

Mr. Priestley's Devil.

MRS. ALFRED HUNT, IN ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

They were half-cousins and had been accustomed to see each other once or twice every year since childhood, for Mary Maskelyne lived with her grandmother and aunt at St. Bridget's, and Edward Maskelyne generally spent his holidays and vacations there. As time went on, they, with the full consent of their own hearts, became engaged to each other, after which these holidays were happier than ever; but when they had been engaged for two years and a half something happened.

It was not that they quarrelled, it was not that he or she had fallen in love with someone else and had to confess the fact, but Edward Maskelyne had recognized that so much work of all kinds lay before him that he could have no time to be in love with his cousin or anyone else for many a year to come. She was in the garden reading when he went to tell her this. She saw him coming, knew in her life she had associated the sight of him with anything but increased happiness, so she put down her book and smiled in anticipation of the joy he was bringing with him.

"I have come to speak to you rather seriously to-day, dear," he said. He did not sit down by her, and his voice was not the voice that she was accustomed to.

Nevertheless he was here, and she loved and trusted him, so she only said: "Oh, Edward, how an interview which began in that manner used to terrify us when we were children!" "It really is something serious," he said. "I've been trying to say it for three days."

"Ever since you came, then? Sit down and say it now," she said, moving a little way to make still more room for him.

He did not take the seat she offered him, but stood by her, looking for once rather awkward. What he had to say made him nervous, but he was perfectly calm while he told her that he was very much afraid, that, in justice to her, their engagement ought to come to an end, as he did not believe he could possibly be in a position to marry for many a long year to come. The phrase had presented itself to his mind when thinking it all over by himself, and he could find no other to use now that he was in her presence.

"But I will wait for as many of these years as you like, dear," she said. "The thought that I was consulting you to do so would be a misery to me! You see, Mary, I am by no means sure that I shall ever be able to make my way."

"You would like to be quite free, you mean?" she said quietly. "The life! I like it like it all! How could I? But I really do believe that it would be better for both of us."

"You shall be quite free. We will be engaged no longer. Your future must be thought of."

"And yours, dear?" "Oh, never mind mine. I have work to do. My future need not be thought of."

"Mary?" She could not stand this, and rose in haste to go in; but she forced herself to sit down again, and said rather inconsequently, "We shall always be friends, so see much of each other after this."

"It will be better if we do not, but we can write occasionally."

"The word 'occasionally' cut her to the heart. She said, almost bitterly, 'Not write!' 'Yes, not write! You see, she said, with a sickly smile intended to comfort him, 'we should have to make such a complete alteration in our style! No, I shall not write to you, Edward, but that won't mean that we are not friends. We shall always be friends, of course, and take an interest in each other; so tell me a little about what you are now going to do and to work for, that I may know what I ought to take an interest in.'"

"Nothing new, I shall just go on as usual. I am going to work, as I'm doing now, but you know that already. He is not very generous with his briefs. But I dare say I shall have more from him in time."

"And then?" asked Mary, very calmly to all appearance, but in her heart there was a sudden uprising of hope that he would say, "Oh, then, dear Mary, I shall come straight to you."

But what he said was: "Oh, then, of course, I must do my best to get into parliament, and other things will no doubt present themselves that I shall have to try for. But don't talk about me, Mary; you don't know how bitterly I feel."

"Oh, if you please, Edward, say nothing of that kind. All is settled—it is no use to talk of such things that are likely to be shaken or resolved. I am going now to see your cousin, as I may still call you dear Edward. Good bye, dear Edward. I shall read the newspapers and see your successes and no one will rejoice in them more than I shall."

"I had thought—" he began, but she was gone.

When he left for London an hour later he looked up when he passed Mary's window with a vague hope of seeing her face once more. Instead of Mary's sweet young face he saw that of her old nurse, Albany—a grim, grey-complexioned woman, who looked down on him with such an amount of concentrated detestation and contempt that he could scarcely think of anything else all the rest of the day.

