

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

THE DOCTOR: "My eyes, restless and feverish, give firm Steedman's Powder and few will soon be all right."

STEEDEMAN'S SOOTHING POWDERS
Contain no Poison

For Love of a Woman;

OR,
New Romeo and Juliet.

CHAPTER VIII.
SPENCER CHURCHILL.

Whenever his name was mentioned someone was sure to say:

"Oh Spencer Churchill! Yes! Awfully good-natured fellow, you know. No end of a good soul. Share his last crust with you. Kind of cherub with legs, don't you know?"

But, if strict enquiry had been made—which it never was—it would have been difficult to bring forward evidence to prove the benevolent Spencer had ever shared anything with anybody, or that he had ever been liberal with anything, excepting always the smile and his soft, persuasive voice.

Of his past history, and, indeed, his present mode of life, the persons who were always ready to praise him knew very little—or anything, and yet he was always spoken of as one of the best-known men in society.

You met him everywhere; at the first reception of the season, at the meeting of the Four-in-Hand Club, at the smoking-room of the Midnight, sauntering in the foyer at the opera, seated in the stalls of the fashionable theatres, in country houses of the most exclusive kinds, on the shady side of Pall Mall, in the picture-galleries, at the big concerts, at dinner-parties. His neat figure always most carefully dressed, his countenance always serene and placid, as if the world were the most charming of all possible places, and had been specially created for Spencer Churchill; and with the benedictory smile always shining.

He was rich, it was supposed; he was a bachelor, it was thought; he was connected with half the peerage, so it was stated; and that was all concerning his private life that any one knew. But, if little was known about him, Spencer Churchill knew a great deal about other people; some said too much.

Lord Neville's surprise at seeing him was quite uncalculated, because Spencer Churchill was in the habit of "turning up" at the most unlikely places, and at the most unlikely times; and whatever surprise you might feel at seeing him, he never expressed any at meeting you.

Nor, as Lord Neville stared at him, he blandly and placidly smiled, as if he had parted from Neville only a quarter of an hour ago, and laid out his hand as if he were bestowing a bishopric by the action.

"Why, the last time I saw you was at Nice!" said Lord Neville, with a laugh, "and here you are at Barton! What on earth brings you here! Don't make the usual answer about the two-twenty-five train and your legs—"

"Wasn't thinking of doing so," said Spencer Churchill, softly. "What a charming spot!" and he looked round

with a soft rapture beaming on his face. "Charming! So rural! That brook—those trees—the clear, spring day—the songs of the birds—didn't I hear human voices by the way?" he asked; and it is to be noticed that he didn't break off to put softly-gliding sentences, as it if were the most innocent and careless of queries, and he let his eyes fall with a gentle, beaming interrogation on the handsome face.

Lord Neville looked aside for a moment. Cherubic as Spencer Churchill was, Lord Neville did not quite care to answer the question.

"I daresay," he said; "but you haven't answered me yet, Spencer. What brings you here?"

"A deeply-rooted love of the country, my dear Clasy; from a child I have revelled in—the green meadows and the purring brook. I always fly from town at every opportunity. And you?"

"I am staying at Barton," said Cecil Neville, rather shortly.

Spencer Churchill raised his pale eyebrows with a faint surprise.

"With the marquis—with the uncle?" he said, softly.

"Exactly. You are surprised; so was I when I got the invitation."

"No—really? Ah! I am so glad! It is so nice to see relations living together in harmony—"

"But we don't live in harmony!" broke in Neville, in his impetuous fashion. "We have only met once or twice and have nearly quarrelled on each occasion."

"Oh, come, I don't think the dear marquis could quarrel with you, his nephew."

"No, you're right," said Neville, with a rather grim laugh. "The dear marquis doesn't quarrel. He's too highly polished to do anything so vulgar; he only carries on until one is driven half-mad by the longing to pitch him out of the window—"

"My dear Neville! Always the same wild recklessness. Pitch the marquis out of the window!" and Spencer Churchill laughed—a kind of dove-like coo. "Now, that is strange. I always find the marquis so delightfully charming—"

"But so you do everybody," retorted Lord Neville, laughing.

