

STAIRS OF SAND

A TALE OF A MYSTERY

BY ERNEST DE LANCEY PIERSON

AUTHOR OF

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

Copyright, 1901,
BY STREET & SMITH

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

"Why shouldn't I agree?" was the thought that was running through Ellison's mind. "I can have this fellow arrested before he has a chance to leave the house—and he looks dangerous." So he picked up the pen and wrote as directed.

Job looked the slip over, suggested some changes, and then, as if satisfied, placed it away in his coat pocket. "I hope it suits you," said Ellison, mockingly.

"Quite so, quite so." And then, as he rose to his feet, "And now I have a few parting words to James Ellison."

"I am listening."

"You were interested in keeping the young man in prison."

"I assure you that you are entirely wrong," with an air of deep indignation.

"Oh, there were few things that you have done of late that I was not acquainted with," pursued the other, slowly and calmly. "You refused to help him out of his trouble, and but for this confession, which I own I helped to secure, he might be languishing in prison yet."

"At first you showed a disposition to help him, but other interests intervened."

"I don't know where you got such absurd ideas as these," twisting uneasily on his feet.

"Never mind where I got them; it is enough that they are true."

"Have your own way," said Ellison, shrugging his shoulders; "and now I hope you will let me go. I can have a chance to tend to some more important business."

He was moving toward the door, when Job stepped forward and barred his way.

"One moment, please."

"What is it now?" angrily.

"Where is the young lady—Grace?"

"How dare you address her by that name, fellow?" and, if a look could kill, the little man would have been annihilated then and there.

"Perhaps I have more right to address her by her first name than you," muttered Job, while a look of unutterable sadness came over his worn old face.

There was something in the expression of his companion that caused Ellison to eye him curiously. There was some strange mystery about the man before him that often set him thinking.

"I dare say you will find the young lady in the garden," he said, at length. "What can you possibly have to say to her?"

"Much more than I dare say," and the shadow again passed over the rough features. "Be sure that it will not be a word about her birth. I shall not speak of that."

"You are a queer man—a queer man," muttered Ellison, and then he hurriedly left the room, shaking his head as over a problem he was hopeless of solving.

Job watched him go with a faint smile. "How he would have liked to show his claws, and yet he was afraid. A coward at heart, he hesitated how to act, even when it was only a broken-down ex-convict against him."

He approached the window and looked down into the sunny garden. It was the sight of a young girl, seated under a tree, that suddenly changed the expression of his face completely. He seemed to be more deeply moved than at any time since he had been fencing with James Ellison for an antagonist. He returned to the center of the room in deep thought, and then—

"You, I must see her. It will be such great good news that her lover is free, and that I have smoothed the way to their happiness. It will comfort the poor child. God bless her!" And, leaving the room, he went down the stairs into the garden, with a smile of anticipation on his face.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Job Hendricks entered the garden with a light step. Seeing the gleam of a white skirt in the distance, he made his way in that direction. At the same time he was timid about approaching the object of his quest.

Grace Ellison came running toward him, but, when she recognized a stranger, she drew back, and then, when she recalled that she had seen him before, stood for a moment undecided in the path.

Job had taken his hat off, and as he approached in a humble way, he spoke in a stammering voice, while his face colored like a bashful school girl's.

"Miss, I have good news for you."

"What do you mean?"

"That to-day—to-morrow, at the most—he will be free."

She stepped forward and took his rough hands in hers.

"Are you sure—are you sure?" drawing back again, as if doubting such wonderful news could be true.

"No doubt about it, miss, since the real criminal has confessed."

She looked at him for a moment in silence, and then held out her hands to him with a gesture that was at once graceful and childlike.

"I believe you have something to do with this."

"Not all I should have liked," and then Job began strange performances with his hands, while for a moment he turned away his head.

"I am certain that you have been instrumental in bringing this about," and he seemed to tremble as her eyes, filled with a soft and kindly look, met his.

"I did what I could," clearing his throat with an effort, and then, after a moment's silence: "I shouldn't wonder if you might arrive here at any moment. Perhaps he is even now in the house."

Job uttered a joyous exclamation, and without a word more, ran by him toward the house.

Job looked after the bright figure, which had turned away with a sigh, and then he turned back toward the garden.

NEEDLE TELLS OF HISTORY.

