

# STAIRS OF SAND

A TALE OF A MYSTERY

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"THE SECRET OF THE MARIONETTES," "A DANGEROUS QUEST," ETC.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

Pleasant avenue is a little New York street facing the East river that has long ago ceased to deserve such a complimentary appellation. Principally filled with empty houses, that at one time must have been occupied by people of wealth and position, it has fallen into a state of ruin and decay, while the road proper is filled with debris and almost impassable to wagons.

There are a few people who live there, because the rents are so cheap—hard-working people, not particular as to their dwellings so long as the rates are not ruinous, and evidently not possessed of a delicate sense of smell.

It was in a little house, at the end of a long garden, reached by passing through the wagonway of an empty factory, that Job Hendricks had established himself for some days.

While he had succeeded in outwitting Ellison for the time being, he thought that now the war between them would be open, and that it would no longer be safe for him to remain in the vicinity of Farrenford.

For the present he might let matters rest, and there was other work he had out to do, that necessitated his presence in the city. So it was that he came to occupy the little cottage at the end of the long garden at the bottom of Pleasant avenue. It was little more than a pavilion, with two rooms on the ground floor and two above.

He bought a few pieces of simple furniture and moved in, occupying the upper rooms. The others he left to the mice and spiders. At least, he could not believe that he had prying neighbors, for they worked too hard all day to bother themselves about the affairs of others, and since he had moved in in the evening, and the house stood out of sight behind the tall factory, it was doubtful if any but a few knew that the house in the garden was occupied. So it was that he felt genuine pleasure in his retreat, for it seemed to afford a refuge where he could pursue his task without fear, and where he hoped, for the present, no one could find him out. To make matters safer, he had taken the precautions to change his appearance, so that even the worthy innkeeper at Exton would have had trouble in recognizing his former guest.

So far Hendricks had not been successful in his efforts to trace the man who had written the letter—the torn envelope of which had been treasured ever since. It bore a New York postmark, and he hoped that the writer was still in town, though it might be otherwise. At least, he might possibly come across one who knew where he was to be found. Though so far he had accomplished nothing, he still had hopes. A man of the type he was seeking must in time be found if he was in the city. Those of his class belonged to certain groups, and, however mysterious their movements, their presence in a place was always known.

Job had returned one evening, worn out with his search in the lower parts of the city, had finished his humble supper, which he had brought home in a paper bag, and had been napping on his cot, when an unusual sound in the empty rooms below him attracted his attention.

He jumped to his feet, and, setting the candle on the table behind him, opened the window, and peered out on the deserted garden. A faint moonlight lay over the rugged berry bushes along the walks, and on the pile of wood that was a most conspicuous decoration and rose like a funeral pyre in the center of the grass plot.

"That's queer," he muttered, drawing in his head. "Not a person in sight, and certainly I didn't dream that I heard that noise."

He took another peep out of the window and then closed it softly, shaking his head.

"Must be in the house—wonder if a rat could make a noise like that? The beggars do grow pretty big in these parts. Ah, there it is again—and comes from these rooms below. I suppose I must look into this a bit," and he sighed to think that perhaps he was not to enjoy his peaceful little abode much longer—that some one had found him out.

He took his revolver out of his pocket, examined it carefully to see that it was in working order, and then, holding it in one hand and carrying the candle in the other, opened the door leading to the stairs and went down. It was very quiet below as he paused at the last step to listen. He heard a skurrying sound in the wall, but there was nothing to be alarmed about in that; it was a man's step he thought he had heard in the first place. After a moment he stepped on the floor and swung the candle around, to get a good view of the place.

Just as he did this he was suddenly conscious of heavy breathing close beside him, and at the same time the pistol was suddenly snatched out of his hand.

It was done so quickly that for a moment he felt stunned, then turned about to grapple with his opponent; but the candle went out, and his outstretched hand only fanned the empty air. He stood there unarmed, not daring to move lest he should betray his whereabouts, and give this unseen foe a chance to locate him for a shot. So he stood still, and was considerably surprised to hear not the crack of an exploding cartridge, but a chuckling laugh, that in the silence of the place sounded so weird that it even startled him from his usual condition of calm imperturbability.

"Who are you? What are you doing there?" he called out.

