

### *The Pillar of Light*

As the boat retreated she caught Stanhope's joyous glance. He saw her, and waved his hand. Something he said caused the two rowers, for the first time, to give one quick glance backward, for they were now scudding rapidly away from the danger zone. She knew them; she managed to send a frantic recognition of all three.

Then, in an almost overpowering reaction, she drew back from the window and tears of divine relief streamed from her eyes.

"Constance," she sobbed, "he has saved us! Look out. You will see him. I cannot."

Yet, all tremulous and breathless, she brushed away the tears and strove to distinguish the boat once more. It appeared, a vague blot in the mist that enshrouded her.

"Connie," she said again, "tell me that all is well."

"Yes, dear. Indeed, indeed, he is safe."

"And do you know who came with him? I saw their faces — Ben Pollard and Jim Spence — in the *Daisy*. Yes, it is true. And Jack planned it with them. They have escaped; and we, too, will be rescued. It is God's own doing. I could thank him on my knees for the rest of my life."

### CHAPTER XV

#### ENID'S NEW NAME

THE twisted strands of tough hemp might have been an electric cable of utmost conductivity if its powers were judged by results. When willing hands had carefully hauled in the rope until the knot could be unfastened, and the end secured to the cord connecting the gallery with the entrance, a man was despatched to warn Brand that all was in readiness for the next step.

The rough sailor was the messenger of the gods to those who waited on each story. As he ran upwards, climbing the steep stairs with the nimbleness of a monkey, he bellowed the great news to each crowded doorway. Seeing the girls in the kitchen, though already his breath was scant, he blurted out:

"It's all right, ladies! He's done the trick!"

On the next landing pallid women's faces gleamed at him.

"Rope aboard!" he gasped. "They're tyin' on legs o' mutton now."

Yet again he was waylaid on the floor above. Hard pressed for wind, he wheezed forth consolation.

"Just goin' to haul the bottled beer aboard," he grunted.

### *The Pillar of Light*

It would never to do pass the hospital without a word.

"Beef-tea an' port wine swimmin' here," he panted.

Brand was peering through the lantern door, awaiting this unwashed Mercury, who caught sight of the lighthouse-keeper 'ere his shaggy head had emerged from the well.

The man stopped, almost spent. He gave an off-handed sailor's salute.

"Haul away, sir!" he yelled, and his voice cracked with excitement. Indeed, they who remained quite coherent on the Gulf Rock, on the ships, and even on the cliffs nine miles away, were few in number and to be pitied exceedingly. There are times when a man must cheer and a woman's eyes glisten with joyous tears, else they are flabby creatures, human jellyfish. The steamboats snorted with raucous siren-blasts, and although the hoarse shouting of men and the whistling of steam were swept into space by the north wind in its rage, those on shore could read the riddle through their glasses of the retreating boat and the white vapor-puffs.

The first to grasp Stanhope's hand when he swung himself onto the deck of the tender was Mr. Cyrus J. Traill.

"Well done, my lad!" he cried, brokenly. "I thought it was all up with you. Did you see her?"

"Yes, but only for a second."

"You thought it best not to join them?"

"You know that I would gladly go now and attempt it. But I dared not refuse the better way. I can't tell

### *Enid's New Name*

you what happened. Something stilled the sea like magic. Look at it now."

Assuredly the waves were breaking again around the pillar with all their wonted ferocity, but one among the Trinity House officers noticed a smooth, oily patch floating past the vessel.

"By Jove!" he shouted, "Brand helped you at the right moment. He threw some gallons of colza overboard."

Traill, a bronzed, spare, elderly man, tall and straight, with eyes set deep beneath heavy eyebrows, went to Jim Spence and Ben Pollard where they were helping to sling the *Daisy* up to the davits.

"I said five hundred between you," he briefly announced. "If the rope holds, and the three people I am interested in reach the shore alive, I will make it five hundred apiece."

Ben Pollard's mahogany face became several inches wider, and remained so permanently his friends thought, but Jim Spence only grinned.

"You don't know the cap'n, sir. He'll save every mother's son — an' daughter, too — now he has a line aboard."

