

# 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 XVII

James Ellison stood before an open safe built in the wall of the study in his city house. He was examining its contents, and occasionally comparing what he found with a list written down in a little book he held in one hand. Now and then he sighed, while a worried look came over his face. Suddenly at the sound of a door being opened he closed the safe hurriedly and turned the knob.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" with a weary air, as his brother entered the room, looking light-hearted and debonair. He went back to his seat by the desk, and sat there with his head resting on one hand in an attitude of deep reflection.

"Yes, it's only me," replied the brother. "Why, you started, Jimmy, when I came in, as if you had been a burglar surprised in the act of rifling that safe."

"You have an unpleasant way of plunging in on people when you are not expected—"

"Or wanted," continued the other, with a malicious smile, as he lit himself down into a chair and lit a cigarette.

"I thought I had locked the door; I was busy with accounts."

"Preparing to give an account of your stewardship, I suppose," and Frank, watching his brother's face, saw a faint flush gather at the words.

"That is my own concern," he said, testily. "I hope you did not come here to be quarrelsome. You know we never could get along well together."

"That was not my fault, for I am naturally of a mild disposition," replied the other, with mock earnestness. "You happened to marry a fortune, and then became so airy that it was no longer possible for us to pull together in harness. Now, as I said before, I am glad to see that you are preparing to give an account of your stewardship." James looked at his brother in surprise.

"I don't know what you are driving at, nor do I see what possible business it is of yours."

"A great deal my business. Your daughter, when she marries, will naturally want the bulk of the fortune. Well, as I intend to marry her, I am interested that my wife should receive her fortune intact."

James Ellison laughed, but there was little heartiness in it.

"You still cling to that absurd idea. I thought the other day you were merely joking."

"I never joke on such a serious subject. Apart from the fortune, I find the young woman charming, and I am not too old to appreciate the charms, mental and physical, of so attractive a personage. I know you will find it hard to surrender the fortune, or the biggest part of it, to me, but you will have it in the family, and that should be a satisfaction," with a grin.

"Oh, a great satisfaction," replied James, grimly, as he looked at his brother keenly, to make sure that he was really in earnest. "And Grace, does she consider your attentions in any light but that of ridicule?"

"Oh, I have not been precipitate. I mean to win her by kindness. Since that—or—er—unfortunate tragedy she is in a sympathetic mood, and I can do much to comfort and console her." Frank Ellison recoiled off this speech with apparent satisfaction, as if he was quite sure of his ground.

"And the school teacher, what of him?"

"I don't think I need fear him any—he is as good as done for."

"You evidently are not aware of what has taken place," said James Ellison, with a pleasure that he could not disguise.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the police have made an arrest. It is in this morning's paper." Frank Ellison allowed the cigarette to fall from his fingers, and the air of smiling complacency disappeared from his face.

"The police have found an ear-ring, one of those poor wife was robbed of on the night of the murder, in a pawnbroker's shop in this city. They have found the man who pawned it, and, though he denies that he had anything to do with the crime, they have still hopes of getting him to confess. Why, you seem very much disturbed over the news, as if Frank swung himself out of the chair where he was seated, and walked back and forth with a nervous air, as if unable to keep still in one place.

"And what might this fellow call himself," he asked, as he paused by his brother's chair.

"He rejoices in the name of 'Reddy,' as the police know him. What his real name is no one knows."

Frank Ellison looked relieved, and went back quietly to his seat.

"Well, perhaps they will find that the poor fellow's story is true. That need not interfere with my plans."

"But she will never forget Barnett. You don't know what a will that little woman possesses," said James. "To tell the truth, I would rather see her his wife than yours."

"It was well that he did not notice the expression of anger that came over his brother's face as he said this, for it was not pleasant, but Frank could control his features, and the cloud was but a passing one."

"I thank you for your good opinion. Perhaps if I had been favored by fortune in capturing an heiress I might have lived as virtuous a life as you," with a smothered intonation in his voice.