Wonderful Piece of Embroidery that Recounts American Scenes.

In Philadelphia there is a piece of embroidery that is without doubt the most marvelous specimen of needlework in the world. It tells the history of America from the time of the landing of Columbus until its four hundredth anniversary. It measures 27 feet in length and 13 feet 6 inches in width. The groundwork is a stretch of silk, and the superb embroidery has been wrought with the finest threads of various colors.

Upon this vast expanse there has been most painstakingly, most laboriously embroidered the chief incidents and the leading figures of American history, the work being due to the skillful fingers of A. M. Peltinsky, a Polish artist. He was engaged six years in the work. While using silk threads of various shades, he has secured the general appearance of a work in oil colors. For instance, he gives portraits of all the Presidents of the United States, from Washington to Harrison, and each of these looks exactly like a finely finished painting in oils. Noted buildings throughout the country are reproduced most effectively, and there is a most remarkable illustration of the Brooklyn bridge.

The fruits, the flowers, the birds and the animals of this continent are grouped together in a most striking manner. The arts, the sciences and the manufactures are represented by pictures of leading inventors, discoverers, etc., like Edison, Fulton, etc. The story of Columbus is most vividly told, there being shown not only his arrival in America, but his prison cell, his famous coffin and the Columbus monument in Genoa. At the bottom of the tapestry, running clear across, there is a representation of the open sea, which is covered with numerous ships and boats of various styles and sizes, from a small yawl to a colossal armed cruiser.

QUEER STORIES

No Russian officer may marry until he is 25.

The average longevity in the United States was 35.2 in 1900.

Ninety per cent of the 128,000,000 people of the Russian empire are farmers.

Since 1872 4,000 miles of railroads have been laid in the Japanese empire.

San Francisco has one saloon for every twenty-two adult male inhabitants.

In Swedish towns the average marrying age of males is 30½ years and of females 27½.

Beetles in the East and West Indies are so brilliant in coloring that they are beautiful as gems.

Males preponderate in the population of Sheffield, England, to the extent of 1,007 to every 1,000 females.

The barking of a dog is said to be an acquired habit and one lost if the animals are allowed to run wild.

In Madagascar silk is the only fabric used in the manufacture of clothing. It is cheaper than linen in Ireland.

Green wood contains fully 45 per cent of water, and thorough seasoning usually expels but 35 per cent of this fluid.

The longest tree in the world lies broken and petrified at the end of a defile in Arizona. It is said to be 996 feet long.

The island of Cuba was known by that name by the Lucayan Indians, who were with Columbus when he discovered it.

An ostrich lives about thirty years, and the average annual yield of a bird in captivity is from two pounds to four pounds of feathers.

Street-corner story tellers still earn a good livelihood in Japan. In Tokio alone 600 of them ply their trade, provided with a small table, a fan and a paper wrapper to illustrate and emphasize the points of their tales.

The annual report of the Austrian Association of Paper Dealers at Vienna says that the stationary business will be ruined unless the use of picture postal cards as substitutes for letters should diminish.

The enormous extent to which the picture cards are used on the continent is shown by the fact that more than 250,000 of them were mailed from Graz in one week during the German Saengerbund festival.

Waiters at a fashionable summer resort were recently found to have supplied their working jackets with inside rubber pockets. Into these they would slip choice viands from the kitchen, which they would then serve to customers, and the proceeds went into their own pockets. Every rubber-pocketed man was of course discharged, and the familiar cry of "rubber!" at that hotel now would create a panic.

A Kingman County (Kan.) farmer is growing a row of corn a little more than twenty-five miles long for no other reason than to be singular and extraordinary. He commenced in a fifty-acre field and went round and round in a circle with a lister until he had planted the whole in a single row, which commences at one of the edges and terminates in the middle. When he cultivated it, of course, he had to plow the same way. As appearances go, the field will make as much crop as it would if planted in the ordinary way.

Betting for Charity's Sake.

Betting on the results of the recent municipal elections at Home was permitted by the government. The profits were devoted to charitable purposes.

The baby is a good deal like its father, always crossing when there is company present.

