

## THE Pillar of Light

By Louis Tracy

Copyright by Melrod & Allen.

(Continued)

After an ingenious seaman had been detected in the attempt to pick the store-room lock, when a tray of cold ham was deliberately upset whilst a football scrimmage took place for the pieces, Mr. Emmett stopped these ebullitions by arming the waiter with assorted weapons from the work-shop and issuing stern orders as to their use in case of need.

Here, again, the warring elements, which form the human camp, were admirably displayed. On duty, under the bonds of discipline, the coarse-grained foreman, who had got bled up a surreptitious lump of fat pig during the first successful scuffle, would brain the daring scoundrel and under the same conditions a similar trick a second time. Discipline, sometimes, converts a skulker into a hero.

When the state of the tide permitted, storm-shutters were opened and a free draught of air allowed to enter through the door. Then all hands eyed the sea with anxiety. The wind was strong and piercing, and the reef maintained its ceaseless roaring. Wherever a window opened towards the land there was a small crowd waiting to peep through it. At last, the sense of orderliness gradually permeating the inmates of the lighthouse, with stated intervals for moving on. There was a momentary relief in looking at the land. The cliffs, the solitary white houses, the little hamlets half hidden in cozy nooks, seemed to be so absurdly near, that it was ridiculous to imagine that help could long be deferred. The seaward passing of a steamer, carrying flowers from the Scilly Isles to Penzance for Covent Garden, caused a flutter, but the sight of a Penzance fishing-smack scudding under jib and close-reefed, in a little boat which was no more than a speck on the horizon, gave the return of the dove with the olive branch, could not have been mistaken when these castaways in their granite ark when the brown-sailed boat came within their view.

The window in the coal-cellar opened far towards the Land's End, and the grimy occupants of this compartment could look their fill at the messenger of life. A rich New Yorker vain offered a hundred dollars to any man who gave up his place in the time after himself, by the operation of the time-limit, was remorselessly sent away from the narrow loop-hole. Dollars and pounds sterling have a curiously depreciated value under such conditions.

The men of the watch were always questioned for news by the unemployed majority. They related the comings and goings of the Falcon, and sympathetic inquiries from story to story—promiscuous passing to and fro being forthrightly rebuffed by the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery. Had they watched the coastline less and the reef more their observations, outside of the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery. Had they watched the coastline less and the reef more their observations, outside of the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery.

Quite early in the day, the purser handed to the occupants of each room a full list of passengers and crew, with the survivors grouped separately. In only three instances were husband and wife both saved. The awful scene in the saloon accounted for this seeming discrepancy. Based men and senseless women were wrenched from each other's clasp either by the overwhelming sea or during the final fight for life at the head of the companion stairway. A wreck, a fire in the theatre, pays little heed to the marriage tie.

The third and last meal of the day was eaten in silence and gloom. All the spare lamps were diverted to the kitchen, because Brand, during a further detailed survey of the stores, made in company with Mr. Emmett and the purser, discovered that there was an alarming deficit of fresh water in the cistern.

In the hurry of the earlier hours a serious miscalculation had been made in transmuting cubic feet into gallons. It became an instant necessity to use every heating boiler, to boil water and start the distillation of a drinkable fluid.

The Gulf Rock Light did not possess a proper apparatus. The only method that could be adopted was to improvise a coil from canvas sewn into a tube. The exterior was varnished, and, wrapped in wet cloths to assist the condensation of the steam. Hence, every kettle and pot being requisitioned for this paramount need, cocoa could be supplied to the women alone, whilst the taste of the water, even thus disguised, was nauseating. No more potatoes could be boiled. Raw, they were almost unobtainable. And potatoes happened to be the food most plentiful.

The genuine fresh water, reduced to a minimum in the cistern, was only a little better in condition unless it was filtered, and Brand decided that it ought to be retained for the exclusive use of those seriously ill. Patients were multiplying so rapidly that the hospital was crowded, and all fresh cases, as they occurred, perforce remained where they were.

