



STRANGLES

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"Yes, it is true! I thought you, as I still think you the most beautiful girl I have ever seen; but it was not only that—it was I can scarcely say what it was, but your manner to Archie completed the spell. I was yours from that moment. Then the idea occurred to me that I would remain plain Hector Warren, and, if I should be so fortunate, woo you, just as a plain, poor unknown man might do. I set to work, and thank Heaven, I succeeded! I should have kept my identity hidden until we were married, but unfortunately, in a moment of carelessness I had given Laura Derwent the permission she has so well used, and unless I had stayed away to-night, which I could not have done, I was forced to discover myself."

"And Lady Rookwell knew it all the time!" says Signa, smiling.

"Knew it or guessed it!" he assents, smiling. "And has been amusing herself by telling the most awful stories about me before my very face, hoping that I should, in a moment of unguardedness, reveal myself; but I think I balked her!" and he smiles as he smooths the silken hair which has got ruffled by his embrace. "And as for Miss Laura Derwent—"

"She will be broken-hearted!" says Signa, smiling.

"I think not. I will put it all right with her. She is a lady not easily daunted or embarrassed."

"And Uncle Podswell?" says Signa, with arched brows.

"He shall have the living he wants," he says, smiling. "The curate is a very good fellow, and I will give him a couple of hundred a year out of my private purse. I will do anything to make things smooth and easy, for I feel that I have caused a good deal of—well, inconvenience. To-night I am so happy that I could wish every one else to be, if I could make them. And you, my darling, my own true love, what shall I say to you?"

"Only that you love me!" she whispers. "Let us go back now," she says, after a few minutes; "they will be waiting. I do not hear any music—"

"And you want to dance?" he adds. Signa shakes her head.

"No! You must not dance again with me to-night. It was all very well while you were only Hector Warren, but as Lord Delamere you owe a duty to half the room of unmarried girls, and you must dance with them!"

"Alas!" he says, with a smile and a sigh, "I already do I regret the loss of my plain mistresshood."

They go back to the ballroom, and Signa, determined that he shall do his duty, slips her hand from his arm and joins the group at the further end of the room.

Her reappearance creates a sensation, and it would amuse a philosopher, given to weighing the motives of humanity, to observe the charged manner with which she is greeted. She is no longer Signa Grenville, engaged to plain Hector Warren, but the affianced of the Earl of Delamere.

Her grace the duchess greets her with a smile, and sweeps her own satin skirts off the couch upon which she sits to make room for the future Countess of Delamere.

"Come and sit down, Miss Grenville," she says, graciously; "you must be tired. We must be great friends; the Towlers," which is the duchess's residence "is not far from here, and we must see a great deal of each other."

And only half an hour ago she would not bestow more than her fingers upon this same Signa Grenville!

Laura Derwent, coming up on the arm of her partner, dismisses him with a word and a smile, and seats herself beside Signa for a moment or two.

"Tell me, my dear, candidly, did you know it?"

Signa blushes and shakes her head. "No, if you mean that Hector Warren and Lord Delamere were one and the same person."

"Yes, I knew you did not, although, that foolish Mrs. Podswell—I beg your pardon, my dear; I forgot she was your aunt—declared that you did. Of course you didn't know it. But how extraordinary it is! And you will be the Countess of Delamere! Isn't your head quite turned? There isn't a girl in the room, including myself, who wouldn't give her head to be what you will be! And I am so angry—at least I should be if the ball weren't going so splendidly. And it is going splendidly. Lord Delamere—I was nearly calling him Mr. Warren!—is doing his duty tremendously. I haven't spoken to him yet; I dare not! But I will say this—that he is doing his utmost to make the thing a success. What a delightful man he is! My dear, you ought to be a very happy girl!"

"I think I am very happy!" says Signa, with a smile.

Then there creeps up the recollection—there is no other world for it—he simply creeps up, rubbing his chin, and coughing, apologetically.

"My dear Signa," he says, with a sickly smile, "this is, indeed a surprise! I cannot—er—say how much your aunt and I—ahem!—delight in your—er—future—prospects; and if we have a regret, which, I trust, we have not, it is—er—that you did not confide in us more fully than you have done."

"But I didn't know it!" says Signa, candidly. "I didn't know anything about it! Tell my aunt that I was as much surprised as anyone," and the crimson flushes her face.

"Miss Grenville, will you give me the next dance?" asks the duke himself, a heavy, more than middle-aged man, who goes in for breeding short-horns, and who is never so happy as when he is in his turnip fields.

Signa smiles an assent, and gives him her hand to hold while she gathers up the train of the Egyptian gauze. The duke dances atrociously, and launches at once into his favorite topic; but all the women in the room glance at the couple, and know that the duke has received his orders to dance with Miss Grenville from the duchess, and understand what it means. It means that Signa Grenville will be the highest lady in that part of the shire, and that she will go out of the room before any one, excepting the duchess herself.