"Well, most people are, aren't they?" said Spencer Churchill, blandly.

"I don't know," replied Lord Neville. "I'm afraid I must be getting back. I'm due at lunch."

He pulled out his watch; but instead of looking at it, glanced in the direction of Doris had taken.

"Looking for anyone?" inquired Spencer, softly.

Lord Neville started rather impatiently.

"No," he said, "oh, no. Where are you staying? I'll look you up—"

"I'll come with you," said Spencer. "The walk will be delightful, and I am glad to see you."

"All right; come on then," said Lord Neville; and the two started in the direction of the Towers.

Spencer Churchill did most of the talking—it was almost like singing, so soft and bland and unobtrusive was the voice; Lord Neville listening rather absent, and making answers rather wide of the mark at times—for he was thinking of Doris—and when they reached the entrance to the avenue he stopped.

"I'm sorry I can't take upon myself to ask you in to lunch, Spencer," he said, with a laugh; "but my uncle might—and probably would—consider it a liberty, and have you, possibly both of us, chucked out; and, though I shouldn't mind it, you mightn't like it you know."

"I really think I'll take the risk," said Spencer. "The marquis and I are such old friends, that I—yes, I'll chance being expelled."

"All right," assented Lord Neville, as before. "Come on, then; and don't blame me if the consequences are as I suggested."

DODD'S KIDNEY PILLS
ALL KIDNEY DISEASES
BRIGHT'S DISEASE
DIABETES & GRAVEL
No. 23 THE PRINCIPAL

"No, I won't blame you," said Spencer Churchill.

They made their way to the hall, and the groom of the chambers and the footmen received them as if they were royal visitors.

Lord Neville said:

"Tell the marquis that Mr. Spencer Churchill has arrived, please."

The groom did not look surprised, but merely bowed as he departed.

The drawing-room was empty, and the two men stood talking for a minute; then the groom came and led Mr. Spencer Churchill to wash his hands, and Lord Neville went up to his room. As he came down the luncheon-bell rang, and he led Spencer Churchill into the dining-room.

The marquis was already seated, and Lord Neville was about to explain Spencer's presence, when he saw the marquis give a start, and as he rose and extended his hand, Neville fancied that he noticed a peculiar twitch of the thin, colourless lips.

"Ah! Spencer," said his lordship—and he spoke, Lord Neville thought, with something less than his usual cold and biting hauteur—"this is a surprise! Pray be seated," and he himself sank into his chair, with no trace of the mental disturbance in his face or manner—if there had, indeed, been any.

"Yes, it is a surprise," said Spencer Churchill, softly, taking his seat, and unfolding his napkin, as if he had been lunching at the same table for months past; "I was so fortunate as to meet our dear Neville in the—er—fields, I may say, where he was roaming in happy and poetic solitude, and he was kind enough to assure me of a welcome if I came on with him."

"His assurance was—on this occasion—justified," said the marquis, with a cold glance at the young man.

Spencer Churchill smiled, as if the taunting and exasperating speech were one of the most amiable.

"Thanks," he murmured; "and you are well, I hope, marquis?"

"I am never ill," replied his lordship, as if he were quite incapable of such vulgarity.

"Ah, no, that is always so delightful of you?" said Spencer. "Our dear Neville enjoys the famous Stoye constitution also. He is never ill—are you, Neville?"

"No," said Neville, grimly, and without lifting his eyes from his plate.

"I have always been given to understand that the possession of rude health is the privilege of the fool," remarked the marquis. "Of course we are the exceptions from the rule."

"Exactly," murmured Spencer again, as if it were the most charming of compliments. "Some of us, alas! become convinced that we have hearts and livers."

"Not all of us—so far as the hearts are concerned," said Neville, curtly.

The marquis almost smiled. To goad anyone into a retort made him as nearly happy as it was possible for him to be.

"Where are you staying? You will come on here, of course?" he said.

"I am staying at the hotel at Barton. I think they call it the Royal. It would be quite too charming if it did not smell so strongly of stale tobacco and coffee. Thanks, yes, I shall be very glad."