"What is that that old woman?" said the old, old grandmother of his to the old aunt of 68. "Edward has broken off his engagement to Mary, and is going to think of nothing now but making his fortune! It can't be true! It can't possibly be true!" "I'm afraid it is," said the old aunt drearily.

"Then all I can say is that there is one thing of which our family may boast and that is of having supplied Mr. Priestley with a perfect genuine devil."

he had explained how entirely destructive of every hope of advancement an early marriage would be to him, she had not hesitated to inform him that though it might have been a great folly to enter into such an engagement, it was sheer knavery to break it off. The words struck him afresh now as he thought of them; but he smiled faintly and bowed to her, and in spite of what might prove to be a cold reception, he sprang forward, not with joy at the sight of his uncle's half-brother's wife, but because, in spite of prudence, in spite of everything, his heart never failed to stir within him whenever he saw any one who was, perhaps, able to give him news of Mary Maskelyne.

Mrs. Phillip Moleworth saw that it was his intention to speak to her, started back, as if in absolute abhorrence of him, but her hand up as if to defend herself from his approach, and before he had recovered his self-possession, gave her coachman the signal to drive on, and was gone. Edward Maskelyne did not find it easy to recover the shock of this.

It was three years since he had done the thing which she was so bitterly resenting now, and even after the storm and stress of their last interview she had assured him that she should always remember that she was his uncle's half-brother's wife, and that though she did not wish to see him, she would, as a devout Catholic, strive not to think unkindly of him. Why had her indignation gathered to itself such an extraordinary accession of strength? "How terribly unforgiving middle-aged female relations can be!" Dear Mary forgave me at once; he thought. He was disappointed now, as well as hurt, for he had not heard Mary's name for more than a year. He had never been in Ireland since they had parted, and though his old aunt wrote him a letter now and then, she always avoided naming her niece.

His answers to these letters had been generally somewhat short; he had little time or inclination for letter-writing, but whenever he thought of Mary it was of the sweetest and dearest woman he had ever known, and he was sometimes even pleased to regard himself as an object of pity for having been obliged to give her up. He had, however, had very little time to think of her at all, for ever since he had last seen her he had been swallowed up in work. It had not been unprofitable work. Thanks perhaps to Mr. Priestley, he had made his way in his profession—he had got into parliament, and only the night before had made a speech which had it was said electrified the house. He had made the most brilliant speech of the session. Five minutes before he had been a happy man, and now all joy had vanished because an ill-tempered old woman had looked on him with abhorrence. And yet, far away in a corner, into which he had huddled it was a thing which he was much too busy to attend to—he had a conscience, which told him now what it was always trying to tell him, that he had done what everyone must view with abhorrence.

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Was that Mrs. Phillip Moleworth's carriage at Lewis & Albany's shop door? It was and she herself was sitting huddled up in a corner of it, looking, if possible, more stern and downcast than during the interview which she had compelled him to attend her three years ago at this engagement to her favorite niece, Mary, had been broken off. She had, as her best thought to make him offer to renew it, and when

"Edward, my dear boy, Edward, they do not want you to be told about Mary. They think that I know nothing about what goes on; but I do. Mary is ill. She has been ill a long time. You ought to come. Come! Come! She has fretted a great deal about you. It is serious now—very serious. Come."

He at once sent a telegram to his grandmother: "Expect me at half-past ten on Thursday night." The moon was shining with almost the brightness of day when he stood at the door of his grandmother's house. The last person whom he had seen when he left it was Mary's old nurse, Albany, a hard, vindictive woman, whom he had never liked, but who passionately loved Mary, and for her sake had schooled herself into being a kind nurse to Mrs. Maskelyne, and for her sake, too, had doubtless pursued him with that look of hatred which even to this day he could not forget. Strange to say, Albany's face was the first that he saw on his return. It looked white and rigid when she opened the door.

"You, Albany?" he said. "I did not expect to see you!" "All the rest are abed, or you would not," she said, without looking in his face or taking any notice of the hand which, for Mary's sake, he held out to her.

"How is Miss Mary?" he inquired anxiously. "Miss Mary is well—very well," she answered sternly, as if she thought that he had no right to ask the question.