"Now, that you are Frank enough in saying that you prefer the school teacher to me, I will give you a piece of interesting news."

James regarded the other with a certain suspicion, wondering if it was well that he should anger him.

marriage, because otherwise I should be tempted to make the paper public, and then every penny you have in the world will go to your wife's relatives."

James Ellison was silent, wishing that he had not provoked his brother. But, after all, this might be mere bravado.

"When you give beyond doubt that the paper is in your possession," he said, cautiously, "we may be able to come to an arrangement."

"Well, I expect in a few days to show you that I am not building a house of cards." And then, going over to his brother, he laid his hand on his arm. "In the meantime, Jimmy, I am sure that you will not resort to any double dealing that would prejudice my case."

For a second their eyes met, but it was James Ellison who first looked away.

"I will do nothing for a week," he said. "Then I will act as I wish."

"A week he it," replied Frank. "And where is Grace now?"

"I think you will find her in the garden. Now, don't make yourself absurd. You know the poor child has had enough trouble of late."

"Don't fear that I shall do anything to make her unhappy. I can be very agreeable when I wish." And he went out and left his brother alone.

"If he really could get hold of the paper he might have the upper hand of me," said James Ellison to himself. "Unless, and he cast an anxious look in the direction of the safe, unless the fortune could be placed out of his reach. Without that he would never care to marry. It is the money he wants, and nothing more. Bah!" with an angry gesture.

"Rather than throw her into the arms of such a rascal, I— But, pshaw! What am I talking about? She loves the other, and this cunning rogue could never win her in a century." And, comforted by this thought, he went to work again at his accounts.

Frank Ellison was smiling to himself as he made his way down the stairs, as if something amused him greatly.

"Birds in their little nests agree," he quoted, "but not birds of prey!" How James would like to show me the door, if he was not afraid of what I might do. It is pleasant to think that I shall soon have a weapon in hand that will keep him, if rightly used, in subjection. It is mighty unfortunate that man should have been captured. I hope he will be able to keep silent. It complicates matters and makes my work doubly hard."

He entered the garden, which, though small, contained some fine old trees, and under the shadow of one of these a young girl was seated. She had a book in her lap, but did not appear to be reading. A somber and pathetic figure in her dull black dress.

"Now, then, please look pleasant," he said to himself, as at the sound of his steps on the gravel, she arose and came toward him.

"I can see that you have heard the good news," she said. "You show it in your face."

"I must have a very speaking face, then, my dear," as he took her hand and pressed it warmly. "What is this good news that you refer to?"

"Why, surely, papa must have told you? Then, as he did not seem to understand, why they have found the real criminal, and now it will be impossible for them to hold poor Dick any longer."

"The deuce! She can think of nothing but that fellow," murmured Ellison, under his breath, but he took care that she should not see that the subject was unpleasant to him.

"Your father certainly did mention that a suspect had been captured by the police, but it seems the fellow strenuously denies his guilt, and, for all we know, may be able to prove an alibi. So your friend, the school teacher, is far from being a free man as yet."

"Oh, dear, and I thought that the worst was over," he eyes growing dim.

"Well, we can only hope for the best," he said, soothingly, for he saw that to keep in her good graces it would not do to show any antagonism toward Barnett.

"I am afraid, though, that in their eagerness the police have seized upon a poor man who has only his previous bad record against him. If young Barnett is innocent, he will get free. In the meantime I would not brood so much on the subject. You ought to get away from yourself and your thoughts more. Come, what do you say to a drive this afternoon. I'm sure it would do you good."

"Oh, as if I could enjoy anything when I know that poor Dick is deprived of every comfort, it would only serve to remind me of his miserable position."

Frank bit his lip, for a good round oath was on his tongue.

"But, my dear," gently, "you owe it to your father—to me—not to give way in this manner. You are getting more pale and ghostly day by day, and will end by collapsing completely. You must make an effort—fight against living such a moody life, take some interest in things, or you will go mad through melancholy."