Then the ex-sailor, chosen with Ben from among dozens of volunteers owing to his close acquaintance with the reef, bethought him.

"You're treatin' Ben an' me magnificent, sir," he said, "but the chief credit is due to Mr. Stanhope. We on'y obeyed orders."

The millionaire laughed like a boy.

### *The Pillar of Light*

"I have not forgotten Mr. Stanhope," he said. "I am sure your confidence in Mr. Brand will be justified. You watch me smile when I ante up your share."

On board the tug, and on the gallery of the lighthouse, there was no time for talk. The vessel, with the most skilful handling, might remain where she was for about four hours. She was already more than a hundred fathoms within the dangerous area marked by the buoy, and there was much to be done in the time.

The strongest rope, the best wire hawser, has its well-defined limit of strain, and the greater the length the greater the tension. From the buoy itself naught save a chain cable would hold in such a sea. The tug must operate from the nearer base. She was pitching and tossing in a manner calculated to daunt anyone but a sailor, and the slightest mistake made by the skipper, the burly oil-skinned man balancing himself on the bridge with his hand on the engine-room telegraph, would snap any line ever twisted.

So, briefly, this was the procedure adopted. A stout rope was bent onto that carried to the rock by Stanhope. With this was sent a whip, thus establishing a to-and-fro communication. The rope itself, when it had reached the rock, was attached to a buoy and anchored. Thus, it could be picked up easily if the thin wire hawser next despatched should happen to break.

A few words may cover a vast amount of exertion. Before the second line, with its running gear, was safely stayed around the body of the lantern — even the

### *Enid's New Name*

iron railing might give way — a precious hour had elapsed, and Stanhope was impatiently stamping about the bridge of the tender, though none knew better than he that not an unnecessary moment was being lost.

At last a signaler stationed on the tug was able to ask:

"What shall we send first?"

And the answer came back:

"Water, milk, bread."

All night tinsmiths had labored to enclose food and clothing in water-tight cylinders ready for transport, and the shining packages now began their voyaging from the tug's trawl-beam to the lofty gallery, three-fourths of the journey being through the sea. When the first consignment reached the rock, another lusty cheer boomed from the watching vessels.

Stanhope, at least, could picture the scene in progress behind the grim granite walls — Constance and Enid, with others whom he did not know, serving out generous draughts to thirsty and famished women and men, helping themselves last, and hardly able to empty the eight-gallon supply of fresh water before they were called on to distribute a similar quantity of milk.

And then, the bread, the cooked meat all cut in slices, the tinned soups and meat extracts, the wines — for Traill had taken charge of the catering and his arrangements were lavish — what a feast for people almost on the verge of starvation!

The hours flew until the tug signaled that she must cast loose and back away from the reef. The tide was

### *The Pillar of Light*

running westward now. Soon the danger would be active, and in any case, the Gulf Rock was saved from the possibility of famine during the next forty-eight hours. So the hawser, in its turn, was buoyed, and Brand's parting instruction was not to attempt to re-open communication during the dark hours of the morning tide.

The wisdom of his advice was manifest. With farewell trumpeting the vessels scurried off to Penzance, and the telegraph-office was kept open all night transmitting the word-pictures of newspaper correspondents to thrill the world with full descriptions of the way in which the Gulf Rock's famished denizens had been relieved.

The two last packages ferried to the lighthouse contained, not only warm woolen wraps for the women and children, but a big bundle of letters and telegrams.

Pyne was the postman. There were at least twenty notes addressed to the girls, and several to Brand, from friends ashore.

Mr. Traill, of course, wrote to his nephew and Mrs. Vansittart. Naturally, Pyne carried his own missive to the kitchen, where he found that Constance and Enid had managed to wash in distilled water.

They were cutting sandwiches and endeavoring to read their letters at the same instant. He bowed with sarcastic politeness.

"I see you are ready for the party," he said.

Certainly he offered a deplorable contrast to them. His face was encrusted with salt and blackened with

### *Enid's New Name*

dirt and perspiration. His hands were like those of a sweep, but smeared with oil, which shone on his coat sleeves up to both elbows. His clothes were torn and soiled, his linen collar and cuffs limp as rags, and his waistcoat was ripped open, having remained in that condition since it caught in a block as he descended the mast.

