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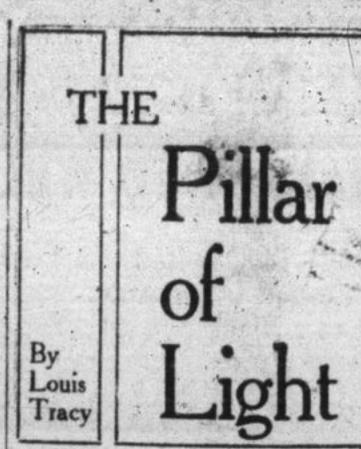


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CHAPTER L. FLOTSAM.

All night long the great bell of lighthouse, slung to a stout beam projecting seaward beneath the outer platform, had tolled its warning through the fog. The monotonous ticking o fthe clockwork attachment that governed it, the sharp and livelier click of the occulting hood's machinery, were the only sounds which alternated with its deep boom. The tremendous clang seut a thrill throug hthe giant column itself' and pealed away into the murky void with a tremolo of profound diminu-

Overhead, the magnificent glantern, its eight-ringed circle of flame burning at full pressure, illumined the drifting vapor with an intensity that seemed to be born of the sturdy granite pillar of which it was the fitting dia- ed gentally: dem. Hard and strong externally as the everlasting rock on which it stood, -replete within with burnished steel and polished brass, great cylinders and powerful pumps,-the lighthouse thrust its glowing torch beyond the reach of the most daring wave. Cold. dour, defiant it looked. Yet its superhuman eye swept to pierce very heart of the fog, and the furnace-white glare, concentrated thousand-fold by the encircling hive of the dioptric lens, flung far into the

to the assistance of the unconquerable light. About the close of the middle watch a gentle breeze from the Atlantic followed the tide and swept the shivering wraith landward to the northeast, whilst the first beams of a June sun completed the destruction of the routed spectre.

the third day, the waters under the heaven were gathered into one place and the dry land appeared, and behold, it was good,

On the horizon, the turquoise rim of the sea lay with the sheen of folded silk against the softer canopy. of the sky. Towards the west group of islands to which drifting banks of mist clung in melting despair, were etched in shadows of dreamy purple. Over the nearer seafloor the quickly dying vapor spread a hary pall of opal tints, Across the tace of the waters glistening bands q dvered in fairy lights. The statting rays of the sun threw broadcast a golden mirage and gilded all things with the dumb gladness of an English

beauty made entrancing by the knowresolve it into maturer and more fa-

He was engaged, it istirue, in the unromantic action of filling his pipe,and navvies, yet his eyes drank in the mute glory of the scene, and, murmured aloud:

Their filmy pennous at her word they furl. And stop obedient to the reins

The small door beneath the glass fane was open. The worker within. busily ceaning an eight-inch burner, "Did you hail me?" he inquired.

The matter-of-fact words awoke the dreamer. He turned with a pleasant

body, but it was Aurora, Spirit of the Dawn, not a hard-bitten sallorman

"Oh, that's all right, cap'n. I thought heard you singin' out for a ight." The other man bent his head to shield a match from a puff of wind, thus concealing from his companion the gleam of amusement in his eyes His mate sniffed the fragrant odor of the tobacco longingly, but the Elder strict discipline, and he vanished to his task without a thought of broken

He left a piece of good advice be

turn in. Jones is feeling At this morning. You ought to be dead beat after your double spell of the last two days. I'll keep breakfast back until three belief (9.30 m.) ian there's tresh eggs an' haddlok.'

"Just a couple of whiffs lint. Then

I'll go below." Both men wore the uniform of as sistant-keepers, yet it meeded not their manner of speech to reveal that one was a gentleman, born and bred, and the other a bluff, good-natured, horny handed A. B., to whom new-last eggs and recently cured fish appealed far more potently than Shelley and a summer dawn at seal

He who had involuntarily quoted "Queen Mah" turned his gaze seaward tgain. Each moment the scene was becoming more brilliant yet nearer to earth. The far of islands sent splashes of gray, brown and green through the purple. The rose flush on the horizon was assuming a yellower tinge and the blue of sky and water was deepening Twenty miles away to the southwest the smoke of Atlantic liner, and the last shreds of white mist were curling forlownly

above the waves. The presence of the steamship, a tiny, dull spot on the glowing picture, peopled the void with life and banished poetry with the thinly sheeted . 13-1104 ghosts of the fox. -In ta little more

han an hour she would be abreast of the Gulf Rock Light. The watcher believed-was almost certain, in fact -that she was the Princess Royal, homeward bound from New York to Southampton. From her saloon deck those enthusiasts who had risen early enough to catch a first glimpse of the English coast were already scanning the trimly rugged outlines of the Scilly Isles, and searching with their glasses for the Land's End and the

, In a few hours they would be in Southampton; that afternoon in London-London, the Mecca of the world, from which, two rears ago he fledwith a loathing akin to terror, The big ship out there, panting and straining as if she were beginning, not ending, her ocean race of three'thousand miles, was carrying eager hundreds to the pleasures an dfollies of the great city. Yet he, the man smoking and silently staring at the growing ! bank of smoke, -a young man, too; handsome, erect, with the clean, smooth profile of the aristocrat,-had turned his back on it all, and sought, and found, peace here in the gaunt pillar on a lonely rock.