"I can't take interest in anything but Dick's fate," she replied, tearfully. "If you want to see me any different, why, you must set him free; that is the only thing that will make me wish to change my ways of living."

"What can I do to kill this infatuation?" Frank was thinking. "The child has become a perfect monomaniac on the subject." Just as this was passing through his mind she suddenly seized his arm and pointed toward the hedge that ran around the garden.

"Look there. Do you see it?"

"What?" staring at the place pointed out.

"A face! The face of that strange little man who seemed to have taken such an interest in Dick's case. It seems that I saw his face peering in at us through the hedge."

Ellison wanted to hear no more, but

ran over to the gate set in the hedge, and dashed out of the grounds, starting up and down the road. There was no one in sight but a butcher boy pushing a handcart, and a man with a load of books passing. So to satisfy himself, he went round the garden, examining every corner, and did not find his man. "It must have been your fancy, my dear," he said, when he returned to her side. "You see, you brood so much on this matter that you are getting to have hallucinations." "No, no," shaking her head decidedly; "I saw the man there, as plain as I see you."

"So we are hunting each other," Frank said to himself as they returned to the house. "Well, he will soon be where he can worry us no more," for he believed that it really was Job whose face she had seen watching them through the hedge, and he marvelled at the audacity of such a persistent enemy, and the hour seemed near at hand.

(To be continued.)

## WEBSTER'S SPELLER.

Wisconsin Director Thought It the Best Instruction Book on Earth.

At a meeting of the Wisconsin State Teachers' Association a Mr. Porter told stories of his personal experience in selling school books. He had been in the business for twenty-five years, and some of the incidents which he described were not only amusing but pathetic. The Milwaukee Free Press gives the following:

"Twenty-five years ago, when I first started in the book business, I went into Dane County and hunted up the president of the school board, an old farmer who had come here from Vermont."

"I drove down the road toward his place, and overtook him driving a load of hay from the fields. He was away up on top of the load, and I hailed him in a loud voice, saying I wanted to have a little talk with him.

"Well," said he, "talk right ahead. You're an agent of some kind. 'What is it?'"

"I told him I was selling school books, and wanted him to look at my line.

"None," said he, "you can't sell me any of those yere new-fangled school books. I wouldn't give a pound of shucks for all the new-fangled rigamajigs in the world compared to one of those old Webster spelling books."

"Well," said I, "the old Webster spelling book is just exactly the book I'm selling."

"What?" said he, "That there old book with the pictures in it? The one with the picture of the boy up the apple tree, and the old man throwing stones at the cow, and the picture of the squirrels in the tree?"

"That's the one," I said.

"Well, the old farmer couldn't get down from his load of hay quick enough to see that old spelling book. He had come from Vermont thirty-five or forty years before, and hadn't seen one since he left. I opened my satchel and let him look at the book, and as he glanced over the old, familiar pages the tears came into his eyes."

"He insisted on my coming up to the house so that he could show the old blue-backed book to his wife; and as I wanted dinner I consented, arranging to buy dinner from him, as was the custom of all agents traveling through the country.

"At the house his wife was nearly as excited as he. She dropped her work of getting dinner, and together they looked through every page of the book, spelling over a few of the old familiar 'hard ones' and laughing as heartily as in the days gone by.

"Before I left the house that evening the old gentleman had got the school board together and bought a whole line of my books, including enough of those old blue-backed Webster's spelling books to last five years or more. To this day you'll find those books in Dane County."

Two Ways of Looking at It.

A steam shovel had attracted a large number of spectators, including two Irishmen, who, judging by their appearance, were both temporarily out of employment. A New York daily paper gives their opinion of machinery:

"As the big shovel at one lick scooped up half a ton of dirt and dumped it on a cart, one of the Irishmen remarked:

"What a shame to think of them digging up dirt in that way?"