Neither Constance nor Enid felt the time hang heavily on their hands. They were too busy, though the new ordinance regarding the food supply transferred their attention from active cooking to the replenishing of utensils which must be kept full of salt-water at boiling-point.

Pyne was an invaluable assistant. In the adjustment of refractory canvas tubes over hot spots, in the manipulation of the condensing plant so that it might act efficiently, in the brimming of lamps, and the stocking of the solitary coal fire, he insisted on taking to himself the lion's share of the work.

He always had a pleasant quip or funny story to brighten their task. "You can conquer trouble with a grin," he said. "Worry doesn't cut ice."

Enid, of course, chaffed him about his American accent, which, she protested, she would acquire after a week's practice.

"It is quaint to our ears," she went on. "I never before grasped the reason why Mark Twain makes me laugh. All he does is to act as a phonograph. Every American is a born humorist."

"There's something in that," admitted Pyne. "We do try to dis-inter a joke. Say, have you girls ever heard how an English professor explained the Yankee drawl?"

"No," they cried.

"He said it represented the effort of an uneducated man to make a speech. Every time his vocabulary gave out he lifted his voice to show he wasn't half through with his ideas."

"Oh," said Constance, "that is neither kind nor true, surely."

"Well," agreed Pyne slowly, "that is the view of mine took of the remark. So he asked the professor if he had a nice agreeable sort of definition for the word 'effort'?"

"The other fellow allowed that he hadn't pondered on it," I guess," said Mr. Pyne, "but he said that an effort was a word used by an educated ass to talk English."

Though the laugh was against them they were forced to snigger approval. Here, again, the warring elements, which form the human camp, were admirably displayed. On duty, under the bonds of discipline, the coarse-grained foreman, who had got bled up a surreptitious lump of fat pig during the first successful scuffle, would brain the daring scoundrel and under the same conditions a similar trick a second time. Discipline, sometimes, converts a skulker into a hero.

When the state of the tide permitted, storm-shutters were opened and a free draught of air allowed to enter through the door. Then all hands eyed the sea with anxiety. The wind was strong and piercing, and the reef maintained its ceaseless roaring. Wherever a window opened towards the land there was a small crowd waiting to peep through it. At last, the sense of orderliness gradually permeating the inmates of the lighthouse, with stated intervals for moving on. There was a momentary relief in looking at the land. The cliffs, the solitary white houses, the little hamlets half hidden in cozy nooks, seemed to be so absurdly near, that it was ridiculous to imagine that help could long be deferred. The seaward passing of a steamer, carrying flowers from the Scilly Isles to Penzance for Covent Garden, caused a flutter, but the sight of a Penzance fishing-smack scudding under jib and close-reefed, in a little boat which was no more than a speck on the horizon, gave the return of the dove with the olive branch, could not have been mistaken when these castaways in their granite ark when the brown-sailed boat came within their view.

The window in the coal-cellar opened far towards the Land's End, and the grimy occupants of this compartment could look their fill at the messenger of life. A rich New Yorker vain offered a hundred dollars to any man who gave up his place in the time after himself, by the operation of the time-limit, was remorselessly sent away from the narrow loop-hole. Dollars and pounds sterling have a curiously depreciated value under such conditions.

his American accent, which, she protested, she would acquire after a week's practice.

"It is quaint to our ears," she went on. "I never before grasped the reason why Mark Twain makes me laugh. All he does is to act as a phonograph. Every American is a born humorist."

"There's something in that," admitted Pyne. "We do try to dis-inter a joke. Say, have you girls ever heard how an English professor explained the Yankee drawl?"

"No," they cried.

"He said it represented the effort of an uneducated man to make a speech. Every time his vocabulary gave out he lifted his voice to show he wasn't half through with his ideas."

"Oh," said Constance, "that is neither kind nor true, surely."

"Well," agreed Pyne slowly, "that is the view of mine took of the remark. So he asked the professor if he had a nice agreeable sort of definition for the word 'effort'?"