Strange, how differently men are bhen Brand. constituted. And women! Bah! Al. There was no wavering judgment hard look came into his eyes. His his voice now. He was angry, and mouth set in a stern contempt. For slightly alarmed. a while his face bore a steely expression which would have amazed the Jim?" was the smiling query.

lustily as he worked. evil spirit to depart from Saul, so did crumpled up forrard? Dead men, the music of the morning chase away mebbe. If they are, she's convoyed the lurking devil of memory which by sharks. sprang upon the lighthouse-keeper with the sight of the vessel. He smiled again, a trifle bitterly, perhaps. Behind him the singer roar. Jones.'

"Soon we'll be in London Town, Sing, my lads, yeo he-o, And see the King in his golden Sing, my lads, yeo ho.

The man on the platform seemed to Jim, who trusted to the head-keep be aroused from a painful reverie by er's veto,—awed, too, by the reference the fingle so curiously a propos to his to Leander, whom he hazily associatthoughts. He tapped his pipe on the ed with Captain Webb,-made no reiron railing, and was about to enter joinder. the lantern and so to the region of He focused the telescope again gloom a silvery cloak of moon-like sleep beneath-when suddenly his gave a moment's scrutiny to the glance, trained to an acutenesss not steamer, and then re-examined the At last an irresistible ally sprang dreamed of by shore folk, rested on boat. The stillness of the morning some object seemingly distant a mile was solemn. Beyond the lazy splash or less, and drifting slowly nearer of the sea against the Gulf Rock it-

fangs were marked by the lighthouse. of Stephen Brand's boots on the iron So, once more, as on the dawn of just then, it was difficult enough to oll-room, the library and office, to the effect a landing at the base of the first bedroom, in the lower bunk of rock, but this same smiling water. race became an awful, raging, tearing fury when the waves were lashed into a storm.

trailing over the stern. its color, with Jones experienced an anxious watch, the sun shining on it, no less than the Not for an instant could be forego, surface of the sea, had prevented the sleet it was necessary to keep him from seeing it earlier. Perhaps the light at full pressure. The surhe would not have noticed it at all plus oil, driven up from the tanks by were it not for the flashing wings of weights weighing half a ton, must several sea-birds which accompanied flow copiously over the brass shaft the craft in aerial escort.

stared insolently in that direction and umn of flame. A man, pacing the narrow gallery declared that there was naught else The occulting hood, too, must be beneath the lantern, halted for a mo, in sight save the steamer, whose tall helped when the warning click came lorn, deserted. clas contour told him striving against the exterior turmoff that it was no local craft straying ad of wind and wave. ken spar and tumbled canvas, betok part of his body chilled to the bone.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy result of a wound received in the convalescent after a painful immobil-Egyptian campaign; nevertheless, he ity of two days

was quick on his feet "What do you make of that?" right hand, a mere shipboard trick of breeze which had vanquished the fog

"Ship's boat," he answered, laconi- plexed by the myriad wavelets. cally. "Collision, I expect. There's Each minute the condition of affairs bin no blow to speak of for days. But on board became more defined. Be ceased for an instant and popped his they're gone. Knocked overboard neath some oars ranged along the when she was took aback by a squall, starboard side he could see several Unless them birds-

shorthand, but his meaning was clear in the bows puzzled him. It was partenough, even to the sentence left un. ly covered with broken planks front "To be exact, Jim, I did hail some inished. The craft was under no con the damaged portion of the upper trol. She would drift steadily into works, and it might be a jib-sail fall the Bay until the tide turned, wander en there when the mast broke. The in an aimless circle for half an hour birds were busy and excited. He did thereafter, and then, when the ebt not like that. restored direction and force to the current, voyage forth again to the Princess Royal, a fine vessel of yacht-

to speak again, jerkily;

line. Wouldn't live two minutes in a At last the lighthouse-keeper heard sea. Somethin' lyin' in the bows ascending footsteps. This was not Can't make it out. And there's a cou Stephen Brand, but Jones. Jim, whose "If I was you, captain he said, "I'd ple of cormorants perched on the gun rare irritated moods found safety in



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Alexander But she'll pass within two hun dred yards on her present course, and the tide'll hold long enough for that." The other man looked around. From that blevated perch, one hundred and thirty feet above high-water mark, he could survey a yast area of sea. Excepting the syproaching steamerwhich would flit past a mile away to the south-and a few distant brown! specks which betokened a shoal of Pensance fishing-smacks making the best of the tide eastward-there was not a sail in sight.
"I think we should try and get hold

of her," he said. Jim kept his eye glued to the tele

"Tain't worth it, cap'n. The sal wage 'll only be a pound or two, not but what an extry suvrin comes in use ful, an' we might the her up to the buoy on the off chance until the relief comes or we signal a smack, But what's the good o' talkin'? We've got no boat, an' nobody'd be such a fool as to swim to her."

