

MADGE MORRISON,

The Molalla Maid and Matron.

By Mrs. A. J. DUNIWAY,
AUTHOR OF "JUDITH REED," "ELLEN DOWD,"
"AMIE AND HENRY LEE," "THE HAPPY
HOME," "ONE WOMAN'S SPHERE,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

The soul of Mrs. Andrews had been so
filled with dismal apprehensions during
the absence of Jason and Madge, that
she was afraid to meet them on their
return, lest her fears would be realized,
and the team and produce squandered
in pandering to her husband's unfortu-
nate appetite.

"I've so far conquered my repugnance
to Jason since the baby came that I
think I could endure him very well,"
she said to Alice, "if he would only
quit his drinking and become a sober
man, as I thought he was when I mar-
ried him."

"Since Madge has taken him in
charge, I think there is great hope for
him," was the consoling reply.

"I don't know," sighed the wife.
"There isn't much hope for a reforma-
tion when there isn't anything to speak
of to build on."

"It passes my powers of comprehen-
sion to understand why you should
have married that man at your time of
life," said Alice.

"You are not more astonished than
I," was the mother's humiliating con-
fession. "I must have been crazy or
dreaming, and I guess I was both. I
guess I was both."

"And I guess you're right in that con-
clusion, mother dear. But let any man
catch me napping over the matrimo-
nial noose with my present knowledge
of the world, the flesh, and the devil."

"Don't be irreverent, Alice," said her
mother, reprovingly, as her daughter
turned to the little mirror to fix some
cheap ribbons in her hair, trilling the
while a lighthearted ditty to an old-time
tune, and dreaming, even then, of future
coquettish possibilities.

"Most single women are matrimonially
insane, while two-thirds of the married
ones are secretly sighing for the same
circumstances. Don't berate us too
severely for telling the sober truth, good
reader. Unpleasant as it is, it must be
spoken, simply because it's true."

"Under these come now," said Mrs.
Andrews, with a half-suppressed sigh,
"and I do wonder if Jason's sober?"

Madge alighted from the wagon, gave
the cattle and the heavy whip into the
charge of Sam and Harry, and assisted
her trembling companion to the ground,
"Just as I expected," said the anxious
wife.

"Just as you don't expect," cried
Madge. "Your baby's father is as sober
as a judge."

"I'm mighty sick, though," replied
the head of the family, as he tottered
toward the house.

"He needs liquor!" exclaimed the
wife, in an undertone.

"Not another word!" said Madge,
aside and authoritatively. "I've re-
solved that he shall never taste another
drop. If he lives over this crisis, well,
we'll do what we can to make as decent
a man as possible of what there is of
him. If he dies because he can't get
whisky, the quicker he's gone the
better."

"Madge!" exclaimed her mother, in
astonishment, "how you shock me!"

"It's to be hoped the shock will do
you good," was the quick rejoinder.
"Jason's my patient, and if he dies I'll
be my funeral. He's better off dead
and sober, than living and a drunkard."

The women had lingered behind, and
out of the hearing of the reforming
man, who staggered on the walk alone
and miserable.

"How I wish I was dead!" he wailed,
as the agony of an intolerable longing
for stimulants burned in his brain and
stomach, while his palsied limbs al-
most refused to do their bidding.

"Are you not ready for death?"

The question seemed to come from the
innermost depths of his shattered being.

In terror he looked around him, but
no living mortal was near enough to be
heard in such a voice except the little
babe that lay in its rude cradle, breath-
ing peacefully.

"Poor little creature! I'm so glad it's a
girl!" he said, repeatedly, as he dropped
into a chair and looked long and ear-
nestly into its face.

"And why are you glad it's a girl,
pray?" asked Madge, kindly, as she
came into the room and placed her
hand caressingly upon his uncovered
head.

"Because it'll never drink whisky."
"What's to hinder it? Maybe it's
inherited its father's appetite. The
sins of parents are often visited upon
their children, you know."

"But women are a heap stronger-
minded than men. A woman never
falls into drunkenness till after she's
kicked out of decent society."

"I must differ with you there, my
good friend. Women would yield to
evil habits, and, per consequence, be
often as men do, or rather, men would
not yield any oftener to evil habits than
women do, only for the fact that women
are generally powerless to dictate to
them concerning their daily walk,

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How long do you think you'd live as
the contented husband of Nancy And-
rews if she should become a habitual
drunkard?"

"Not long."
"Then you see that your great weak-
ness is caused in great part by the li-
cense you have had to do evil. You
have dared to exercise the masculine
prerogative because woman was power-
less to make laws, either to prevent it
or protect herself. But, by the time
this baby is a woman, all women will
be men's co-law-makers, and then, men
will be held to just as strict account for
all their misdeeds as they to-day hold
women. There is no law now in exist-
ence to protect woman in this way;
therefore, I, an outlaw as far as the
legal codes of men are concerned, am
resolved to be a law unto myself, and
thereby protect my own womanhood."