"And my grandmother?" "My mistress is well, sir. Supper is laid for you in the dining room, and you are to sleep in the room you came to occupy before, when you came here," and having thus got rid of all that she thought it necessary to say to him in one breath, she turned to go.

"I shall see my aunt, I hope; it is barely half-past ten." He was determined not to seem to observe the woman's tone of animosity.

"Miss Maskelyne is not here. She took Miss Mary to Dublin a month ago for better advice."

"Then Miss Mary is in Dublin, too. I am afraid. They have neither of them come back you mean," he exclaimed, and his spirits fell to zero, for during some hours at least he would, perhaps, be left to the tender mercies of the forbidding woman, tempered only by such kindness as could be shown by a nonagenarian.

"They have neither of them come back," she said. "But Miss Mary is better? You said that she was better."

"Yes, I said she was better, and she is." "And she will soon come back here?"

As if weary of being forced to reply to the questions of the man he hated, Albany suddenly turned her back on him and began to go, but he would not let her have the triumph of departing without giving him an answer.

"Albany, I asked a question and must have an answer. Will Miss Mary soon be back?" "Yes, she will soon be back," she said, without so much as turning round while she spoke; and then she left him.

He went into the dining-room, which, under feminine management, was more of a sitting-room than a dining-room. He had always liked to eat in privacy, and when he saw it again a blissful sense of being once more at home and at rest came over him; here indeed was rest, and here soon would be love and happiness. He took up a candle to look at Sir Joshua's portraits of his great-grandfather and great-grandmother, and Linnell's of his aunt when young, and the inlaid cabinets and precious china bowls which had never seen the inside of any London shop, but had been brought from China or Japan by sailor-uncles of their fathers. All at St. Bridget's and Albany's were full, and he had left it for London and its clamor and strife. He drank some wine and went out by a window into the garden. By this time the past had him wholly in its power. He hit his pipe and he was happy. He lit his pipe and he was happy. He lit his pipe and he was happy. He lit his pipe and he was happy.

"It's all because my uncle's half-brother's ugly old wife has just cut me dead," said Maskelyne, smiling bitterly.

"But why in the name of all that's sensible are you not at this moment with somebody's sweet young sister, some girl who is willing to be your wife, I mean? You shouldn't look like that. You should be thinking of the girl who has come to you at this very moment is, no doubt, sitting with her cheeks all aflame and eyes all aglow, reading what every paper in the country is saying of you."

"Perhaps I am thinking of her!" "Thinking of her? What's the use of thinking of her? Go to her and enjoy your success with her—there's no such way of enjoying it as that. By Jove! what would I not give to be able to make such a speech as you did? What would any of us not give? Come along. If you are going to the club, I'll have the distinction of waiting with you."

"I am going to my chambers."

"Not to brood over your half-uncle's deceased wife's sister—that's what she was, wasn't it?—passing you by without speaking. I hope. Why did she do that, I wonder? No young woman would have done it. Parsonell!"

"Why did she do it?" Maskelyne began to wonder, too, for she was much more bitter against him now than at first, and she had promised, as a devout Catholic—he and all his family were Catholics—to try to think kindly of her. "Go to her and enjoy your success with her—there's no such way of enjoying it as that. By Jove! what would I not give to be able to make such a speech as you did? What would any of us not give? Come along. If you are going to the club, I'll have the distinction of waiting with you."

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this of hers. It seemed to cut him through and through.

"That's all!" she said, as she turned away. "Screw down the lid and get done."

For the last time Maskelyne struggled to move or speak, and succeeded in saying "Mersey!"

"What mercy did you show her?" said Albany. "Oh, done, men."

Maskelyne heard them begin to fumble with screws.

"Mersey!" he said again; but at that moment he was shut off from all light and hope.

"He shall have a grand funeral," he heard Albany say, as if to console the men for what they were compelled to do. "Everything shall be done just as the family itself would do it for him. I have seen to all that myself. It is beginning now—there's the 'Miserere.'"