"Just wait until I get this candle going, and I'll make myself known," said the man he could not see, and at the same time Job heard a scraping sound, as if the other was trying to find the candle. This he was able to do, for, after a moment's hunt, the candle was lit, and out of the gloom a shuffling figure appeared. Job took the candle out of the hand and held it up to the face of the man. He saw not a handsome face

into which he peered. The fellow had doffed a ragged hat, that he might show his features better. His hair descended in ragged wisps about his hungry and cadaverous face, that, being unshaven, seemed sprinkled with coal dust. His dark eyes, set in deep hollows, wore a half-amused expression, while his lips were parted in a grin that disclosed a double row of yellow and uneven teeth.

"Oh, it's you, eh?" grumbled Hendricks.

"You know me—Jebbs—do you? Ah, I thought you would," and the stranger broke out into a chuckling laugh again. "Here's yer pistol," said he, handing over the weapon. "Gave ye a jolly good scare, that's what I done."

"Nonsense—come upstairs and say what you have to say," and Job, angry at the way he had been treated, led the way up the stairs, while the other, evidently conscious that it would not do to anger his host further, followed him slowly.

"Now, how did you come to find me?" asked Hendricks, as he set the candle down on the table and eyed his guest with anything but an amiable look.

"Well, I see you several times of late in the street, and somehow you slipped away 'fore I could catch up with you. To-night I had better luck."

"Hum!" Then, going to a box in one corner of the room, which he evidently used for a closet, he took a bottle from it and a plate of bread and meat, and set them down on the table before his guest. Job did not attempt to speak again, as he watched the man fall on the food like a wild animal, and it was only when the last crumb had been devoured and the bottle emptied that he ventured to say:

"Why did you come in like a thief?"

"I wasn't sure you was in, and I wanted to surprise you," with a grin. "When I see you come down in the dark with that pistol in hand I was 'fraid you'd plink me 'fore I could make myself known, and so I had to take it from ye. How you'll excuse me for that. Ye might have killed me by mistake, and then a explanation wouldn't have did me no good. See?"

"Yes, I see," growled the other, to whom the subject was evidently an unpleasant one, and rumbled, since it showed how easy it would be to disarm him another time.

"Well, and what do you want?" he asked, after a moment's pause. "Why did you come and seek me out?"

"I thought that you might have some work on hand for me to do." Then, with a keen look, "I must say, Will—that you have changed—there are some things 'bout ye I can't make out."

"Changed? Course I've changed; who wouldn't in all these years. Well, I don't know but I have work for ye to do."

The other drew his chair up nearer to the table and moved his thin lips together as if he was smacking them over a prospective treat.

"What is it, cleanin' chimneys?" with a knowing wink.

"I'm done with all such things." "Get out—what sort of a story is that?" Turned Method, have ye, an' you one of the best in the business? Mind taking the baboon's gold snuff box at a wodge?—Oh, say, that was rich," and he broke out into noisy laughter.

"There—there, I wish you wouldn't make so much noise," grumbled Hendricks. "I came here to keep out of people's way, and while I don't mind your nodding me out—"

The stranger drew a long whistle, and then nodded sagely.

"I see. Wanted, eh? Well, naturally, you must lay low for a while. Now, what was the job you would put me on to? You always was a master hand for layin' out work. If I had your brains I'd do nothin' else, and it's much safer."

"I wish you wouldn't talk so much, and listen to me," said Job, testily. "What a jabber you are?"

"I'm shut up—so go ahead," said the other, subsiding.

Job became thoughtful, and they were not pleasant thoughts, to judge from his frowning forehead and the fierce look that came into his eyes. His big hands resting on the arm of the chair opened and closed now and then convulsively, but presently he grew calmer.

"It was before your day that this happened, maybe, or, at least you were out a lad, Jebbs. The Delamater Iron Works, over on the North river side, was robbed—the foreman happened to be killed—a man named Martin Frale was accused—found guilty and sentenced to twenty years." He paused and drew a long breath.

"I've heard the story. I was not in business at the time," said the other. "But what of it? They say Frale is dead."

"Frale never had anything to do with the murder. He was starving almost at the time. There was a man—an enemy of his—who that night wined him and dined him, and when he was fuddled led him into the trouble," and when Job was saying this his eyes were a far-away look as if his thoughts were wandering back in the past.