"Oh, you poor fellow!" cried Constance. "How you must envy us. Here is a kettleful of hot water. I can't say much for the towel, but the soap is excellent."

Refreshed, Pyne opened his uncle's letter. The girls were keeping up a running commentary of gossip.

"Mousie (Mrs. Sheppard) says she hasn't slept for three nights."

"Edith Taylor-Smith says she envies us."

"That letter you are reading now is from Lady Margaret. What does she say?"

"She sends all sorts of love, and — that kind of thing," cried the blushing Enid, who had just learnt from Jack's mother that Stanhope had appropriated her as his intended wife without ever a proposal.

"Is that all — in four closely written pages?"

"Well — she hopes soon to see me — to see both of us —"

Constance was too kindly to quiz her sister; maybe she saw something in Enid's eye which threatened speedy retaliation.

"Here's a note from the vicar. They have held a special service of intercession at St. Mary's."

"And Hettie Morris writes — Good gracious, Mr. Pyne! Have you had any bad news?"

### *The Pillar of Light*

Enid's wondering cry was evoked by the extraordinary way in which the young American was looking at her. Some intensely exciting knowledge had mastered stoicism. His eyes were distended, his lips quivering. He leaned with one hand on the kitchen table; in the other he had clenched his uncle's letter.

Constance stood near to him. That he, of all the men she had ever met, should yield to an overpowering emotion, startled her greatly.

She caught his arm.

"Mr. Pyne," she said softly, "if — it is any ill tidings — you have received — we are, indeed, sorry for you."

He pulled himself straight, and gave Constance such a glance that she hastily withdrew her hand. It seemed to her that he would clasp her in his arms forthwith without spoken word. Her action served to steady him, and he laughed, so softly and pleasantly that their fear was banished.

"Girls," he said slowly, "I have been parachuting through space for a minute or so. I'm all right. Everybody is all right. But my head swims a bit. If I come back forgetting my name and the place where I last resided, remember that once I loved you."

He left them. He could not trust himself to say more.

"That letter was from his uncle, I suppose," said Enid, awe-stricken.

"It must be something very dramatic which would make him act so strangely. Why has he run away? Was he afraid to trust us with his news?"

### *Enid's New Name*

There was a sharp vehemence in Constance's voice which did not escape her sister's sharp ears.

"Connie," said Enid, quietly, "as sure as Jack loves me, that man is in love with you."

"Enid —"

But the other girl laughed, with a touch of her saucy humor.

"Why did he look at you in that way just now? Didn't you think he was going to embrace you on the spot? Confess!"

"It was at you he was looking."

"Not in the way I mean. He gazed at me as if I were a spirit. But when you touched him he awoke. He might have been asleep and suddenly seen you near him. I wonder he didn't say, 'Kiss me, dearest, and then I will be sure it is not a dream.'"

Constance discovered that she must defend herself.

"Mr. Pyne hardly conveyed such unutterable things to me," she said, conscious that a clean face betrays a flush which smudges may hide. "Have you had a letter from Jack that you can interpret other people's thoughts so sweetly?"

"No, dear. Jack has not written. I have found out the cause. His mother expresses the hope that he will be the first to convey her good wishes. So I think he meant to try and bring the rope himself. Dad knew it and Mr. Pyne. That is why they did not tell us."

Constance gathered her letters into a heap. The tiny pang of jealousy which thrilled her had gone.

"Eighty-one hungry mouths expect to be filled to

### *The Pillar of Light*

repletion tonight," she said. "No more gossip. What curious creatures women are! Our own affairs are sufficiently engrossing without endeavoring to pry into Mr. Pyne's."

"Connie, don't press your lips so tightly. You are just dying to know what upset him. But, mark my words, it had nothing to do with any other woman."

Wherein Enid was completely mistaken: she would never commit a greater error of judgment during the rest of her days.

When Pyne quitted the kitchen his intent was to reach Brand without delay. As he passed Mrs. Vansittart's bedroom he paused. Something had delighted him immeasurably once the first shock of the intelligence had passed.