"The other fellow allowed that he hadn't pondered on it," I guess," said Mr. Pyne, "but he said that an effort was a word used by an educated ass to talk English."

Though the laugh was against them they were forced to snigger approval. Here, again, the warring elements, which form the human camp, were admirably displayed. On duty, under the bonds of discipline, the coarse-grained foreman, who had got bled up a surreptitious lump of fat pig during the first successful scuffle, would brain the daring scoundrel and under the same conditions a similar trick a second time. Discipline, sometimes, converts a skulker into a hero.

When the state of the tide permitted, storm-shutters were opened and a free draught of air allowed to enter through the door. Then all hands eyed the sea with anxiety. The wind was strong and piercing, and the reef maintained its ceaseless roaring. Wherever a window opened towards the land there was a small crowd waiting to peep through it. At last, the sense of orderliness gradually permeating the inmates of the lighthouse, with stated intervals for moving on. There was a momentary relief in looking at the land. The cliffs, the solitary white houses, the little hamlets half hidden in cozy nooks, seemed to be so absurdly near, that it was ridiculous to imagine that help could long be deferred. The seaward passing of a steamer, carrying flowers from the Scilly Isles to Penzance for Covent Garden, caused a flutter, but the sight of a Penzance fishing-smack scudding under jib and close-reefed, in a little boat which was no more than a speck on the horizon, gave the return of the dove with the olive branch, could not have been mistaken when these castaways in their granite ark when the brown-sailed boat came within their view.

The window in the coal-cellar opened far towards the Land's End, and the grimy occupants of this compartment could look their fill at the messenger of life. A rich New Yorker vain offered a hundred dollars to any man who gave up his place in the time after himself, by the operation of the time-limit, was remorselessly sent away from the narrow loop-hole. Dollars and pounds sterling have a curiously depreciated value under such conditions.

The men of the watch were always questioned for news by the unemployed majority. They related the comings and goings of the Falcon, and sympathetic inquiries from story to story—promiscuous passing to and fro being forthrightly rebuffed by the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery. Had they watched the coastline less and the reef more their observations, outside of the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery.

Quite early in the day, the purser handed to the occupants of each room a full list of passengers and crew, with the survivors grouped separately. In only three instances were husband and wife both saved. The awful scene in the saloon accounted for this seeming discrepancy. Based men and senseless women were wrenched from each other's clasp either by the overwhelming sea or during the final fight for life at the head of the companion stairway. A wreck, a fire in the theatre, pays little heed to the marriage tie.

The third and last meal of the day was eaten in silence and gloom. All the spare lamps were diverted to the kitchen, because Brand, during a further detailed survey of the stores, made in company with Mr. Emmett and the purser, discovered that there was an alarming deficit of fresh water in the cistern.

In the hurry of the earlier hours a serious miscalculation had been made in transmuting cubic feet into gallons. It became an instant necessity to use every heating boiler, to boil water and start the distillation of a drinkable fluid.

The Gulf Rock Light did not possess a proper apparatus. The only method that could be adopted was to improvise a coil from canvas sewn into a tube. The exterior was varnished, and, wrapped in wet cloths to assist the condensation of the steam. Hence, every kettle and pot being requisitioned for this paramount need, cocoa could be supplied to the women alone, whilst the taste of the water, even thus disguised, was nauseating. No more potatoes could be boiled. Raw, they were almost unobtainable. And potatoes happened to be the food most plentiful.

The genuine fresh water, reduced to a minimum in the cistern, was only a little better in condition unless it was filtered, and Brand decided that it ought to be retained for the exclusive use of those seriously ill. Patients were multiplying so rapidly that the hospital was crowded, and all fresh cases, as they occurred, perforce remained where they were.

Neither Constance nor Enid felt the time hang heavily on their hands. They were too busy, though the new ordinance regarding the food supply transferred their attention from active cooking to the replenishing of utensils which must be kept full of salt-water at boiling-point.

Pyne was an invaluable assistant. In the adjustment of refractory canvas tubes over hot spots, in the manipulation of the condensing plant so that it might act efficiently, in the brimming of lamps, and the stocking of the solitary coal fire, he insisted on taking to himself the lion's share of the work.