Jebbs eyed him keenly and blurted out: "Say, old man, what of all this job you was talkin' 'bout? What's all this here ancient history to do with it?"

Hendricks roused himself as if returning from the past to the present and nodded his head.

"Maybe I was wandering," then with great earnestness: "This is what I want to know—who wrote those words—and where can the writer be found," and so saying he laid on the table before his shabby guest the torn envelope he had found that day when he went to visit James Ellison.

Jebbs picked it up, and held the paper where the light of the candle would fall upon it, while his companion watched him with anxious eyes.

"Come, if you know, out with it," he said at length, impatiently. "I'm told that you have a great head for hand-writing—the keenest of all."

The other pored over the paper and then let it fall.

"I know who wrote that," he said slowly.

"He is living—you could find him—or show me where he could be found?" asked Hendricks, anxious and eager.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Jebbs, with a provoking grin.

"What do you mean—don't sit there like a ninny."

"Well," drawled the other, "came the fellow that wrote this is more of a shadow than a man."

(To be continued.)

## One on Ingersoll.

This is the story of how an old colored woman once got the better of the great infidel:

"When Robert G. Ingersoll came to Washington from the West, his head filled with legal lore and infidelity, or it would be better to call it agnosticism, he encountered in one of the corridors of the capitol an old negro woman vigorously scrubbing the floor when she heard any one coming, and when the footsteps died away busily reading her Bible.

"He slipped up on her very quietly one morning, and taking her by surprise, with her Bible, he said: 'Mary, do you believe all you read there?'

"I surely do," she replied; 'every word, Colonel Ingersoll.'

"Do you believe that God made man out of dust?"

"In course I does."

"Say, it happened to rain hard about that time, and the dust was gone and there was nothing but mud?"

"Den de good Lawd knowed enough to know dat it was time to make dem lawyers an' infidels, Colonel Ingersoll."

"Bob walked away crestfallen and quoting Tennyson's 'In Memoriam': 'Leave thou thy sister when she prays.'—Woman's Home Companion.

## A Strong Constitution.

Miffers—Talk about strong constitutions! My neighbor Whiffers beats any one I ever saw.

Differs—That man! You must be daff! He's been bedridden for ten years.

Miffers—Yes; but he's tried all the known remedies for his disease and he's alive yet.

## Rather Egotistical.

"I wouldn't marry the best man on earth," said the fair female, who had been up against a game of solitaire for some 40 odd summers.

"Hu!" growled the old bachelor, "I see no reason why you should have permitted that remark to escape. I didn't ask you to make my life a burden."—Chicago News.

## Damaged by the Storm.

Stranger—Did the late storm do much damage in this section?

Farmer Meadow—Did it? I should say it did. It rained so hard that my wife and six darters, who got caught in it, rushed into the Cross Roads store an' bought seven umbrellas an' had 'em charged to me.—New York Weekly.

## The Woman of It.

Postal Clerk—This letter is overweight, ma'am. You'll have to put another stamp on it.

Woman—I think the government is just too mean for anything. I know I've mailed hundreds of letters that weren't anywhere near full weight, so I think the least you can do is to let this one go through.—Judge.

## A Domestic Mystery.

Mr. Binks—Something queer about Biffkins. He has never once mentioned his wife.

Mrs. Binks—Perhaps he can't marry.

Mr. Binks—Oh, yes, he is. He wears out three pairs of shoes a month trying to save car fare.—New York Weekly.

## Strategy.

Subbubs—We're changed the name of our town to Bogdale.

Citizen—Why, it was only six months ago that you changed it to Swamp-burn.

Subbubs—I know, but we have to change it frequently, so as to get servant girls to come out, thinking it's a new place.—Philadelphia Press.

## It Never Came Back.

"Take my advice. Don't lend Borrhoughs any money."

"I never did."

"Why, you used to, I'm sure, because—"

"No, I used to think I was lending it to him, but I soon discovered it was purely a gift."—Philadelphia Press.

## Berry He Spoke.

"After all, man is only dust," remarked Reuben Rail, who owed a two months' grocery bill.

"Yes; but some men don't resemble dust," snapped the storekeeper.

"Why not?"

"Because dust will settle."

## Wanted to Know.

"And are you really connected with the signal service bureau?" asked the inquisitive girl.

"Yes, miss," replied the young man. "Then won't you please tell me which is your weather eye?"