GOOD Short Stories

In his "Story of the Cowboy," Emerson Hough gives the following quarterly report of a foreman to an Eastern ranch owner, which constituted his most serious labor of the year: "Deer Sur, we have brand 800 calves this roundup we have made sum hay potatoes is a fare crop. That Englishman you left in charge at the other camp got to fresh an' we had to kill him. Nothing much has happened since you left. Yurs truly, JIM."

One day at a rehearsal, W. S. Gilbert observed a girl crying, and asked her the cause of it. Between her sobs, she declared she had been insulted by one of the costumers, who had said to her: "You are no better than you ought to be." Gilbert immediately looked very sympathetic, and said: "Well, you are not, are you, my dear?" To which she replied, promptly: "Why, of course not, Mr. Gilbert." "Ah, that's all right," he said, and she went away perfectly comforted.

The other day a Sunday school superintendent, in talking to his pupils about cruelty to animals, said: "Only a coward would abuse a creature that has no way of protecting itself. Why, children, I once knew a little boy who cut off a calf's tail! Think of it—took a knife and cut the tail right off! Can any one tell me a verse in the Bible that would have taught this cruel boy that he should not have cut off the calf's tail?" After a moment's silence, a small boy held up his hand, and when asked to quote his verse, ventured: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

One of the packages of seed provided by the Department of Agriculture was recently returned to a member of Congress by one of his constituents, with the following modest request: "I appreciate your good-will in sending the seeds, but my eldest daughter, Matilda, is going to marry the doctor down to the village next month, and wife and I think of giving up the farm and going there to live. If we do, the seeds won't be much good, as we shan't have a garden, so if you could change them for some stockings, No. 9, and some handkerchiefs or a nice spring bonnet for Matilda, I would be much obliged."

When Dion Boucicault was playing "The Vampire" at the Princess Theatre, London, the opening scene represented the highest regions of the Alps by moonlight, while a thunder storm raged in the distance. One night, in the height of the season, a tremendous clap of thunder startled the audience, and interrupted Mr. Boucicault in the middle of a speech. Lowering his voice so that it could be heard only by the property man, he said: "Very well, Mr. Davis, you are making more mistakes. That clap of thunder came in the wrong place." Mr. Davis replied in stentorian tones, which could be plainly heard all over the auditorium: "No fault of mine, sir; it wasn't my thunder. Thunder's real out of doors; perhaps you can stop it there."

RICHES, RANK AND MISERY.

These Three Are Inseparable to the Life of Some Titled Englishmen.

We have in our midst a millionaire who has never been reconciled to her husband's ill-gotten wealth, says the London Empire. On her countenance one traces a look of bemused bewilderment that has become her habitual expression. Dimly and dumbly she has realized that such colossal wealth, dishonestly acquired, must necessarily constitute a curse. She roams through her banal mansion with an affrighted air which betrays a haunting obsession.

One occasion she was found weeping on the doorstep—a victim of hysterical grief. The insolence and extravagance of the costly crudités with which her husband has encumbered his "palace" cause her simple soul to imagine weird things. What are they for? Why is she surrounded by these objects, so foreign to her lowly, primitive nature? She lives in constant and nervous dread of some impending calamity.

To alleviate her haunting misery she has engaged four detectives to guard her and her treasures. They are dressed as footmen. The principal pleasure now indulged in by this pathetic creature is to peer through the bars and passages to make sure that her guardians do not relax their vigilance. This pleasure itself is beginning to pall and there is every fear that her millions will ultimately crush her and deprive her of her reason.

Haunted by the ghastly specter of her wealth, she starts up at night in a feverish perspiration, consumed by a horrible dread of some frightful disaster which she is powerless to avert.

And her husband? He is tired of her, of her miserable whining, her haunting white face and generally depressing temperament. He is cynical, jovial, and never suffers from any qualms of conscience. He has made what he calls a "pot of money" by the promotion of shady companies. And he intends to enjoy it.

He frequents the race course and other resorts of the pleasure-loving. The money squeezed from the widow, the orphan and the curate is recklessly squandered among all the vile parasites which compose the fast section of London society. He is popular; the press speaks well of him; he is a welcome figure in the most exclusive society. He is so rich, he gives such good dinners, he puts his friends into

such "good things," out of which they make money.