He seemed to be irresolute in his mind, for he waited some time on the landing before he knocked at the door and asked if Mrs. Vansittart would come and speak to him.

"Are you alone?" she demanded, remaining invisible.

"Yes," he said.

Then she appeared, with that borrowed shawl still closely wrapped over head and face.

"What is it?" she said wearily.

"You have had a letter from my uncle?"

"Yes, a charming letter, but I cannot understand it. He says that some very important and amazing event will detain him in Penzance after we reach the place. He goes on — but I will read it to you. I am quite bewildered."

### *Enid's New Name*

She took a letter from her pocket and searched through its contents until she found a paragraph. She was about to read it aloud when someone came down the stairs. It was one of the officers, yet Mrs. Vansittart was so flurried that she dropped the sheet of paper and bent to pick it up before Pyne could intervene.

"Oh, bother!" she cried. "I am dreadfully nervous, even now that we are in no further peril. This is what I wish you to hear."

And she read:

"Nothing but the most amazing and unlooked-for circumstances would cause me to ask you to postpone the date of our marriage for at least a month after you reach shore. This is not the time, nor are your present surroundings the place for telling you why I make this request. Suffice it to say that I think, indeed, I am sure, a great happiness has come into my life, a happiness which you, as my wife soon to be, will share."

The American, whilst Mrs. Vansittart was intent on her excerpts from his uncle's letter, studied all that was visible of her face. That which he saw there puzzled him. She had suffered no more than others, so he wondered why she wore such an air of settled melancholy. Throughout the lighthouse gloom was dispelled. The sick became well, the lethargic became lively. Even the tipplers of methylated spirits, deadly ill before, had worked like Trojans at the rope, as eager to rehabilitate their shattered character as to land the much-needed stores.

What trouble had befallen this woman, so gracious,

### *The Pillar of Light*

so facile, so worshipful in her charm of manner and utterance during the years he had known her, that she remained listless when all about her was life and joyance, she, the cynosure of many eyes by her costumes and graceful carriage, cowering from recognition? Here was a mystery, though she had repudiated the word, and a mystery which, thus far, defeated his sub-conscious efforts at solution.

She lifted her eyes to his. Her expression was forlorn, compelling pity by its utter desolation.

"What does he mean?" she asked plaintively. "Why has he not spoken clearly? Can you tell me what it is, this great happiness, which has entered, so strangely, into his life and mine?"

"I have never met any man who knew exactly what he meant to say, and exactly how to say it, better than Cyrus J.," said Pyne.

"But he has written to you, surely. Does he give no hint?"

"His letter is a very short one. To be candid, I have hardly made myself acquainted with its contents as yet."

"You are fencing with me. You know, and you will not tell."

Her mood changed so rapidly that Pyne was not wholly prepared for the attack.

"It is a good rule," he said, "never to pretend you can handle another man's affairs better than he can handle them himself."

He met her kindling glance firmly. The anger that

### *Enid's New Name*

scintillated in her eyes almost found utterance. But this clever woman of the world felt that nothing would be gained, perhaps a great deal lost, by any open display of temper.

She laughed scornfully.

"Mr. Traill is certainly the best judge of those worthy of his confidence. Excuse me if I spoke heatedly. Let matters remain where they were."

"Just a word, Mrs. Vansittart. My uncle has written you fairly and squarely. He has not denied you his confidence. If I understood you, he has promised it to the fullest extent."

"Yes, that is true."

"Then what are we quarreling about?"

He laughed in his careless way, to put her at her ease. She frowned meditatively. She, who could smile in such a dazzling fashion, had lost her art of late.

"You are right," she said slowly. "I am just a hysterical woman, starting at shadows, making mountains out of molehills. Forgive me."

As Pyne went on up the stairs his reflections took this shape:

"The old man shied at telling her outright. I wonder why. He is chock full of tact, the smoothest old boy I ever fell up against. He thinks there may have been little troubles here, perhaps. Well, I guess he's right."

In the service-room he found Brand cleaning a lamp calmly and methodically. All the stores had been carried downstairs, and the store-room key given over to the purser.

