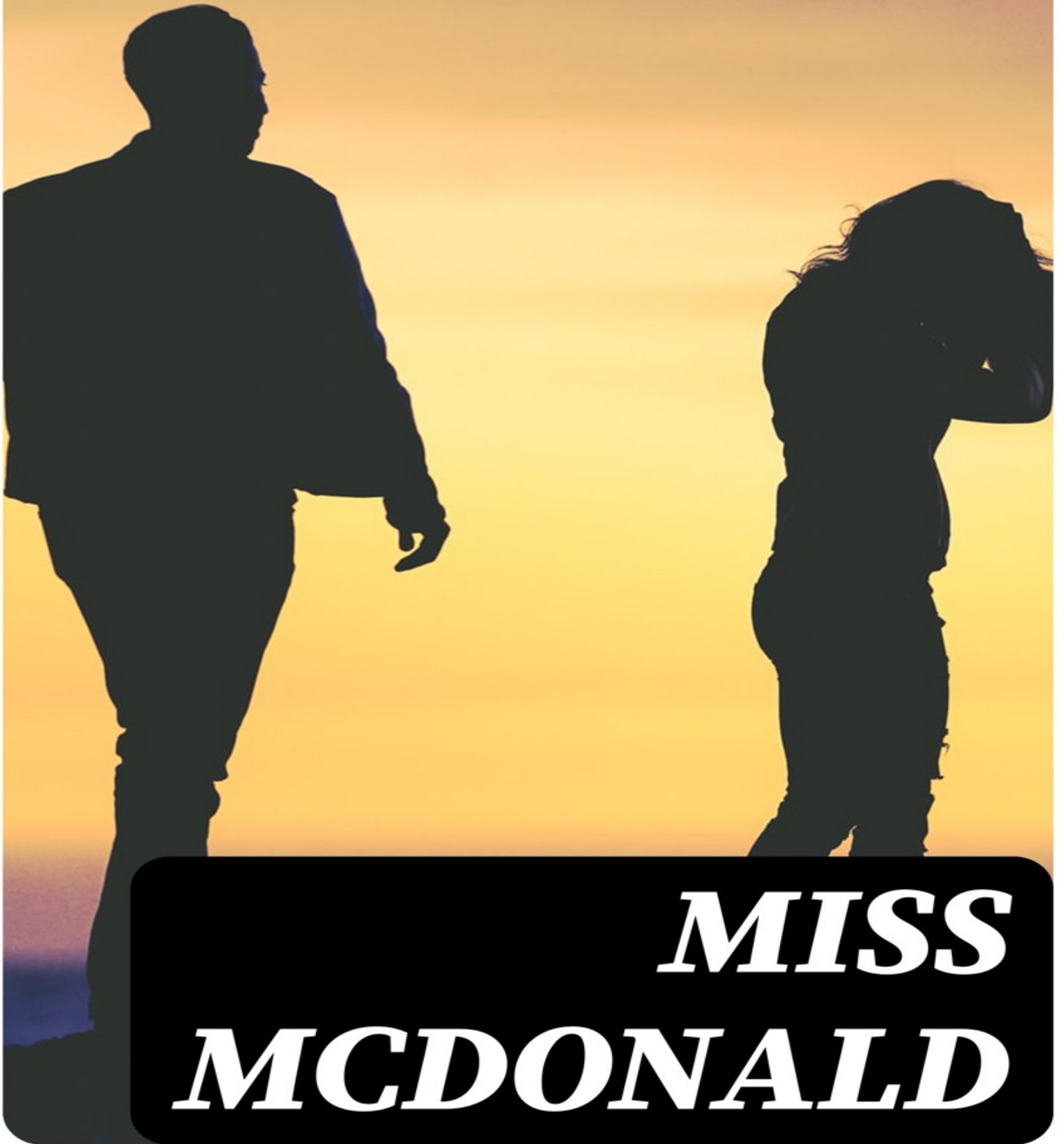


***MARY JANE
HOLMES***



***MISS
MCDONALD***

Mary Jane Holmes

Miss McDonald

EAN 8596547357124

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[CHAPTER I](#)

[CHAPTER II](#)

[CHAPTER III](#)

[CHAPTER IV](#)

[CHAPTER V](#)

[CHAPTER VI](#)

[CHAPTER VII](#)

[CHAPTER VIII](#)

[CHAPTER IX](#)

[CHAPTER X](#)

[CHAPTER XI](#)

[CHAPTER XII](#)

[CHAPTER XIII](#)

CHAPTER I

[Table of Contents](#)

EXTRACTS FROM MISS FRANCES THORNTON'S JOURNAL
ELMWOOD, June 15, 18—.

I have been out among my flowers all the morning, digging, weeding, and transplanting, and then stopping a little to rest. Such perfect successes as my roses are this year, while my white lilies are the wonder of the town, and yet my heart was not with them to-day, and it was nothing to me that those fine people staying at the Towers came into the grounds while I was at work, "just to see and admire," they said, adding that there was no place like Elmwood in all the town of Cuylerville. I know that, and Guy and I have been so happy here, and I loved him so much, and never dreamed what was in store for me until it came so suddenly and seemed like a heavy blow.