At whose expense? They never stop to think. They need money; he puts them in the way of obtaining it. No further do they trouble. Leaving his haunted wife to roam through the corridors of his "palace," he looks on the wine while it is red, basks in the smiles of the fair, enjoys the incense of the vernal press and varies his pleasures by taking frequent trips to Paris, where his face is as well known as in London.

He is perfectly well aware that he is a swindler who has wrecked thousands of homes. But he is equally well aware that the law can not touch him, that lawyers, divines, aristocrats, officials and even judges can be bought by a portion of his ill-gotten gains. And he drains the cup of pleasure to the dregs—cynical, insouciant, a typical product of the age which invented the ill share for the better despoiling of the ignorant and the innocent. Shortly he will float another big company.

RURAL FREE DELIVERY.

Importance of This New Branch of the Postal Service.

Of all the institutions that promote the progress of the United States there is no other, to my mind, that compares in importance with free rural mail delivery. Although it is scarcely five years since the system was adopted, it has already revolutionized social, business and economic conditions in territory covering over 100,000 square miles. Its popularity is increasing at a rate exceeding that attending any improvement heretofore attempted in the post-office service and it means more in the way of personal happiness and public advancement than anything else of which I know, says a writer in Success.

The importance of this new branch of the postal service is best indicated by the rate at which it has grown. We began, in 1896, with an appropriation of \$40,000. For three years previous to that Congress had made each year an appropriation; but with declining revenues and increasing deficits the post-office department has been loath to take any step that might involve additional burdens. As the matter of establishing rural routes had been left to the discretion of the Postmaster-General, the appropriations were unused.

In 1896, Congress, in making the appropriation, embodied a mandatory clause; and, with much misgiving, Postmaster-General William L. Wilson, in October, 1896, established the first route, which was out of Charleston, W. Va. On the first of July, 1897, only forty-three routes were in operation. To-day there are more than 6,000 routes, serving 600,000 farmhouses, in which live more than 4,000,000 people. It requires some experience of life in the country, under old conditions, to realize what it means to these people to be suddenly brought from an isolated position into daily touch with the outer world, the news and events of which had only sifted to them at haphazard. The territory covered by the rural routes is equal to about 120,000 square miles, equaling in area the New England States, New York and New Jersey. Eventually they will cover 1,000,000 square miles or more. The appropriation for the maintenance of the service advanced from \$40,000 in 1897 to \$50,000 in 1898; \$150,000 in 1899; \$450,000 in 1900; \$1,750,000 in 1901.

FELINE FEROCITY.

Are the Symptoms Meant to Simulate Serpentine Form?

All members of the cat tribe wave their tails to and fro when provoked. I do not see how this curious habit is to be explained except as an instance of what is called "Protective Mimicry." Among insects and other humble creatures it is common to find those which are comparatively defenseless adopting the aspects and manners of their more formidable neighbors, and thus securing immunity from attack. This defensive method is rare among the higher animals. Nevertheless, many of the cat tribe, when face to face with an enemy, apparently imitate the behavior of a venomous snake, and thus avail themselves of the instinctive horror of the serpent, which we find among the warm-blooded creatures.

The hissing and spitting indulged in by kittens (and other young creatures which have their natural nurseries in hollow trees and similar places) probably has its use in the fact that few inquisitive predatory beasts would care to risk a possible encounter with an angry snake. The front aspect of an angry cat, with its ears laid flat against its head, its eyes glaring and its fangs exposed, is very snake-like, and the explosive hissing sounds it utters are exactly similar to those uttered by some serpents when about to strike.

Against the mimicry hypothesis is the fact that a large and formidable feline, such as panthers, lions and tigers, which assuredly need no protection of this sort, wave their tails when alarmed or angry quite as much as do the small cats which stand in danger from foxes, dogs and jackals. It must be remembered, however, that all innate habits, such as those which we are discussing, and especially all habits which are common to a whole species or family, are of the extreme antiquity. And in early days of mammalian life on the earth all the ancestors of our modern cats, and, indeed, all warm-blooded creatures of every kind, were so small and defenseless that they probably needed such stratagems as the above to avoid extinction.—Pearson's.

King Edward looks like such a freak with his crown on that we have lost all desire to become an angel and wear one.

When a glacier caldogen itself and sails away over the Arctic seas, it never travels alone. In the wake of every large one floats a line of smaller companions. The Eskimos call this phenomenon "the duck and sucklings," and any one who has watched the progress of the elder duck followed by her brood will appreciate the aptitude of the name.