He always had a pleasant quip or funny story to brighten their task. "You can conquer trouble with a grin," he said. "Worry doesn't cut ice."

Enid, of course, chaffed him about his American accent, which, she protested, she would acquire after a week's practice.

"It is quaint to our ears," she went on. "I never before grasped the reason why Mark Twain makes me laugh. All he does is to act as a phonograph. Every American is a born humorist."

"There's something in that," admitted Pyne. "We do try to dis-inter a joke. Say, have you girls ever heard how an English professor explained the Yankee drawl?"

"No," they cried.

"He said it represented the effort of an uneducated man to make a speech. Every time his vocabulary gave out he lifted his voice to show he wasn't half through with his ideas."

"Oh," said Constance, "that is neither kind nor true, surely."

"Well," agreed Pyne slowly, "that is the view of mine took of the remark. So he asked the professor if he had a nice agreeable sort of definition for the word 'effort'?"

"The other fellow allowed that he hadn't pondered on it," I guess," said Mr. Pyne, "but he said that an effort was a word used by an educated ass to talk English."

Though the laugh was against them they were forced to snigger approval. Here, again, the warring elements, which form the human camp, were admirably displayed. On duty, under the bonds of discipline, the coarse-grained foreman, who had got bled up a surreptitious lump of fat pig during the first successful scuffle, would brain the daring scoundrel and under the same conditions a similar trick a second time. Discipline, sometimes, converts a skulker into a hero.

When the state of the tide permitted, storm-shutters were opened and a free draught of air allowed to enter through the door. Then all hands eyed the sea with anxiety. The wind was strong and piercing, and the reef maintained its ceaseless roaring. Wherever a window opened towards the land there was a small crowd waiting to peep through it. At last, the sense of orderliness gradually permeating the inmates of the lighthouse, with stated intervals for moving on. There was a momentary relief in looking at the land. The cliffs, the solitary white houses, the little hamlets half hidden in cozy nooks, seemed to be so absurdly near, that it was ridiculous to imagine that help could long be deferred. The seaward passing of a steamer, carrying flowers from the Scilly Isles to Penzance for Covent Garden, caused a flutter, but the sight of a Penzance fishing-smack scudding under jib and close-reefed, in a little boat which was no more than a speck on the horizon, gave the return of the dove with the olive branch, could not have been mistaken when these castaways in their granite ark when the brown-sailed boat came within their view.

The window in the coal-cellar opened far towards the Land's End, and the grimy occupants of this compartment could look their fill at the messenger of life. A rich New Yorker vain offered a hundred dollars to any man who gave up his place in the time after himself, by the operation of the time-limit, was remorselessly sent away from the narrow loop-hole. Dollars and pounds sterling have a curiously depreciated value under such conditions.

The men of the watch were always questioned for news by the unemployed majority. They related the comings and goings of the Falcon, and sympathetic inquiries from story to story—promiscuous passing to and fro being forthrightly rebuffed by the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery. Had they watched the coastline less and the reef more their observations, outside of the narrowness of the stairs and sent every trifling pretext on their own part to reach the topmost height and feast their eyes on the panorama visible from the storm-gift gallery.

Quite early in the day, the purser handed to the occupants of each room a full list of passengers and crew, with the survivors grouped separately. In only three instances were husband and wife both saved. The awful scene in the saloon accounted for this seeming discrepancy. Based men and senseless women were wrenched from each other's clasp either by the overwhelming sea or during the final fight for life at the head of the companion stairway. A wreck, a fire in the theatre, pays little heed to the marriage tie.

The third and last meal of the day was eaten in silence and gloom. All the spare lamps were diverted to the kitchen, because Brand, during a further detailed survey of the stores, made in company with Mr. Emmett and the purser, discovered that there was an alarming deficit of fresh water in the cistern.