"What do you mean?" asked his companion.

"Well," said the other, "that machine is taking the bread out of the mouths of hundreds of laborers who could do the work with their picks and shovels."

"Right you are, Barney," said the other fellow.

Just then a man who had been looking on and who had overheard the conversation remarked:

"See here, you fellows, if that digging would give work to a hundred men with shovels and picks, why not get a thousand men and give them teaspoons to do the job?"

The Irishmen, with the quick wit of their race, saw the force of the remark and the humor of the situation. They joined heartily in the laugh that followed, and one of them added:

"You're dead right, mate! The machine's the thing, after all."

A Loss.

The plutocrat—I am \$100,000 richer than I was yesterday.

His Wife—You don't seem happy over it.

"No, I'm two days older."

Ancestral.

Father—Tell me why you want to get married?

Daughter—I expect it's one of the traits I inherited from my mother.—New York Sun.

# DOINGS OF WOMEN

## GIRLS, HELP YOUR MOTHERS.

EVERY girl, if she be not thoroughly selfish, is anxious to lift some of the burden of household management from her mother's shoulders on to her own; but, unfortunately, many girls wait to be asked to do things instead of being constantly on the lookout for little duties which they are capable of doing.

If you would be of any real use in the home you must be quick to notice what is wanted—the room that needs dusting, the flowers which require rearranging, the curtain which has lost a ring and is therefore drooping. And then you must not only be willing to do what is needed, but willing to do it pleasantly, without making people feel that you are being martyred.

It is almost useless to take up any household duties unless you do them regularly. If you do a thing one day and not the next, you can never be depended on, and if some one else has to be constantly reminding you of and supervising your work, it probably gives that person more trouble than doing it herself would cause.

Have a definite day and a definite time for all you do—the flower vases will need attention every other day. There should be one day kept for mending and putting away the household linen. Begin, too, directly after breakfast, and keep on steadily till your work is done.

If you begin by sitting down "just for a minute" with a book, or think you will "just arrange the trimming" on your new hat, the morning will be half gone before you know where you are.

A girl who has brothers may spare her mother all those tiresome little jobs which boys are always requesting to have done for them, if she will only do them kindly.

But a boy will not come and ask his sister to repair frayed-out buttonholes if she snaps and says he is "always bothering."

It is not easy work, but it is quite possible for the daughter at home to make up a good deal of its sunshine, and it is only when she has learned this that she is fit to go away and be the sunshine of a home for her own.

Thoughtless Marriages.

It is a pity not only that so many young women are allowed by their elders to be exposed to the danger of unsuitable attachments, but that so many of them also are not trained to a rational and intensely serious understanding of the meaning of the marriage obligation.

There was a fine example, the other day, in Washington, of courageous good sense on the part of a promised bride, through the exercise of the quality was rather belated. Miss Theodora H. Van Wyck, daughter of a former Nebraska, now deceased, and having, it is said, a large income in her own right, went with a young man before a clergyman to be married, but in the midst of the ceremony responded to the usual question on which depended her fate with an emphatic "No."

The astonished clergyman asked the reason of the sudden change of mind. "Because," she answered, "this is too serious; I have got to think it over."

The eleventh hour is not the best at which to think it over; but better than that later. If every girl and every young man, for that matter, thought it well over before seeking the minister or the lawyer representative to tie the knot, there would be less frequent efforts to untie it, with their attendant heart-burnings and recrimination and exposure of petty weaknesses, which so often inspire a momentary disgust with human nature.—Philadelphia Times.

Motherhood.

So little a soul, scarce a cry  
Or a name!  
Hedge it in lest it fly  
To the heaven whence it came.  
For the soul knows its wing  
And earth's night  
So bewild'ring  
May fright the small thing!

So little a soul, scarce a breath,  
Lost its way, drifted far,  
Like a rose petal whirled  
To the world  
From a star.