"Humph!" says his grace, after a short plunge or two. "Not much of a dancer, Miss Grenville; rather too much of the bear on hot bricks for a good stepper like yourself. Been staring here long? Oh, I beg your pardon, I forgot. The duchess just told me you were to marry Delamere; remember him when he was a boy in drawers; awful pickle he was. When he came home from school he used to poach my preserves, though he had plenty of game in his own. Hope he's grown up steeper, and not taken to poaching other people's game—of all kinds, eh?"

Signa, amused and not quite clearly understanding, smiles, and says she hopes so, and the jolly farmer—for his grace is really no much higher, and would be rather flattered than otherwise if any one called him a farmer—chuckles, and nods an grunt.

"Going to marry him, aren't you? By George, lucky young dog!"

"Do you mean me or Mr.—Lord Delamere, your grace?" says Signa, with a twinkle in her violet eyes.

"Delamere, Delamere!" replies his grace, laughing, and staring at the beautiful face, now alight with a subtle witchery; she is so happy, you see, that she is half-inclined to flirt even with his grace the duke!

"And so he is!" he retortates, heartily. "I say, I hope he'll settle down. No more philanderings. Make him go in for farming; nothing like farming to settle a man."

"It settles too many I have heard," says Signa, with the same twinkle.

"The duke chuckles.

"Gad! so it does, by George! But that won't affect Delamere; got plenty of money. Richer man than I am, by George!"

"Perhaps that's because you have come in for farming," says Signa.

He chuckles again.

"Perhaps so, but never mind. You persuade him to run a home farm and anything that keeps a man steeper than short-horns; by George! if he attends to them properly, he'll be able to think of nothing else!"

"I don't fancy I should like him to go in for short-horns then," says Signa, demurely.

He grins broadly out loud this time, so that those near them turn with smiling curiosity.

"Hah! hah! I see! Want him to think of you?"

"Sometimes," says Signa.

It is not a very brilliant conversation, yet those near strain their ears to catch fragments of it, for is it not a duke who is talking?

"I don't think we'd better dance any more," he says, looking down at her dress. "I should be sorry to tear that pretty frock of yours, and then my wife would scold me. I'll take you back, unless you'll be kind enough to sit down and talk to me."

Signa seats herself and talks to him about his beloved short-horns, and when the duke takes her back, he confides to her grace, loud enough to be heard a dozen yards off, that—

"By George! that girl is the most sensible girl in the room, and pretty as well as sensible. Knows something about everything, and ain't afraid of saying it!"

If anything were wanting to secure

Signa's success, the duke's expressed approval would supply it. Every one in the room is now prepared to go into ecstasies over her. From a little distance, where he is making himself pleasant and doing his duty as the host, Lord Delamere sees the little ducal incident, and smiles with pride and satisfaction.

"My darling!" he thinks—"not fit to be a countess. There is no one here who is half as fit!"

No sooner has the duke assigned his partner than half a dozen men come forward eager to inscribe their names on her ball programme, and Signa is soon whirling round the room with a young marquis who is fortunate enough to find a dance disengaged.

Laura Derwent looks on with a smile.

"She deserves it all!" she says, almost to herself. "I never saw a girl take her honors more quietly! Ninety-nine women out of a hundred would have their heads turned."

"Signa is the hundredth!" says Lady Rookwell, with a smile which for once is not sarcastic. "Think of it! She has just discovered, only an hour or two ago, that instead of a poor, unknown man, her future husband is an earl; that instead of living in a poky cottage on a hundred a year or so, she will be mistress of half a dozen such places as this, and forty or fifty thousand a year! And yet she takes it as meekly and quietly as you see, Laura. You are fond of a phenomenon; there is one for you!"

"I shall be very fond of her, at any rate," says Laura Derwent.

"Though she has deprived you of all chance of being Lady Delamere!" says the terrible old lady.

The beauty flushes, then laughs.

"Yes, even so! Wonderful, isn't it, aunt? What's that?"

"That is the signal for supper," says Lady Rookwell. "Thank Heaven, there will be no scrambling and fighting to-night," and she gathers her skirts round her with a sigh of relief.

There is no need for either fighting or scrambling. The supper which comes up to even Lady Rookwell and Laura Derwent's standard, is laid in the spacious banquet-room, and there is a seat and a plate and a knife and fork for everyone; a rare thing at a ball! The contractors have fulfilled their glowing promise, and it is a banquet rather than the usual filmy ball supper, which awaits two hundred guests.

Lord Delamere, as in duty bound, takes in the duchess, and Signa finds herself allotted to a young captain of dragoons, as handsome as Apollo, and with all the fine tones of a man of fashion.