In the hurry of the earlier hours a serious miscalculation had been made in transmuting cubic feet into gallons. It became an instant necessity to use every heating boiler, to boil water and start the distillation of a drinkable fluid.

very busy.

"But this is important," cried Mrs. Vanstatter shrilly. "It is of the utmost importance to me."

"Fraid it can't be helped ma'am," said Pyne civilly. "Anyhow we're not ashore yet, and I can't see that any time will be wasted."

The electric bell jangled in the room, calling Mrs. Vanstatter to jump visibly.

"Oh, what is it?" she screamed.

"My father is calling one of us up," explained Constance. "It may be a message from Jack. You go, Enid."

Enid hurried away. She had scarcely reached the next floor before Mrs. Vanstatter, who seemed to have moods in full compass, said sweetly:

"Convey my deep obligations to Mr. Brand, won't you, Charlie. Indeed, you might go now and write out the text of my message to your uncle. Some early opportunity of despatching it may offer."

"All right," he said in the calm way which so effectively concealed his feelings. "I shall escort you to your room."

"By no means. I came here quite unassisted," Miss Brand and I can chat for a little while, if you don't wearying to be sent all day and all night in one little room. Even the change to another little room is grateful."

Pyne bowed, and they heard his steady tread as he ascended the stairs. "Quite a nice boy, Charlie," said Mrs. Vanstatter, coming forward into the kitchen, with its medley of queer-looking, hissing, steaming contrivances.

"Yes, we think he is exceedingly nice," said Constance. She wondered why the other woman seemed always to stand in the shadow of her choice. The strong light in the darkened chamber came from the grate, and Mrs. Vanstatter deliberately turned away from it.

"If all goes well he will soon be my nephew by marriage," went on the other. "I quit New York yesterday week in order to marry his uncle in Paris. Rather a disastrous beginning to a new career, is it not?"

"I hope not, indeed. Perhaps you are surrounded by difficulties at the commencement rather than at the end."

"It may be. I am so much older than you that I am less optimistic. But you did not grasp the significance of my words. I said I was to be married in Paris."

"Yes," said Constance, still at a loss to catch the drift of an announcement which Mrs. Vanstatter seemed so anxious to make.

"Well, the Chinook was wrecked last night, or rather early this morning. The name of the ship was not made known throughout the world until long after daybreak. It is quite impossible that Mr. Trail should have reached this remote corner of England from Paris in the interval."

For one moment the girl was puzzled. Then a ready solution occurred to her.

"Oh, of course, that is very simple. Mr. Trail was awaiting your arrival in Southampton, thinking to take you by surprise, no doubt. That is sure to be the explanation. He has just received the first telegram must have given him."

"How did he ascertain that his nephew and I were alive?"

"The very first thing father did was to telegraph to him and stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"I think there is no one like him in all the world," said Constance. "He is less curt, at any rate," replied Brand, and they faced each other. There was a period of utter silence until the lighthouse-keeper rose to light the lamp.

Pyne watched him narrowly. "I may be trespassing on delicate ground," he said. "If I am, you are not the sort of man to stand on ceremony. In the States, you know when the authorities want to preserve the dignity of the law, they don't walk on the grass. They put up a board which reads: 'Keep off. We never kick.'"

"It is nothing of any consequence," he said and darted past him.

Brand looked up from his journal. He smiled, though the American thought there was a hint of pain in his eyes.

"I am going to lose one of my girls," he said. "Oh, no, this is not a loss by death but by marriage. If I were a Frenchman, I would describe it as gaining a son. And has just received what is tantamount to a proposal."

"By marriage?" Pyne was naturally interested.

"Yes, you would not expect one of the people from the Chinook to be so enterprising."

"I don't know," said Pyne, punctuating each word with a deliberate nod.

"Well, in any case, I would not have forwarded this application after an understanding of the Chinook being a reserved Brand, with equal deliberation."

"They're strong, powerful fine girls," said Pyne, staring at the two women. "They have just been telling me how Miss Enid happened along. It reads like a fairy tale."

She was given to me by the winds and waves, yet she is dear to me as my own child. I shall miss her greatly. If all goes well here."

