

THE Pillar of Light

By Louis Tracy

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(Continued)

"Mr. Trill smiled. He knew what was in the other man's mind. 'Do you see a likeness in this young lady to anyone you have ever known?' he asked.

"Well, sir, I hope it will not hurt your feelings, and it's good many years ago now, but I could have sworn—well, I must out with it. She is the living image of your wife."

"Indeed, that cannot hurt my feelings, as she is her daughter."

"Her daughter?" "Your daughter?" gasped Enid.

A small serving-maid, with the ears of a rabbit, was listening spell-bound at the open window. Here, indeed, was a choice bit for the milkman, and the postman, and the butcher's and grocer's boys. From this lower current the stream of talk flowed upwards until it reached the august drawing-room of Mrs. Trill-Smith.

She drove in frantically to Lady Margaret's villa, and fired questions broadcast.

"Oh, yes," said Jack's mother, suavely. "It is quite true. Of course I have known it from the first. According to present arrangements the marriage will take place in the spring. Enid's marriage settlement will be nearly a quarter of a million."

Like most women, she loved that word. A million, even in fractions, is so glib, yet so unattainable.

The only person who was slightly dissatisfied with the progress of events was Pyne. Constance never appeared. She shared with Mrs. Shepard the care of her mother. Enid, lithe and guileless in the public eye, did the house-keeping and represented the household.

Brand, too, save for a couple of visits to the hotel, remained invisible. He was pale and worn, a man at war with himself. The young Philadelphia—for Pyne's family home was in the Quaker City, though his estate lay principally in New York—was not pleased by the slight signs perceptible behind the screen of Brand's reserve.

"Constance takes after her father," he told himself. "There may be trouble about her mother. In the scurry I may get left. I must think this out. At last came a day of warm sunshine, when Enid announced that the invalid, by the doctor's orders, was carried downstairs.

"Has Mr. Brand seen her yet?" asked Pyne.

"No," replied Enid, with a little cloud on her fair face. "He never mentions her. And how we wish he would. He is suffering, but keeps at it, and neither Constance nor I can make any suggestion."

"But what will be the outcome?" "How can I tell? That night—after we left the hotel—he told us the story of his married life. I did not seem to be utterly impossible to straighten matters, but we knew nothing of her career during so many years. Was she married again? I have asked my father. He believes she was, but is not certain."

"Father?" "Mr. Trill, Brand remained. 'Dad,' thus did Enid solve the difficulty."

"Is she aware that Constance knew she is her mother?"

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