

THE GUARDED FLAME

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THE last house on the cliff by the fishing village of Whitebridge is named Cliff Lodge. Tyndall—in one of his lectures—has spoken of it with these words: "I like to think of the necessary isolation of great minds. I like to think of that cliff tower above our southern sea, from which the flame of truth has shed amidst the darkness of so many years its steady radiance. I call that house the lighthouse."

The owner of the house, with his young wife, is slowly climbing now from the harbour to his home. As he passes very slowly, in the pleasant September sunshine, women nod and smile at him; fishermen, mending nets by the bridge, touch caps and show white teeth in tanned faces; Mr Hind, the fancy stationer, at the corner of Pier Street, takes off his hat and stands on his dark threshold framed in fluttering magazines and dangling wooden spades; Mr Ingle, the hairdresser, on the steps of his saloon in Harbour Wall, waves his hand affably. As, with slow footsteps, he passes onward and upward all eyes follow him. This is the morning walk, undeviating in extent, unchangeable in time, taken in fair weather and in foul: known to all Whitebridge as "the daily constitutional." Now is the hour for strangers to get a peep at the great man: now is their chance—"Look out. Here he comes. . . . *What* the deuce is the matter with this confounded shutter? . . . Lord's sake, Florrie, I've never put my films in!"

He is world-famous—from the slowly growing fame of forty years: our great philosopher, they call him on the Continent. He is the last and perhaps the biggest of the Victorian giants

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