He almost thought that he did hear the "Miserere." He was now alone, and he certainly heard it. Suddenly a loud shriek rang throughout the house, whereupon his distress became so great that he awoke.

It was broad daylight, the sun was shining into the room. He mechanically looked at his watch. It was nearly 7 o'clock, but—and he shuddered as he became aware of it—he still heard the funeral psalm.

The singing seemed to come from outside. He was able to get out of bed, but barely awake yet, and stood in much wonder the influence of that dream. Thank God, however, he was at last beginning to recover the use of his limbs. He drew aside the curtain and, though half-blinded by the light, saw a little group of people just turning round a corner of the drive as they went to church, which they were visible from the house. They looked like people in a procession—nay, what he saw even seemed to fit on to his hideous and grotesque dream. Had it been a dream? He was dreaming still? For this really and truly looked very like a funeral procession. Two boys acolytes headed it; then came young men bearing crosses, with a boy on each side of them, each carrying a candle. Then came a boy with incense and another with holy water, and after them the priest in his black biretta and black and white vestments. Maskelyne's breath became quick. That fiend Albany had said that all should be done properly, and it was being done properly, for behind the priest walked a group of the Maskelyne tenants. All came slowly up to the house, and behind these was the coffin, covered with a heavy black pall. And now the fall of the "De Profundis" rose and fell, and still Maskelyne, who in the two or three minutes that had elapsed had not had time to shake off the stupor of sleep and the horror of this dream which had accompanied it, wondered what could be the significance of this. Was his dream, as dreams sometimes are, to some extent true? Was his grandmother dead, or was she dream still living on?

He roused himself. He was not dreaming, and his grandmother, if dead, would have been borne out of the house, not brought into it. And then a thought came into his mind that made his heart stand still.

It was Mary who had just come bringing home! Mary was dead—that was why Albany had said she was well! Knowledge of the whole truth came to him in a flash—Mary had been dead for some days. Mrs. Phillip Moleworth had had a stroke and died. He had not spoken to him. His grandmother did not know—they had kept the truth from her—but she knew enough to make her try to do good to Mary by bringing him back to her.

He had come back and he loved her, and she loved him. He had not come near him. He was nothing to any of them at that moment. He lay where he fell, sometimes half-conscious—he never knew how long.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon he had come back. He would not go as he had come, unseemly and unsummoned. How could he speak to them? How could they speak to him? The trestles on which her coffin had rested were still standing in the middle of the hall. The floor was strewn with fallen white roses—yes, and broken flowers from her funeral wreath—and as he looked on them he knew that the rest of his life would be as broken and shattered as those white flowers.

Through the crowded streets returning, at the ending of the day, hastened one whom all saluted as he sped along his way.

In his eye a gleam of triumph, in his heart a joy sincere. And the voice of shouting thrushes still resounding in his ears, as he passed the "tooth a stately archway toward the goal of his desire. Till he saw a woman's figure looting idly by the fire.

"I have won!" he cried, exultant; "I have saved a course from wreck. Crumpled and he roared, set my foot upon his neck! Now at last the way is open, now at last men call me great. I am the leader of the leaders, I am master in the state!"

Languidly she turned to listen, and decorous was her attention. And her cold, Patricia's features mirrored forth indifference. "Men are always scheming—striving for power and glory," she said. "Then, a little yawn suppressing: 'What is all of this to me?'"

Through the shadows of the evening, as they quenched the sunset glow, came the other, faring homeward, with dejected step and slow. Wistful, peering through the darkness, on their shoulders.

"Set it down there at the bed foot, if you please," said Albany sternly; and having been obeyed, she came straight to the bedside and looked at him.

"You can put him in at once," she said. "He is asleep, and will not wake up. There is no fear of his doing that."

"But neither of the men moved. 'Don't you hear me?' said Albany, impatiently. 'Now is the time to do it! I tell you again, that he will not be able to wake up.'"

Heroupan Maskelyne, who felt perfectly able to hear, see and understand all that was going on, tried to spring to his feet, but found that he could not so much as raise his head from the pillow.