Helen Moon's Case.

New Providence, Ia., Oct. 13th.—The wonderful case of little 3-year-old Helen Moon continues to be the talk of the neighborhood and everyone is rejoicing with Mr. and Mrs. E. V. Moon, the happy father and mother.

It will be remembered that this sweet little girl was given up by the doctors with Dropsy. She was so far gone that her eyes were closed up and her body bloated till it was purple.

After everything else had failed Dodd's Kidney Pills were used, and to the joy and surprise of everyone she commenced to improve.

This improvement resulted in complete good health and she continues to keep strong and well without the slightest symptom of the Dropsy left.

The doctors are as much bewildered as anyone at the wonderful cure of this desperate case.

The lowest death rate in the world is that of Sweden. The annual average for the last ten years has been 16.49 per 1,000.

A boon to travelers. Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry. Cures dysentery, diarrhoea, seasickness, nausea. Pleasant to take. Acts promptly.

Eight new theatres will be opened in New York City within the next eighteen months.

BALL'S CATARRH CURE is taken internally. Price 75 cents.

Taking the world as a whole 25 per cent die before they reach the age of 17.

DO YOUR CLOTHES LOOK YELLOW? If so, use Red Cross Ball Blue. It will make them white as snow. 2oz. package 5 cents.

Emigrants to South Africa are officially warned to wait until land can be secured for them.

Clear white clothes are a sign that the house keeper uses Red Cross Ball Blue. Large 2 oz. package 5 cents.

The population of Damascus, reputed the oldest city in the world, is calculated at 225,000 souls.

Only one remedy in the world that will at once stop itchiness of the skin in any part of the body. Doan's Ointment. At any drug store, 50 cents.

San Francisco leads American cities with the largest ratio of suicides, of 39.1 per 100,000 of population.

I find Piso's Cure for Consumption the best medicine for croupy children.—Mrs. F. Callahan, 114 Hill street, Parkersburg, W. Va., April 16, 1901.

In a recent number of the Scottish Medical and Surgical Journal Sir Arthur Mitchell holds that dreamless sleep is a myth.

Mrs. Austin's famous Pancake flour, made from the three great staffs of life—wheat, corn and rice.

The two American cities in which the number of colored inhabitants is increasing most largely are Washington and Philadelphia.

Mrs. Winslow's SOOTHING SYRUP for children cures colic, soothes the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, etc. bottle.

"It was almost a miracle. Bloodroot Blood Bitters cured me of a terrible breaking out all over the body. I am very grateful." Miss Julia Filbridge, West Cornwall, Conn.

A hearty kiss on the ear of Mrs. Martha Allen, by her granddaughter fractured that lady's ear drum, and she has been taken from Binghamton to New York City for treatment. The kiss caused a puncture about the size of a pin head.

Georgia fruit growers are claiming that the peach crop of their state yields more money to the producers than does the cotton crop.

Trouble Begins. Trouble begins with the first backache. Backache comes in many forms—sudden twinges of pain, sharp stitches, slow, exhaustive aches.

Most backache pains are kidney pains. The kidneys fail to perform the duties nature intends them to do and the warning of trouble comes through the back. Neglect the kidney warning, grave complications will surely follow.

Urinary disorders—Diabetes, Bright's Disease—are the downward steps of neglected kidneys.

Doan's Kidney Pills cure every kidney and bladder sickness and the cure lasts. Read this proof of it:

Mrs. Adam Guntle, residing at 701 South Plum street, Crawfordsville, Ind., says: "I made a public statement in 1897 saying that Doan's Kidney Pills had cured a member of our family after he had suffered for years with a weak back and kidney troubles. He took three boxes of this remedy and was completely cured. Now three years have elapsed since I made this statement, and I am only too pleased to re-endorse it. I have also used Doan's Kidney Pills myself, obtaining the best results. I have recommended this remedy to my friends and neighbors as one which can always be depended upon."

A FREE TRIAL of this great Kidney medicine which cured Mrs. Guntle will be mailed on application to any part of the United States. Address: Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

For sale by all druggists. Price 50 cents per box.

In 1900 France exported 3,000 horses more than she imported, whereas Germany had to import 90,000 more than she exported.