Why did he want to get married, when he has lived to be thirty years old, without a care of any kind, and with money enough to allow him to indulge his taste for books, and pictures, and travel, and is respected by everybody, looked up to as the first man in town, and petted and cared for by me as few brothers have ever been petted and cared for; why, I say, did he want a change, and, if he must be married, why need he take a child of sixteen, whom he has only known since Christmas, and whose sole recommendation, so far as I can learn, is her pretty face?

Daisy McDonald is her name, and she lives in Indianapolis, where her father is a poor lawyer, and Guy met her last winter in Chicago and fell in love at once, and made

two or three journeys West on "important business," he said, and then, some time in May, told me he was going to bring me a sister, the sweetest little creature, with such beautiful blue eyes and wonderful hair. I was sure to love her, he said, and when I suggested that she was very young, he replied that her youth was in her favor, as he could more easily mold her to the Thornton pattern.

Little he knows about girls, but then he was perfectly infatuated and blind to everything but Daisy's eyes, and hair, and voice, which is so sweet and winning that it will *speak* for her at once; and he asked me to see to the furnishing of the rooms on the west side of the house, two which communicate with his own private library, where he spends a great deal of time with his books and writing. The room adjoining this he would have for Daisy's boudoir or parlor, where she could sit when he was occupied and she wished to be near him. This he would have fitted up in blue, as she had expressed a wish to that effect, and he said no expense must be spared to make it as pretty and attractive as possible. So the walls were frescoed and tinted, and I spent two entire days in New York hunting for a carpet of the desirable shade, which should be right both in texture and design.

Guy was exceedingly particular, and developed a wonderful proclivity to find fault with everything I admired. Nothing was quite the thing for Daisy until at last a manufacturer offered to get one up which should suit, and so the carpet question was happily ended for the time being. Then came the furniture, and unlimited orders were given to the upholsterer to do his best, and matters were

progressing finely when order number two came from the little lady, who was sorry to seem so fickle, but mamma, whose taste was perfect, had decided against all blue, and would Guy please furnish the room with drab trimmed with blue. "It must be a very delicate shade of drab," she wrote, and lest he should get too intense an idea, she would call it a *tint* of a *shade* of drab, or, better yet, a *hint* of a tint of a shade of drab would describe exactly what she meant, and be so entirely unique, and lovely, and recherché.

Guy never swears, and seldom uses slang of any kind, but this was a little too much, and with a most rueful expression of countenance he asked me "what in thunder I supposed a hint of a tint of a shade of drab could be."

I could not enlighten him, and we finally concluded to leave it to the upholsterer, to whom Guy telegraphed in hot haste, bidding him hunt New York over for the desired shade. Where he found it I never knew, but find it he did, or something approximating to it, a faded, washed-out color, which seemed a cross between wood-ashes and pale skim milk. A sample was sent up for Guy's approval, and then the work commenced again, when order number three came in one of those dainty little billets which used to make Guy's face radiant with happiness. Daisy had changed her mind again and gone back to the blue, which she always preferred as most becoming to her complexion.

Guy did not say a single word, but he took the next train for New York and stayed there till the furniture was done and packed for Cuylerville. As I did not know where he was stopping, I could not forward him two little missives which came during his absence, and which bore the Indianapolis

post-mark. I suspect he had a design in keeping his hotel from me, and whether Daisy changed her mind again or not I never knew.

The furniture reached Elmwood the day but one before Guy started for his bride, and Julia Hamilton, who was then at the Towers, helped me arrange the room, which is a perfect little gem and cannot fail to please, I am sure. I wonder Guy never fancied Julia Hamilton. Oh, if he only had done so I should not have as many misgivings as I now have nor dread the future so much. Julia is sensible and twenty years old, and lives in Boston, and comes of a good family, and is every way suitable; but when did a man ever choose the woman whom his sister thought suitable for him? And Guy is like other men, and this is his wedding day; and after a trip to Montreal, and Quebec, and Boston, and New York, and Saratoga, they are coming home, and I am to give a grand reception and then subside, I suppose, into the position of the "old maid sister who will be dreadfully in the way."

SEPTEMBER 15, 18—.

Just three months since I opened my Journal, and, on glancing over what I wrote on Guy's wedding day, I find that in one respect at least I was unjust to the little creature who is now my sister and calls me Miss Frances. Not by a word or look has she shown the least inclination to assume the position of mistress of the house, nor does she seem to think me at all in the way; but that she considers me quite an antediluvian I am certain, for, in speaking of something which happened in 1820, she asked if I remembered it! And I only three years older than Guy! But then she once called

him a dear old grandfatherly man, and thought it a good joke that on their wedding tour she was mistaken for his daughter. She looks so young—not sixteen even; but with those childish blue eyes, and that innocent, pleading kind of expression, she never can be old. She is very beautiful, and I can understand in part Guy's infatuation, though at times he hardly knows what to do with his pretty plaything.

