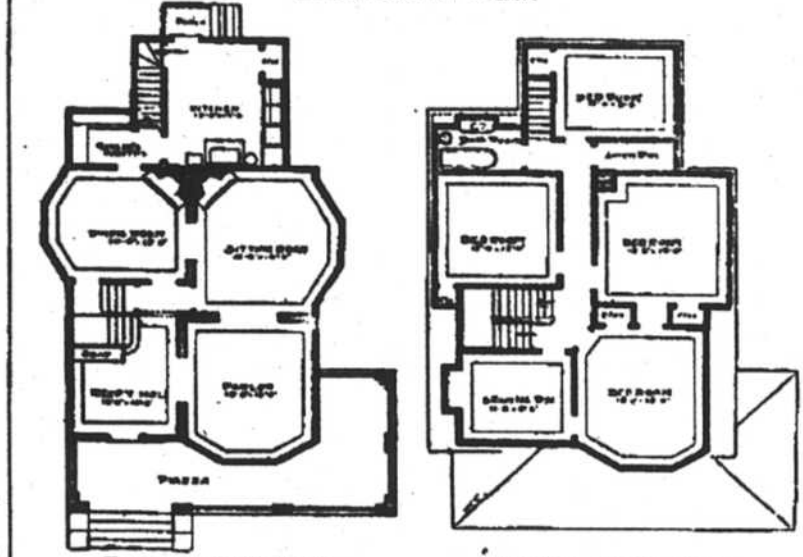
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This attractive design contemplates eleven rooms. It is built in the cottage style, with gambrel roof, the roof being kept low. The first story is clap-boarded. The exterior above the first story is stained and shingled. The rooms are of moderate size, but open well together. One main chimney, with a fireplace in both the library and dining room, makes the plan very economical. The first floor is trimmed in native hardwood, and the remainder of the house is trimmed in soft wood and finished natural or painted.

This design is especially well adapted to a city lot and has all the conveniences and comforts of some of the larger homes, while costing much less. The house is heated throughout with steam, and all walls and ceilings are plastered with three good coats. Estimated cost \$4,000. F. T. MACLAGAN.

Week End Rates—Season 1906. The Carolina and North-western railway has issued the following notice as Joint-Circular No. 2:

To All Agents: This will be your authority to sell Round Trip Tickets between all Stations on these lines at a rate of One First-Class Fare, plus twenty-five cents (25) for the Round Trip. Tickets to be sold on Saturday of each week, following date of sale. The above rates will go into effect on Saturday, April 7th, 1906, and are effective until and including Saturday, October 27th, 1906.

Use regular Local Tickets, marking across face of same, "Week End." Acknowledge receipt of this Circular, below. Approved: L. T. NICHOLS, General Manager. R. F. REID, General Passenger Agent.

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Special Low Rates. The C. & N.-W. Railway Company has issued the following notice as joint circular No. 1:

To All Agents: Upon application and sufficient notice to this office, Special Round Trip Rates will be quoted parties of Twenty-five to Fifty people on one ticket, on regular trains, between any two points, on these lines. Effective on and after April 1st, 1906. R. F. REID, General Passenger Agent.

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