The men were coming noiselessly towards him. Albany was calmly watching their movements. Once more he strained every nerve to rise up and resist what was coming, once more he found that he could not even move a finger.

Then the men came, one to his head and one to his feet, and lifted him into the coffin, and he felt that his body was cold and stiff as that of a corpse while they did it, and yet his mind was alert.

And now Albany drew near to take a last look at him as he lay there. After repeated attempts, he was able to decipher these words—

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CLOSE AT 6 O'CLOCK

WE GIVE YOU the actual every-day selling price of every item and the special selling price for Friday. We tell you candidly and honestly that in no other store on any day can goods of equal value be bought for the same money. All we ask is that you come and see for yourself. Friday from 10 until 6 o'clock.

Friday Sale Strictly All-Wool Carpets
Double extra super and strictly all-wool Ingrain Carpets, in a beautiful range of patterns and colors. Not a yard of similar carpet has ever sold under 60c. On Friday only **49c**

500 Baskets of Groceries, worth \$1.61; on Friday only 1.00
Each basket contains one pound coffee, worth 25c; one-half pound mixed tea, 25c; 4 pounds oat meal, 12c; one-half pound pepper, 8c; one can corn, 9c; one tomato, 9c; one can peas, 9c; 3 pounds starch, 15c; one can baking powder, 10c; 1 package Prosperity Washing Powder, 5c; 2 pounds prunes, 10c; 1 package corn starch, 8c; 1 basket, 10c. See them in the window. Friday only.....

Tremendous Offerings of White Nainsooks for Friday
The chance of the season. 3,500 yards of white nainsooks, in small and medium checks. These are mill ends direct from the manufacturer, and in full pieces would be worth 8 cents a yard. Friday..... **3c**

High Class Wash Goods Unusually Cheap for Friday
Right now, when you need it. And Friday, too, when you can surely come. Your choice of all our fine 12 1/2c dress gingham in newest effects; also our entire stock of 12 1/2c and 15c dimities. All this season's goods, remember. Friday only..... **7 1/2c**

8c Cup and Saucer for 5c **Castile Soap and Wash Cloth 7c**
Large white granite cup and saucer, that always sells for 8c set. Take them on Friday only at..... **5c** Full size cake of Castile Soap, purest kind, wrapped in Turkish wash cloth, worth 12c. Friday..... **7c**

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Miles and miles of pretty ribbons. All of the finest silk taffeta. All colors, including black and white. Newest season's shades. Widths 4 1/2 and 5 inches. At any ordinary time you'd pay anybody from 25c to 35c yard. On Friday only..... **15c**

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Full 26 inch in size. Covered in finest quality of English Goria, solid paragon frames with steel rods. Fancy curled wood handles—some with silver tips. Worth \$1.00 each—never sold here under 89c and 98c. Take them away Friday at..... **73c**

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The "Kaiser" brand, known the world over as the very best Silk Gloves. All colors, also black and white. The three button kind. Patent finger tips. Not a pair has ever been sold in any store under 50c. Any shade you want Friday for..... **41c**

Handsome White Bureau Scarfs as a Friday Bargain
Marseilles pattern. The very newest. Full two yards long and handsomely fringed. Just the thing for light summer bureau coverings. Worth 18c. Take them Friday only at..... **12 1/2c**

Ladies' White Muslin Gowns, Empire Style—Very Cheap
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See window. You'll come then. A car load of goods for this Friday. Rockingham Teapots, 1, 2 and 3 quart size, worth 10c to 24c; Yellow Mixing Bowls, 2 to 8 quart size, worth 10c; also a large assortment of 2 quart Pitchers, oval and round Potato Dishes, Platters, etc., worth 10c. Your choice on Friday..... **9c**

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See them in window. 400 pairs of fine vic kid Oxford Ties in black and dark russet. Every new style of toe—English, Lenox, Broadway and Paris Opera last. Kid and vesting tops. Sizes 2 1/2 to 8. Widths D, E and EE. Also Common Sense toe. None ever sold under \$1.45. Many were \$2. Your choice Friday..... **1.00**

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