It was the middle of August when they came from Saratoga, sorely against her wishes, as I heard from the Porters, who were at the same hotel, and who have told me what a sensation she created, and how much attention she received. Everybody flattered her, and one evening when there was to be a hop at Congress Hall, she received twenty bouquets from as many different admirers, each of whom asked her hand for the first dance. They had ascertained that Guy was not a disciple of Terpsichore, though I understand he did try some of the square dances, with poor success, I imagine, for Lucy Porter laughed when she told me of it; and I do not wonder, for my grave, scholarly Guy must be as much out of place in a ball room as his little, airy doll of a wife is in her place when there. I can understand just how she enjoyed it all, and how she hated to come home, for she did not then know the kind of home she was coming to.

It was glorious weather for August, and a rain of the previous day had washed all the flowers and shrubs, and freshened up the grass on the lawn, which was just like a piece of velvet, while everything around Elmwood seemed to laugh in the warm afternoon sunshine as the carriage came up to the door. Eight trunks, two hat-boxes, and a

guitar-case had come in the morning, and were waiting the arrival of their owner, whose face looked eagerly out at the house and its surroundings, and, it seemed to me, did not light up as much as it should have done under the circumstances.

"Why, Guy, I always thought the house was brick," I heard her say as the carriage door was opened by the coachman.

"No, darling—wood. Ah, there's Fan," was Guy's reply, and the next moment I had her in my arms.

Yes, literally in my arms. She is such a wee little thing, and her face is so sweet, and her eyes so childish and wistful, and her voice so musical and flute-like that before I knew what I was doing I lifted her from her feet and hugged her hard and said I meant to love her, first for Guy's sake and then for her own. Was it my fancy, I wonder, or did she really shrink back a little and put up her hands to arrange the bows and streamers and curls floating away from her like the flags on a vessel on some gala day?

She was very tired, Guy said, and ought to lie down before dinner. Would I show her to her room with Zillah, her maid? Then for the first time I noticed a dark-haired girl who had alighted from the carriage and stood holding Daisy's traveling bag and wraps.

"Her waiting maid, whom we found in Boston," Guy explained when we were alone. "She is so young and helpless, and wanted one so badly, that I concluded to humor her for a time, especially as I had not the most remote idea how to pin on those wonderful fixings which she wears. It is astonishing how many things it takes to make up

the *tout ensemble* of a fashionable woman," Guy said, and I thought he glanced a little curiously at my plain cambric wrapper and smooth hair.

Indeed he has taken it upon himself to criticise me somewhat! thinks I am too slim, as he expresses it, and that my head might be improved if it had a more snarly appearance. Daisy, of course, stands for his model, and her hair does not look as if it had been combed in a month, and yet Zillah spends hours over it. She—that is, Daisy—was pleased with her boudoir, and gave vent to sundry exclamations of delight when she entered it and skipped around like the child she is, and said she was so glad it was blue instead of that indescribable drab, and that room is almost the only thing she has expressed an opinion about since she has been here. She does not talk much except to Zillah, and then in French, which I do not understand. If I were to write just what I think I should say that she had expected a great deal more grandeur than she finds. At all events, she takes the things which I think very nice and even elegant as a matter of course, and if we were to set up a style of living equal to that of the Queen's household I do believe she would act as if she had been accustomed to it all her life; or, at least, that it was what she had a right to expect. I know she imagines Guy a great deal richer than he is; and that reminds me of something which troubles me.

Guy has given his name to Dick Trevylian for one hundred thousand dollars. To be sure, it is only for three months, and Dick is worth three times that amount, and an old friend and every way reliable and honest. And still I did not want Guy to sign. I wonder why it is that women will always jump at a

conclusion without any apparent reason. Of course, I could not explain it, but when Guy told me what he was going to do, I felt in an instant as if he would have it all to pay and told him so, but he only laughed at me and called me nervous and fidgety, and said a friend was good for nothing if he could not lend a helping hand occasionally. Perhaps that is true, but I was uneasy, and shall be glad when the time is up and the paper canceled.

Our expenses since Daisy came are double what they were before, and if we were to lose one hundred thousand dollars now we should be badly off. Daisy is a luxury Guy has to pay for, but he pays willingly and seems to grow more and more infatuated every day. "She is such a sweet-tempered, affectionate little puss," he says; and I admit to myself that she is sweet-tempered, and that nothing ruffles her, but about the affectionate part I am not so certain. Guy would pet her and caress her all the time if she would let him, but she won't.

"Oh, please don't touch me. It is too warm, and you muss my dress," I have heard her say more than once when he came in and tried to put his arm about her or take her in his lap.

Indeed, her dress seems to be uppermost in her mind, and I have known her to try on half a dozen different ones before she could decide in which she looked the best. No matter what Guy is doing, or how deeply he is absorbed in his studies, she makes him stop and inspect her from all points and give his opinion, and Guy submits in a way perfectly wonderful to me who never dared to disturb him when shut up with his books.