He is a lady-killer of the most advanced type, and would give much to be able to lay siege to the heart of the beautiful girl in his charge, but he knows in a moment that all his blandishments are in vain, as he sees the glance which Signa exchanges with Lord Delamere, as he happens to pass her on his way to the head of the table.

"These blessed earls always have the best of it!" mutters the handsome captain to himself. He is as poor as a church-mouse and must "marry money" sooner or later. But, nevertheless, he makes himself very pleasant and amusing, and choosing the subject which he thinks will be most welcome, talks about Lord Delamere.

"Plenty of game here," he says, as the footman helps them to pigeon-pie. "Delamere is a magnificent shot. I was shooting with him ten years ago in America. I have seen him bring down a buffalo as neat as a whistle. Indeed, he is what we call an all-round man; can do almost anything, and do it well. He ought to have been in the service; he would have made a first-rate officer."

Signa's smile rewards him for his praise.

"Delamere has got no end of pluck,



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you see, and a man who has got that is sure to get on. I remember a tremendously plucky thing he did; it was out in the west—Canada, I mean—we, our party, you know, were going down river in canoes, and one of the canoes got upset at one of the rapids. It would have been all up for the Englishman on board, who couldn't swim a morsel, but Lord Delamere went for him, and after a hard fight brought him to land. I never saw a braver thing, or a harder swim!"

Signa glances at the handsome face of the man whom he is praising, and her heart throbs with pride.

"You have known Lord Delamere for some time?" she says.

"Oh, years. We were at Eaton together. We haven't seen much of each other lately, because he has been wandering about. He was always a lucky boy; I think he is a lucky man also!"

Signa blushes at the rather broad compliment, but forgives it, and the captain fills his glass with champagne and goes on with his supper, feeling that he has earned it.

The supper is a great success. One expects to be crowded and pushed about on such occasions, but here there is plenty of room, and when they return to the ballroom there is plenty of laughter to denote that the guests of this strange party are enjoying themselves.

"It is going beautifully!" exclaims Laura Derwent, coming up to Signa. "My dear, this night will be talked of in the shire—ah! in the town, too, for quite a year! which is a long time, let me tell you! It is such a magnificent party, you see, and everything has been done so well, and Lord Delamere—I never knew a man exert himself with more willingness or greater success. Signa, I envy you!"

"Don't do that!" says Signa, with a smile and a flush.

"But I do! I can't help it! To think that you will have all this," and she looks round, "and him into the bargain. Why, my dear, I'm in love with him myself. You don't mind, do you?"

"Not in the least!" says Signa, smiling, "so that he be not in love with you!"

Laura Derwent laughs.

"You need not be afraid of that! I think he thoroughly detests me for being the cause of his discovering himself. Would you believe it, I haven't spoken to him since we first came in?"

"Miss Derwent," says Delamere, at her elbow. "If you have a dance left, I shall be very grateful."

She turns with a smile—she couldn't start to save her life—and gives him her card.

"You can see. I'm afraid not."

"No!" he says. "But this, I see, is given to the marquis; he will let me have it, I have no doubt."

"Very well," she says. "You must make your peace with him."

He leads her off, as Signa is taken away by her partner. For a minute or two Delamere and Laura Derwent dance in silence, then he pulls up and stands looking down at her with a curious expression; then he says:

"Miss Derwent, I wanted a word with you."

"Yes," she says, looking up. "And I am glad to find an opportunity of speaking to you, Lord Delamere. I don't know what to say now that I feel that I ought to beg your pardon for my—I should like to say 'cheek!' It is the only word that will fit in!"

He smiles.

"You have done no harm to beg my pardon for," he says in his quiet way—a way that told more with those who came in contact with it than the most emphatic verbal expressions. "You have given me an opportunity of meeting my friends and neighbors, and gaining, I trust, their good will—that is all."

"That is not all!" she says, moving her fan restlessly. "I have made myself awfully objectionable; I feel it! Lord Delamere, why did you not tell me that you were Hector Warren—I mean, Lord Delamere?"

"Why?" he says. "Well, I did not tell Signa, who is my affianced wife!"

"I am answered," she says, with a shrug. "But nevertheless I shall never forgive myself; never! I felt I was doing wrong that night at Casa-lina; do you remember that night? What a strange place it was for us to meet in!"

"I remember," he says, and as he speaks a shade crosses his brow, and his eyes droop in a way peculiar to him when he is very much in earnest.

"Yes, I remember! Miss Derwent?"

"Yes," she says, bending her brows upon him waitingly.

He is silent a moment; then, with an effort, that is scarcely perceptible, he goes on:

"We met, if you remember, at Casa-lina?"

"Yes."

(To be continued.)

ELECTRIC HEAT.