### *The Pillar of Light*

"I am glad you have turned up," said the lighthouse-keeper. "Oblige me by opening that locker and taking back the articles I purloined recently. If the purser asks for an explanation, tell him the truth, and say I am willing to eat this stuff now for my sins."

Pyne noticed that Brand's own letters lay in a small pile on the writing-desk. With two exceptions, they were unopened. As a matter of fact, he had glanced at the superscriptions, saw that they were nearly all from strangers, and laid them aside 'until night fell and the lighting of the lamps would give him a spare moment.

"I'll do that with pleasure," said the American, "but there's one thing I want to discuss with you whilst there is a chance of being alone. My uncle says he has written to you."

"To me?"

"Yes. It deals with an important matter, too. It concerns Enid."

Mr. Traill has written to me about Enid?" repeated Brand, stopping his industrious polishing to see if Pyne were joking with him.

"That's so. See, here is his letter. It will tell its own story. Guess you'd better read it right away."

The young man picked up one of the sealed letters on the table and handed it to the other.

Setting aside a glass chimney and a wash-leather, Brand lost no time in reading Mr. Traill's communication.

Save that his lips tightened, and his face paled slightly, there was no outward indication of the tumult

### *Enid's New Name*

the written words must have created in his soul, for this is what met his astonished vision:

"Dear Mr. Brand — I hope soon to make your acquaintance. It will be an honor to meet a man who has done so much for those near and dear to me, but there is one reason why I am anxious to grasp your hand which is so utterly beyond your present knowledge that I deem it a duty to tell you the facts, to prepare you, in a word.

"Circumstances have thrown me into the company of Lieutenant Stanhope. We had a kindred inspiration. He, I understand, is in effect, if not in actual recorded fact, the accepted suitor of your adopted daughter, known as Miss Enid Trevillion. I, although an older man, can share his feelings, because I am engaged to be married to Mrs. Vansittart, a lady whom you have, by God's help, rescued. Hence, Mr. Stanhope and I have almost lived together, ashore and afloat, during these troubled days. Naturally, he spoke of the girl he loves and told me something of her history. He described the brooch found on her clothing, and a Mr. Jones, retired from the lighthouse service, who was present when you saved the child from speedy death, informs me that her linen was marked 'E. T.'

"These facts, combined with the date and Mr. Jones's description of the damaged boat, lead me to believe that the girl is my own daughter, Edith Traill, whom you have mercifully preserved to gladden the eyes of a father who mourned her death, and the death of her mother, for nineteen years.

"I can say no more at present. I am not making inferences not justified in other ways. Nor am I setting up a father's claim to rob you of the affections of a beautiful and accomplished daughter. I will be con-

*The Pillar of Light*

tent, more than content, if she can give to me a tithe of the love she owes to you, for, indeed, in Mr. Stanhope, and in all others who know you, you have eloquent witnesses.

“Yours most sincerely,

“CYRUS J. TRAILL.

“P. S. Let me add, as an afterthought, that only my nephew and you have received this information. The agonized suspense which the ladies must have endured on the rock is a trial more than sufficient to tax their powers. If, as I expect, Mr. Stanhope meets you first, he will be guided wholly by your advice as to whether or not the matter shall be made known to your Enid—to my Edith—before she lands.”

Brand dropped the letter and placed his hands over his face. He yielded for an instant to the stupor of the intelligence.

Pyne, as Constance had done, came near to him and said, with an odd despondency in his voice:

“Say, you feel bad about this. Guess you’ll hate our family in future.”

“Why should I hate anyone who brings rank and fortune to one of my little girls?”

“Well,” went on Pyne anxiously, “she’ll be Mrs. Stanhope, anyhow, before she’s much older.”

“That appears to be settled. All things have worked out for the best. Most certainly your excellent uncle and I shall not fall out about Enid. If it comes to that, we must share her as a daughter.”

[ 256 ]

*Enid's New Name*

Pyne brightened considerably as he learnt how Brand had taken the blow.

“Oh, bully!” he cried. “That’s a clear way out. Do you know, I was beginning to feel scared. I didn’t count a little bit on my respected uncle setting up a title to Enid!”

[ 257 ]