The marquis looked at the butler, the look meaning "Send for Mr. Spencer Churchill's luggage." The butler gilded from the room.

"You find us quite a merry party," said the marquis. "We have another visitor besides Neville—"

"Who can scarcely be counted a visitor," murmured Spencer.

"Really, that is scarcely fair," said the marquis, blandly. "Neville has his faults, but he is not quite the nonentity you would represent him."

Neville raised his head, stung to a retort, when the door opposite to him opened and Lady Grace entered.

She was charming, perfectly dressed, looking like a vision of one of Lippo Lippi's angels.

"I'm afraid I'm late—" she began, lightly, then her eyes fell upon Spen-

cer's smiling face, and her own paled. For a second she stood still and, put out her hand as if seeking something to support her, then her face resumed its usual serenity, and with a smile she came forward. "Mr. Spencer Churchill. Really! What a nice surprise!"

"How good, how kind of you to say so!" he sang, as he bent upon her hand.

"I am always good and kind. I can't help it. Well, Lord Neville, how have you been amusing yourself?" she went on, as he rose and arranged her chair for her.

"Under melancholy boughs in the woods, musing in moody meditation, mentally morbid?" said Spencer Churchill. "I found him beside a purring brook, composing sonnets, Lady Grace."

"Or dreaming of last night's Juliet?" she said, smiling.

He looked up quickly, but her eyes seemed full of unconsciousness and innocence.

"You did go to the theatre last night, didn't you?" she asked. "They told me so."

"Yes, I went," he replied.

"And it was 'Romeo and Juliet' wasn't it?"

He nodded.

She made a little grimace.

"Fancy 'Romeo and Juliet' at a country theatre, Mr. Churchill! The Romeo striding about, all gasps and sighs, the Juliet, fat, fair, and forty! Poor Lord Neville!" and her silvery laugh rang softly through the room.

Lord Neville knew it would be the better, wiser course to smile and shrug his shoulders, but he could not.

"It was quite the reverse," he said, and his voice sounded short and almost grim. "The play was well cast and admirably staged. The Romeo didn't gasp or strut, and the Juliet—"

He stopped, feeling that his voice had grown more enthusiastic, and was betraying him. "Oh! she played very well," he said.

"Indeed! Really!" exclaimed Lady Grace. "Oughtn't we to patronize the local talent, marquis?"

He raised his cold eyes to her lovely face.

"I am too old to commit mental suicide," he said. "Take Neville's recommendation and go, if you like, and be sorry for it."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"After all, I don't think I could venture on it; it would be—forgive me, Lord Neville—too awful. And so you have come to Barton, Mr. Churchill? And from whence, pray?"

They talked together in this light, careless, half-indifferent, blasé manner which is now—Heaven help us!—the fashion; and Lord Neville finished his lunch in silence.

(To be continued.)

Children must always have plenty of sleep—if they are up late at night they must sleep longer the next morning.

Fashion Plates.

A SIMPLE, PRACTICAL APRON WITH OR WITHOUT POCKET.

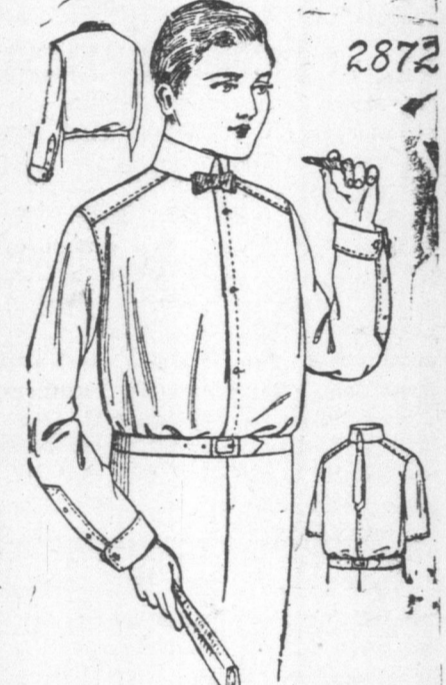


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