How Electricity is Changed Into Heat by Resistance Wire.

It is not always necessary to burn something to produce heat. However, we have secured our heat by combustion for so long that most of us believe that heat can be produced in no other way. It is hard to convince the user of an electric flatiron, or even an electric range, that nothing is burned with in the iron, that there is no fire in the range. If you don't believe that heat can be produced without fire and combustion try rubbing a coin briskly on the carpet. In a few seconds the coin will be too hot to hold. If you rubbed it fast enough and long enough, it would set fire to the carpet.

When the coin is rubbed on the carpet it is heated by friction. By this same process is heat produced in an electric iron or any other electric-heating device. Only in the case of electricity, "friction" is called by another name, "resistance." Electric heat is produced by the "resistance" offered by the flow of the current by special resistance metal inserted in the circuit. The current flows easily and smoothly along the copper wire leading into the electric iron. In the bottom of the iron is inserted a stamped leaf, or a grid of resistance wire, through which the current must force its way before it can flow on to complete the circuit, but there is pressure, or voltage, enough to force it over the difficult path. In overcoming this resistance a part of the electrical energy is changed to heat energy and the resistance wire becomes quite hot.

All wire offers more or less resistance to the flow of electricity. The term, however, is usually applied only to those wires possessing a higher specific resistance than copper wire. Silver has the lowest electrical resistance of all the metals, but as silver is costly, and as copper has but slightly greater resistance, it is copper wire that is in commercial use, so all comparisons are made with reference to an electrical current. This resistance to the current causes the electrical energy to become converted into heat, and it is by the utilization of this heating characteristic that resistance wire finds so great a use to-day in the electrical trade.

Resistance wires are almost always composed of alloys of various metals. They are usually given trade names by the concerns making them. The composition of the various resistance wires now on the market, however, are nickel and chromium, nickel and steel, nickel, copper and manganese (manganin), nickel and copper, nickel and manganese, nickel, copper, manganese

and aluminum and copper, nickel and zinc (German silver).

The metals used are alloyed in varying proportions, probably no two concerns using the same proportions. The standard metals or alloys used in resistance wires, by their specific resistance, divide resistance wires into grades having definite limits, as from six to twelve times the resistance of copper up to forty-five to sixty-five times the resistance of copper.

Resistance wire is furnished in so-called wire, ribbon and plate form. Usually only the wire is carried in stock, the ribbon and plate being made up to order.

In the electrical trade resistance wire is used for two purposes: For heating elements and for resistance or current reducing elements. The largest use at the present time is in connection with heating elements.

For heating elements the use of resistance wire is confined solely to cooking and other heating devices, the heating elements of which are composed of resistance wire embedded in an insulating material. This class of work calls for a wire that will withstand high temperatures and that has a high specific resistance. For this reason it has been found that nickel and chromium resistance wire best meets the requirements, and is invariably used. Troy Times.

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Mrs. W. J. Wilson, Carp, Ont., writes: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets for the last ten years and can highly recommend them for babyhood and childhood ailments. My baby boy was very delicate; in fact we never thought he would live but thanks to the Tablets he is now a fine healthy boy. Baby's Own Tablets should be kept in every home where there are small children. They regulate the bowels and stomach and never fail to cure the minor ills of little ones. The Tablets are sold by medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont."

SMART NEW ELOUSES

Some of the Favorites of the Incoming Season.

Spring and summer blouses show more originality than for several seasons past, also more variety. Perhaps their most emphatic general characteristic is "cover boneness," that is, their capacity for being worn outside the skirt. Therefore, not only are the poplins in order, but the Russian blouses, comfortable smocks, mandarin blouses, and the like, most worn by smart women.

There is, too, a sleeveless waistcoat of plush that is expected to be favored by the ultra-fashionable. Jumpers have made their appearance and the trend in blouses that they will receive a cordial reception. Smocks for this summer are to be made up in fancy materials, especially gingham, and the like, most worn by smart women.

A separate blouse featured by the exclusive shops for the first time is the "flying shirt." It is made up in solid wash silks and in linens, but in each instance has a fancy pleated bosom of printed silk.

Cotton fabrics promise to be more popular than the usual silk blouse fabrics, such as crepe de chine, silk shirtings and georgettes. Cotton "leaders" are voile, batiste and organdy. Suit blouses for the spring and early summer are to be in the color of the suit or in one that pleasantly contrasts, and are to have a touch of the suit fabric for trimmings, thus making in effect three-piece suits.

While women may have a choice of color styles in blouses, that which is the new model emphasize is practically that, such as the sailor and the rounded cape effect. Some times, indeed, blouses are quite collarless, the neck finish consisting of simple stitching or, and on such instances usually being cut square or in a shallow oval. A few blouses have high collars and on occasional flare collar is seen.

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