## Ma's Opinion.

Little Willie—Say, ma, who invented the envelope?

Ma—I really don't know, my son, but I believe the first one was discovered in a married man's pocket addressed to his wife's mother.—Chicago News.

## Mortification.

Bloeker—Has your wife made any plans for the summer yet?

Baxter—No, it's too early. Why, she hasn't even tried to find out where I don't want her to go yet!—Puck.

## Science and Invention

With his electro-magnetic gun, Professor Birkeland, who has been experimenting at Christiansia, expects to hurl one thousand-pound projectiles much farther than they can be thrown by explosives.

All the blood in the human body passes through the heart in about three minutes. The heart beats seventy times a minute, 4,200 times an hour, 100,800 times a day, throwing out 2½ ounces of blood a second, 656 pounds an hour, 7½ tons a day. It is only when supplied with pure, rich blood that the heart, an organ six inches long by four inches wide, can accomplish this enormous amount of work and rebuild its own wasted tissues.

In an account of the recent survey, under British government auspices, of the Maldiv and Laccadive Islands in the Indian Ocean, the habits of some of the hermit-crabs that inhabit them are described. These animals, it is said, were once inhabitants of the sea, but have forsaken the sea and taken to living on the land. They, however, retain the habit of protecting the abdomen with some hard shield or covering, and one of the pictures illustrating this peculiarity, in the published report of the explorations of the islands, shows a crab which has taken possession of a broken coconut shell, and is traveling about with the vulnerable part of its body safely ensconced therein.

Recent experience shows that science should go hand in hand with colonization in the development of new countries, and often it should be the pioneer. Sir Harry Johnston avers that the British government might have saved as much as \$2,500,000 in the construction of the Uganda Railway if it had previously expended \$100,000 in enabling men of science to investigate the geology, climatology, botany and other scientific aspects of the region. Germany and France have shown an appreciation of the great utility of such investigations in the settlement and exploitation of their colonial possessions. Every day the practical value of branches of science commonly regarded as almost purely intellectual in their claims to attention is being demonstrated.

Evidences of the gradual revival of solar activity, as manifested by the presence of dark spots on the face of the sun, are becoming more numerous and conclusive. It is considered certain that the sun has now passed the minimum of the spot period, and during the present year many spots may be seen. The increase of a sun-spot period is more rapid than its subsequent decline. The minimum just passed has been somewhat long-drawn-out, and the return of the spots has been awaited for a year. In March the first spots bearing all the traits of those that belong to a new period were seen in the sun's northern hemisphere, in latitude 25 degrees. It is characteristic of a new period that its first spots appear far north or south of the equator, while at the end of a period they are near the equator.

## WHERE HE WAS DECIDED.

The Western Bully Decided He Was Going to Get Off.

The following story of how a bully was subdued on a railroad train by a courageous conductor is told in the Baltimore Sun by D. E. Monroe of the Baltimore bar. Mr. Monroe was coming eastward over the Atchafalpa Railroad one night in the fall of 1877. The train stopped at Dodge City, which was then the most important point for the shipment of cattle in southwest Kansas. Some of the worst characters on the frontier made their headquarters there. A number of passengers of the true frontier type boarded the train.

Among them was a fellow who particularly attracted my attention because of his burly form and coarse, and I could not but think, cowardly features. He wore a suit of buckskin profusely adorned with a fringe of the same material. "Bully" was written in his unattractive face and was shown in his every movement.

The conductor of the train, a very courteous and efficient man, rather small of stature, named Bender, some time after leaving Dodge City, came through the car, collecting fares. Bender had some nasal trouble, which made it appear when he spoke that he was talking through his nose. He frowned out his words very slowly, and altogether his utterances were rather frolic. He approached the Dodge City bully and asked for his ticket.

"Got no ticket," he said surlily.

"Where are you going?" drawled Bender.

"Goin' where I please, and it's none of your business where I'm goin'," replied the bully.

"You've got to pay your fare or get off this train; and I want to know how far you're going," again demanded Bender.

"I tell you I'm not tellin' you or any one else where I'm goin'," replied the bully, at the same time placing his right hand on one of the two revolvers of large caliber conspicuously displayed in his belt.