"That is what I had in mind." Jim lowered the glass. "That's the fust time I've ever heard you say a d-d silly thing. Ste-

"Why is it so emphatically silly, man within the lantern, now singing "How d'ye know what's aboard of her? What's them fowl after? What's But as the harp of David caused the under that sail? What's that lyin'

> "Sharks! This is not the Red Sea. am not afraid of any odd prowler. aOnce- Anyhow, I am going to ask

"Jones won't hear of it." "That is precisely what he will do, within the next minute. Now, don't be vexed, Jim. Stand by and sing out directions if needful when I am in the water. Have no fear. I am more than equal to Leander in a sea like

self, and an occasional heavy surge as At this hour a two-knot current the swell revealed and instantly swept to the east around and over smothered some dark tooth of the the treacherous reef whose sunken reef, he heard no sound save the ring In calm weather, such as prevailed stairs as he descended through the which lay Mr Jones' keeper and chief, recovering from a sharp attack of

During one fearful night in the He pocketed his pipe and stood with March equinox, when the fierce heat hands clenched on the rail, gazing in of the lamp within and the icy blast tently at a white-painted ship's life- of the gale without had temporarily boat, with a broken mast and a sail deranged the occulting machinery, vaporous eddies fading down to the attendance on the lamp. Owing to of the burner, or the metal might Even yet a landsman would have yield to the fervent power of the col-

masts and two black funnels were or it would jam and fail to fail per now distinctly visible. But the light lodically, thus changing the character ledge that a few brief moments would / house keeper knew he was not mis. of the light, to the bewilderment and taken. Here was a boat adrift, for grave peril of any unhappy vessel

venturously from island to mainland. So Jones passed four hours with his a simple thing, beloved alike of poets Its unexpected presence, waited thus head and shoulders in the temperature strangely from ocean wilds, the bro ture of a Turkish bath and the lower captive to the spell of the hour, he ened an accident, perchance a tragedy. He thought nothing of it at the time This was duty. But at intervals His mate, engaged in shrouding the throughout the rest of his life, the sci-"Floating on waves of music and of gleaming lenses from the sun's rays, atic nerve would remind him of that came at the call. He was lame—the lonely watch. This morning he was

Watching the (boat, Jim centered her in the teloscopic field, and looked The sailor required no more than a anxiously for a sharp arrow-shaped gesture. He shaded his eyes with his ripple on the surface of the sea. The concentrating vision and brain, for now kissed the smiling water into the rising sun was almost behind him dimples, and his keen sight was per-

tins, such as containe biscuits and He spoke in a species of verbal compressed beef. The shapeless mass

Nearly half an hour passed. The like proportions, sprinting for the af-For a little while they stood togeth ternoon train, was about eight miles er in silence. Jim suddenly quitted away, sou'-west by west. According his companion and came back with to present indications steamer and a glass. He poised it with the preci derelict would be abreast of the Gulf Brethren of the Trigity maintain sion of a Bisley marksman and began Rock Light simultaneously, but the big ship, of course, would give a wide

"Stove in forrard, above the water berth to a rock-strewn shoal. stolid silence, neither spoke nor looked around when his chief joined him. binoculars in hand.

Jones, a man of whitewash, polish and rigid adherence to framed rules. found the boat instantly, and recapitulated Jim's inventory, eliciting grunts of agreement as each item was

A clang of metal beneath caught their ears-the opening of the stout doors, forty feet above high-water mark, from which a series of tron rungs, sunk into the granite wall, led to the rocky base.

"Brand's goin' to swim out. It's hardly worth while signalin' to the Land's End," commented Jones. No answer. Jim leaned well over and saw their associate, stripped to his underclothing, with a leather belt supporting a sheath-knife slung across his shoulders, climbing down

This taciturnity surprised Jones, for Jim was the cheeriest nurse who ever brought; a sufferer a plate of soup. is it?" was the anxious question. "No. It's no distance to speak of." "An the sea's like a mill-pond?"
"Ay, it's smooth enough."

Don't you think he ought to try it?
Every fine morning he has a dip off

[To be continued.)



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