

MILDEW MANSE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649222322

Mildew manse by Belle K. Maniates & William Van Dresser

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

BELLE K. MANIATES & WILLIAM VAN DRESSER

MILDEW MANSE



I called them in and read the letter. FRONTISPIECE.
See page 198.

MILDEW MANSE

BY

BELLE K. MANIATES

AUTHOR OF "AMARILLY OF CLOTHES-LINE ALLEY," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
WILLIAM VAN DRESSER



BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1916

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

I called them in and read the letter	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Down went my head on the music rack and I had the weeps—hard	PAGE 68
Learning to walk on the wavering fence with a balancing pole	" 127
Haphiram had betrayed my retreat	" 231

MILDEW MANSE

March 25th.

FATHER-DEAR:

HERE am I, Little Jumping Joan, as you used to call me, in a city far away from that four by nine place where you and Mark left me. I can see your look of consternation and hear your guarded gutturals, but read farther and you will see that I have landed on my feet — steady little feet, you always said. You will also see that I am better housed and homed than I was in that halfway hamlet on the hillside.

You know I never could stay “put” anywhere. The wanderlust which sent you to Northern Alaska to recuperate our fallen fortunes brought me here. I’d rather be an agile ashcat in an alley than a lonely lily in the field, anyway; and then, too, daddy dear, I want to be a help instead of the hindrance I’ve always been to you.

MILDEW MANSE

I couldn't let you split even with me when you need so much money for our gold-dredging proposition, so I put three-quarters of the amount you left for me in a package and gave it to Mark to deliver to you after leaving Seattle.

Right here let me tell you not to expend too much sympathy on Mark. He didn't go with you to the wilds of Alaska on account of a broken heart, but because — well, that is his story. And don't delude yourself with the hope that absence will make the heart grow fonder. It never does; not a healthy heart, anyway.

No; you and I have feasted and famined together for twenty years and lived in many air-castles, but we have now come down to earth — I mean sand, and whether it sifts gold or is only good for footprints, I want no shining Mark — only my dear young daddy.

You know you promised that this was to be our last flyer at a fortune and, win or lose, you'd settle down with me to a hearth and home life.

To return to my running jump: I made up my mind to exchange the peace of the

MILDEW MANSE

pastures for the turmoil of town and become a little self-supporter. Inventory of my qualifications towards this end was not encouraging. I am not of the one-talent kind, you know, but "flutter in all ways and fly in none." I can sew a little, embroider less, play the piano improperly and run a typewriter, but never made the word-signs in shorthand and never shall, so I was in doubt what to try my hand at, until I recalled what you said to Mark the other day — that times are changing and that nowadays people make a living more by their wits than by brains or labor, so I set my wits to working.

My light refused to shine; it seemed to be a dark lantern until there came a flashlight which showed me how to capitalize my semi-speciality and I decided to open a Bureau of Suggestions. Like you I am no advocate of grass-growing, and I hastened to come here where I knew just one person, Mrs. Munk, our ex-housekeeper, sole survivor of that brief halcyon time when we had "maids in plenty." Fortunately we have always kept up a Christmas card communication, so I knew her address. Like

MILDEW MANSE

the Little Old Woman called Nothing-At-All, she lived in a dwelling exceedingly small, but her door opened invitingly wide to me. She looks just as she used to, plump and billowy of form. Do you remember that Mark always referred to her as the feather-bed?

She couldn't grasp our change of fortune and I had hard work to convince her that our one and only prosperity period was a thing of the past. I told her of your Alaskan enterprise and she was quite impressed, believing it to be a gold mine. When I explained that it was in the sands you were building your hopes, she thought I meant something in masonry and told me a long rigmarole about her son having taken the third degree. Then I was the one that was muddled, as I had a hazy idea that third degrees had to do with the quizzing of witnesses or criminals. Finally we got the sand puzzle solved, though she is rather pessimistic as to your prospects. Said she had heard of people warding off the wolf by sifting ashes but had never heard of sifting sand.

When I told her of my plan, she looked