The bully during the colloquy had emphasized his words with the coarsest profanity. The other passengers in the car became a little excited, and were evidently curious to see what the end would be.

When the bully thus threateningly gave his ultimatum Bender eyed him coolly for a moment in silence, then passed on, collecting his fares. In perhaps half an hour Bender came into the car from the direction of the express car with a double-barreled shotgun cocked, and before the bully had time to offer any show of defense Bender had him covered, the muzzle of the gun being within two feet of the bully's face.

"Now where are you going?" said Bender, coolly drawing out the question through the nose.

"I'm goin' to get off," replied the thoroughly cowed bully.

A brakeman pulled the bell cord and the train came to a halt. Bender, keeping his man covered with the cocked gun, followed him until he saw him jump from the steps of the car into the darkness, at least twenty miles from the nearest station. Then the train moved on and the passengers settled into a normal quiet.

## HORRORS OF THE BLACK CELL.

Terrible Method of Punishment in the French Prisons.

It was in Le Nou that Mr. Griffith saw the terrible cachot noir or black cell—"that engine of mental murder which the sentimentalism of communards has substituted for the infinitely more merciful lash." The cachots noirs were never opened except at stated intervals—once every morning for inspection and once every thirty days for exercise and a medical examination of the prisoner. Mr. Griffith stopped at the doors of two cases of "ten years' solitary confinement in the dark," and asked for the doors to be opened. The commandant demurred for a moment. Mr. Griffith's credentials were explicit and the doors were opened.

"Out of the corner in one came something in human shape, crouching forward, rubbing his eyes and blinking at the unaccustomed light. It had been three and a half years in that horrible hole, about 3 feet long by 1½ broad. I gave him a feast of sunshine and outer air by taking his place for a few minutes.

"After the first two or three minutes lengthened out into hours. I had absolutely no sense of sight. I was as blind as though I had been born without eyes. The blackness seemed to come down on me like some solid thing and drive my straining eyes back into my head, and the silence was like the silence of upper space.

"When the double doors opened again the rays of light seemed to strike my eyes like daggers. The criminal whose place I had taken had a record of infamy which no printable words could describe, and yet I confess that I lifted him as he went back into that living death of darkness and silence."

It is scarcely three years since Mr. Griffith witnessed this atrocity. It is a relief to know, as he informs us in a note, says the Scotsman, that since then—not, however, by legislation but on the authority of the Minister of Colonies—this terrible punishment has been made less severe.

## DIED IN PRISON.

Inventor of French Telegraphic System Met Sad Fate.

Only the other day there died on Devil's Island, the French convict settlement off Cayenne, the man who invented and patented the telegraphic system now universally adopted in France, and known as the multiple transmission system. Victor Nimalut, 20 years ago, was an electrical employee of the French telegraphic service. In 1871 he discovered and legally protected a system of multiple transmission, on which he had been hustled for years. Almost coincidentally a M. Baudot (not an official) invented a somewhat similar apparatus. This M. Baudot, being a personal friend of M. Raynaud, the director of the Telegraphic Department, found favor with that gentleman, and the Baudot system was finally accepted and universally adopted as the better of the two. Victor Nimalut brought actions against M. Baudot and M. Raynaud, and, after losing lawsuit after lawsuit, died at last and mortally wounded M. Raynaud. The unhappy inventor was tried, sentenced to imprisonment for life, and in due course was sent out to Cayenne. Twenty years having elapsed, he was recently pardoned by President Loubet. A subscription made by his friends in France left by the same boat which took out his pardon. But it arrived too late for Victor Nimalut, who had been ill for some time, died the day before port was made. The irony of it all is that poor Nimalut's system has been in use in France for many years now; for, after he was sentenced, it was found to be preferable to the one adopted and approved by Raynaud, the then director of the Telegraphic Department.

United States Senators are supplied with bottled mineral waters at government expense. Nearly every committee-room has something like a bar attachment. It is usually in one corner, behind a screen and next to the wash-bowl. The bottles of fizz water are supplied by colored messengers, who bring them in buckets of ice, like champagne. The excuse for the expense is the poor quality of the Potomac water.

Lamp lighter on a Bicycle.

A Parisian lamp lighter makes his rounds on a bicycle, with a long torch carried over his right shoulder. He guides the wheel with the left hand, and is so expert that he lights the lamps without dismounting.

Shakespeare.