On the crest of a wave balancing  
Between life and death, night and dawn,  
(Heaven lingers so near)  
Lest it tremble with fear,  
Lest it open its wings  
And be gone!

—Nellie H. Wordworth in Boston Journal.

Managing a Husband.

There is a positive exhilaration to be derived from bringing all one's efforts to bear upon a husband whose business worries have pursued him from the office. There is a genuine delight to fight with the unknown anxieties which his love will not permit him to unburden at home. It brings out all the tact and patience and diplomacy, all the charms and graces of a woman's character, to transform a cross, tired, worn-out husband into a new man—just by a good dinner and a little tact.

But to manage a husband when there are so many kinds of husbands requires, more than any other one thing, a thorough study of your subject. To "meet your husband with a smile," which is the old-fashioned rule for all

ills, is enough to make a nervous, irritable man frantic. Look him over before you even smile. You ought to know how to treat him. Don't sting or hint if he has a headache or begin to tell him the news before you have fed him. If there is one rule to lay down— which there is not—or if I were giving automatic advice—which I am not—I should say that most men come home like hungry animals and require first of all to be fed.—Lillian Bell, in Harper's Bazar.



The dress of two lines, a plaided and a plain one, is a novelty of the season. A blue plaid or a sprigged flower pattern with plain cream flounces, a collar and turned up cuffs showing soft lawn eyes beneath, or a coral scheme with pale pink embellishments are attractive models. With these colored linens the embroidery on the white or creamy collars is in a contrasting shade of the color of the gown, or of the same tone as the collar. A white linen dress, with collar, cuffs and belt of cream color, embroidered in the same creamy tint, is exceedingly cool and pretty in appearance.

While the metre cloaks are said to be the most modish of the great family of black silk wraps, it is undeniable that they also show dust the most. This is especially true of that great favorite, the heavy more velour, which seems to have handsome ridges for no other purpose than the making of peaceful reposing places for dust and microbes generally. It is, however, not so prone to wrinkles as is the daintier taffeta, which is made rather mussy by too much sitting on. These coats range from the tiny plaited blouses to the long affairs with circular flounces.

Tremendously ultra are the plaited boleros of black cloth or silk when worn with skirts of black and white checks. These skirts are mostly in tiny checks, though some broken plaids are seen, and the skirt, the plaits stitched down to the knees, is a favored model. In some instances the blouse is of the checked silk, but more often it is of cream lace, which shows only as a vest and big undersleeves once the jacket is on. The jacket, by the way, has plaited sleeves in flowing effect.

A Table Decoration.

Hand-painted ribbons make a pretty table decoration for a change. A wide white satin ribbon is placed all along the table at either side, bearing hand-painted designs at intervals. Hunting scenes make the most effective designs, with all the scenes placed in proper order from start to finish. But I have also seen designs from the seasons very effectively arranged in this way, so that it was spring at one end of the table and winter at the other.

Pongee Corsets.

The pongee corsets rival the white net styles in favor for summer wear. The French corset of pongee is light, cool, and graceful in outline. Silk corset-linings should always be used, even on cotton or jean corsets. A cotton or linen facing invariably shows beneath a closely-fitting summer waist, and round elastic laciings are worst of all, as they leave a distinct mark on the back of the bodice.

Health and Beauty Hints.

Don't moisten your food with the idea of saving your teeth. It spoils the teeth and you will soon lose them.

Don't keep the sun out of your living and sleeping rooms. Sunlight is absolutely necessary for a right condition of the atmosphere that we breathe and for our bodily well being.

There are some skins to which locally applied fat of any kind acts as an irritant. I am not referring to cases of oily seborrhoea. Quite often, when the skin is not greasy, fat gives rise to a crop of red, itching spots.

Those who have their hands roughened will find them greatly improved by using an oatmeal ball, made by washing half a pound of lard thoroughly in a basin and mixing it with fine oatmeal, until no grainness is felt. If used regularly it is said to be very successful in restoring the hands to a soft condition.