"I've cottoned on to both of them something wonderful. But if I am not intruding into private affairs, how comes it that Miss Enid is being telegraphed for?"

"I would feel that way myself if the conditions were favorable."

"Pyne could be as stolid as his face indicated when he was not in a hurry. He found no hint in his words."

"When the girl told me, you, Mr. Brand, that that bluff doesn't go."

"Thank Heaven, you are twenty-four hours yet," murmured Brand. "It will be all the same when we have only twenty-four seconds. Let us fix it in our minds right now. You see, it will be easier to deceive the girls? And there's another reason. Brand and I have been in the score desperate men boxed up down here. When they begin to die on coals there will be trouble. A few of us, ready to take chances, will be helpful. Some of them may have to die quick, you know."

Brand closed his eyes in sheer affliction. In that way he tried to shut out vision.

"Be so," he gasped. "May the Lord help us."

It was the responsibility that mastered him. Judges on the bench often break down when they sentence a man to death, but what judge, humane, tender-hearted and God-fearing, ever pronounced the doom of seventy-eight people snatched from a merciful death to be steeped in horrors."

At last his iron will predominated. The knowledge that the path of duty lay straight before him, he turned his tortured soul. No man could say he was trying to save his children. That was a trust as solemn as any that was placed in the hands of the Trinity.

He placed a hand on Pyne's shoulder, for this young man had become dear to him.

"Had I a son," he said, "I should wish to be like you. Let us strive to forget the evils that threaten us. Drooping is useless. If need be, you will have the charge of the lower deck. There is starvation allowance for three more days at the worst. But I hate the thought of starting the new scale tomorrow."

"It may not be necessary."

"Candidly, I fear it will. I know the Cornish coast too well. When bad weather sets in from the south-west at this season, it holds for a week at the lowest computation."

"Is there no other way? Can nothing be done out there?"

"Able men, the best of sailors, the most experienced of engineers have striven for half a century to devise some means of storm communication with a rock lighthouse placed as this. They have failed. There is none."

"That's good," cried Pyne quite pleasantly. "Where is your pouch? I feel like a smoke. If I hadn't fired a shot, I should have been a great deal of time in hard thinking."

Brand had to scheme that night to reach the store-room unobserved. The Falcon, steaming valiantly to her observation post near the buoy, Brand was aroused.

It was evident that the brief rest had cleared his brain and restored his self-confidence. He instantly took up the thread of events, and his first words showed how pleased he was that someone of authority in the lighthouse service was in active communication with him.

Through his glasses he distinguished Stanhope on board the Trinity steamer, standing by the side of the inspecting officer of the South-Coast lights. Other officials were there but Brand knew them not. He was a tall elderly man, unknown and certainly a stranger in Penzance.

The Falcon was now chartered by pressmen, so the civilian on the deck was evidently a person of consequence. Indeed, Brand imagined long before Pyne was able to verify the impression, that the official was Mr. Cyrus R. Trail, whom he had failed to notice in the poor light of the previous evening.

He knew quite well that the experienced chief of the lighthouse service would appreciate fully the disabilities under which he labored, with eighty-one months to feed from a stock already far below the three-month maximum.

The first telegraphed question betrayed the prevalent anxiety. "Hope all is well?"

"What was he to say? Was it not best to speak boldly and let the men know the truth, not alone as to their present desperate plight but revealing the measures he had devised for the protection of the light? He could not make up his mind to launch out into a full explanation that instant."

So he signalled: "Everyone alive, but many cases of grave collapse."

Stanhope was again the signaler—evidently he had arranged matters with the Admiral at Portsmouth—as Brand expected the prompt reply: "How are Constance and Enid?"

"Quite well and cheerful."

The tall man near Stanhope bent closer.

"Are Mrs. Vanstatter and Pyne all right?"

Brand assumed that the lady was in no worse condition than others. Constance, telling him the state of the sick during a hasty visit, had not mentioned her name ought to be.

"No, not there," he commented.