More than 250 references to Shakespeare by his contemporaries have now been collected.

A fat woman who has trouble in getting ready-made dresses to fit her has been advised to try a circus tent.

## HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT

### Savory Jelly.

To make the savory jelly use two quarts of good meat stock, a quarter of a pint of sherry, one-eighth of a pint of tarragon vinegar, four ounces of sweet gelatine, and three whipped whites of eggs. Put all the ingredients into a saucepan, and whisk them together until they boil, then leave them to boil gently for five minutes. Strain the jelly through a coarse tea-cloth, stretched fairly tight into a basin, strain again into another basin, and so on until the jelly is perfectly clear, using a clean basin each time. It is now ready for use. This of course makes rather a large quantity, but by halving the amount of the ingredients a smaller quantity can be made.

### To Clean Carpets.

If carpets be very dirty they will look better and brighter for being washed with soap. Beat the carpet to free it of dust, then nail it down on the floor and wash it with a lather made with yellow soap dissolved in hot water, with the addition of a little soda. Rub the mixture into the carpet with a house dannel, and then rinse with clean water and rub with a dry cloth. Only attack a little piece of the carpet at a time and finish before going on to another part. If, after it is dry, the colors do not look bright, apply to the carpet a weak solution of alum in water.

### Facts About Eggs.

Eggs boiled twenty minutes are more easily digested than if boiled ten. They are dry and mealy and are readily acted upon by the gastric juice. The yolk of an egg well beaten is a very good substitute for cream in coffee. An egg will season three cups. Heartburn and tickling in the throat are relieved by a gargle of the white of an egg beaten to a froth with a tumblerful of warm, sweetened water. Beat an egg fifteen minutes with a pint of milk and a pint of water, sweeten with granulated sugar, bring to boiling point, and when cold use as a drink. It is excellent for a cold.

### Aprons for Housemaids.

In well-regulated houses the housemaids are supplied with large gingham working aprons that replace or cover the white apron while the work of dusting or cleaning is going on. These aprons are of pink and blue plain gingham, made with a square bib and a deep pocket. The skirt is long and full, protecting the dress thoroughly. The mistress adds to the outfit a dust cap to match. By keeping the caps and aprons in sets of different colors and patterns and insisting that they shall be so worn it is easy to see that they are laundered sufficiently often.

Roly-Poly Padding of Tinned Fruit.

Make a light suet or butter crust for boiling, roll it out the size required, and have the contents of a tin of peaches or apricots or plums chopped rather small, without the syrup, and dusted with caster sugar and flour. Spread it on the crust, roll up tightly, and then roll and tie in a cloth and steam or boil three hours. The syrup should be boiled and thickened with a little arrowroot or cornflour, and served with the pudding as sauce.

### Sweetbread Croquettes.

Prepare two sweetbreads, parboil them and cut in small pieces, cut one can mushrooms into small pieces also. Put into a saucepan one tablespoonful each of flour and butter, and when made smooth add one-half a cup of cream; heat and add the sweetbreads and mushrooms. When very hot, take from the fire and add two well beaten yolks of eggs. When cool, form into croquettes and dip in egg and crumbs and fry in hot fat.

### Gingerbread.

One teaspoonful of ground ginger, the same of baking powder, added to one pound of flour; warm together one pound of golden syrup and a quarter of a pound of clarified dripping or butter, and mix this well into the flour, add one egg beaten up with a tablespoonful of new milk. Have ready some shallow baking tins, buttered and warm, pour the mixture at once into them, and bake one hour in a moderate oven.

### Ham with Cream Sauce.

Heat a frying pan very hot, and into it put slices of raw ham. Do not use any fat to fry it. When crisp take it out and lay it on a hot platter. Add one cupful of milk to the fat in the pan; when it boils thicken it with one tablespoonful of flour; season with salt and pepper. Pour the sauce over the ham and serve.

### How to Cut Meat.

In cutting breakfast bacon, lay the rind side down on the meat board, cut round to the rind as many slices as are needed, then cut it off in a block. Turn edgewise and cut off one end, then the other end, the inside, and last the rind, and you will have trimmed all the slices nearly as quickly as you could have trimmed one.

### Stewed Lobster.

Cut the boiled lobster fine; put it in a stewpan with a little milk or cream. Boil up once; add one