Tender feet are often made so by the use of much-darned stockings. Wear light woolen stockings and let them be of the cheap kind, that you will not mind discarding directly they become worn. To harden the skin it is a good plan to rub the soles of the feet with methylated spirits every day or to wash them over with salt water.

## Another Good Way.

Chimmy—Wot's de best way to teach a girl to swim?  
Johnny—Well, yer want to take her gently by de hand, lead her gently down to de water, put yer arm gently round her waist and—  
Chimmy—Oh, cut it out. It's me sister!  
Johnny—Oh! Push her off de dock!—Puck.

End.  
"I think I have heard," said the tenor-foot, "that the man you called Ratsnake Sam came to an unfortunate end—hanged for horse-stealing, or something of that kind."

"Wuss than that, pard," replied the cowboy, shaking his head with ineffable sadness. "He was killed by beln' throwed frin a hoss."—Chicago Trib-une.

Saw Him First.  
Mrs. Dimpleton—I am to see the doctor to-day, and I know he will insist upon my going abroad.

The Hon. John—No, he won't. I met him yesterday and told him if he sent you abroad I couldn't pay his bill.

Faizung.  
"Hey, where's that valise I gave you or quarter fer erry for me?"  
"It's all right, mister. Me little brother's comin' wild it just as fast as he can."

How Cruel of Him.  
Mrs. Mann—William, why do you run off to the club every evening right after dinner?

Mr. Mann—I want to make up for all the evenings I lost while I was courting—Chelsea Gazette.

Neighboring Advice.  
Mrs. Nezdore—My daughter's getting to be quite an enthusiastic piano player.

Mrs. Pepprey—Yes; why don't you set her to join a union?

Mrs. Nezdore—Join a union?  
Mrs. Pepprey—Yes; she wouldn't work more than eight hours a day at it then.—Philadelphia Press.

Answers the Door.  
Mrs. Throp (excitedly)—Bridget, here's a policeman ringing at the front-door bell.

Bridget (coolly)—Well, ma'am, yez can tell him 'G' in not in.

Polite.  
Mrs. Jones—John, there are burglars down stairs!

Mr. Jones (sleepily)—You go down, dear. They wouldn't dare strike a woman.

The Only Way.



Wislon—Yes, sir; this summer I expect to own my own home.

Kidder—How long do you think your wife will be away?

She Wasn't There.  
Woman (to dry goods clerk who has been showing blankets for half an hour)—I thank you for your trouble, but I really didn't intend to buy any thing. I'm looking for a friend.

Clerk—Well, if you think she's in these blankets, I'll go through them again.

No Chance to Talk.  
Wigg—No, I can't say that Talkot is a friend of mine. I merely have a speaking acquaintance with him.

Wagg—Most people only have a listening acquaintance.—Philadelphia Record.

Still on Earth.  
"You are an angel," asserted the love-stricken youth. "That's no reason why you should keep her up to unearthly hours," remarked the old man from the head of the stairs.—Philadelphia Record.

Not Superstitious.  
Tess—Don't you really believe in dreams?

Jesse—No, indeed. It's superstitious to believe in dreams, and besides it's a bad sign when you believe in them, for it usually brings you bad luck.—Philadelphia Press.

Did She Mean Anything Unkind?  
Mother (exhibiting first born)—Don't you see a resemblance? Look at our faces side by side.

Visitor—Nothing could be plainer.—Punch.

A Timely Affair.  
"You are charged with loitering," said the repairer to the tired watch.

"What have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing," replied the watch. "You should judge me by my works."

"Well, I will look into your case," said the repairer, "and if I find you guilty—"

"What will you do?" queried the watch.

"Set you to work doing time, probably," replied the repairer, who had a license to pose as a judge.

Revenge.  
The Bride—There's only one thing needed to complete our happiness.

The Groom—What is that, dearest?</