"I only wish all the women in the
world were like ye?" exclaimed the
nervous sufferer, with a sob.

"If every woman would be true to her-
self she could easily compel all men to
be true to themselves," was the decided
reply.

"I'm awful sick!" said Jason, sud-
denly, "and I'll never be well any
more."

"He ought to sober off by degrees,"
whispered Mrs. Andrews, coming in.

"Which he cannot do!" said Madge,
as she assisted him to the clean, white
bed, with its "clover leaf" spread of
patch-work, which he had so often de-
spised in days gone by with his
drunken debaucheries.

"I clearly see," continued Madge,
"that it's a case of kill or cure. If we
give him liquor, and patch him up by
easing his longing, it will only prolong
his misery, for he will not be cured, but
will be more than ever susceptible of
temptation. Let him alone. He'll
either get thoroughly well and die de-
cently, in his bed, or rise from this ill-
ness so thoroughly controlled by the
demon that we can no longer manage
him, and then he'll die on the gallows
or in the gutter. Desperate diseases re-
quire desperate remedies. I have re-
solved to save Jason Andrews, but
whether in the body or out of the body,
I cannot tell. God knoweth."

"Madge! are you crazy?"

"I guess so. It seems to do you all a
great deal of good to think I am, at any
rate."

"But what do you mean by saving
Jason whether in the body or out of
it?"

"Just what I say."
"Well, do explain it. You frighten
me."

"Mother, I see clearly, yet I cannot
tell you how or why, for it is not lawful
for me to utter all the truth that is re-
vealed unto me, that when a poor
drunkard dies with his spirit clouded
with such a disease as is consuming
Jason, the awful appetite will follow
him into the other life, where there
shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
That evil spirit must come out of Jason
Andrews, and we must exercise it. If
his body is rent by the ordeal, we shall
have done our duty, and can afford to
leave the result with God. If he shall
survive the treatment, he shall come
forth ransomed while yet in the body
from one of the most burdensome and
soul-destroying diseases ever yet endured
or cured among men. If he goes out
into the life of souls afflicted and in
chains, his last state shall be worse
than his first."

"Well, Madge, have things your own
way. But I must say that, to my mind,
your theology looks about as badly
muddled as your system of hygiene."

"If you could feel truths in your
bones, and see them with your eyes
shut, you wouldn't talk that way!"
cried Madge, as she relapsed into her
usual reticence over the faith that was
in her; which was literally the sub-
stance of things hoped for, and the evi-
dence of things not seen.

It was soon known through the neigh-
borhood that Jason Andrews was dan-
gerously ill. To the surprise of the
many visitors who so thronged and
filled the house with all sorts of un-
seen magnetisms as would alone have
rendered the recovery of the patient uncer-
tain, if not impossible, he refused other
medical aid than such as Madge pre-
scribed.

"I've dreamed dreams an' seen vi-
sions, an' somehow I know that what
Madge tells me is true!" he would say.
"I don't want to live unless I can con-
quer drunkenness by gettin' well. If I
die fightin' it, I know I'll conquer, for I
see the light ahead."

"The girl's bewitched him. I'd like
to see the days of thumb-screws and
racks come back again for all cases like
Madge!" said the ex-parson, with the
voice that naturally attuned itself on all
solemn occasions to a rasping double
bass. "This sorcery among women that
rises and puts its own construction on
Scripture, when Paul suffered not a
woman to teach, is simply abominable."

"Which is the best judge of what a
woman can and ought to do, do you
think—God Almighty, or Paul?" cried
Madge, her eyes flashing.

"There's more nonsense! You can
never reason with a woman!"

"Try common sense for argument, and
see!" and Madge turned away with a
shrug of disgust.

Jason Andrews did not rally. For
weeks and weeks he lingered, as help-
less and exacting as a spoiled and petted

child. He would suffer no one except
Madge to wait upon him, and her ordeal
of servitude told fearfully upon her
health.

Meanwhile, the trial of Morris Morri-
son for the alleged murder of George
Hanson dragged its tardy length into a
so-called court of justice.

After the usual preliminaries, (and
men who wear their lives away in the
arduous service of an ungrateful coun-
try are seldom in a hurry about prelimi-
naries), a jury of twelve sovereign
people was impaneled, whom, but for
Mark Twain's inimitable take-off upon
another jury of twelve conservators of
law and life and destiny, which is yet
fresh in the minds of our readers, we
might occupy pages in describing each
and severally, and the prisoner was
placed inside the bar.

The prosecuting attorney seemed es-
pecially blood-thirsty, so watchful was
he of the rights and immunities of a
sovereign people. The judge was an
urbane, slow-speaking gentleman,
phlegmatic and deliberate, but in all
things inclined to be just according to
the light that attorneys and witnesses
were able to bestow.

The prisoner was pale and emaciated.
Long confinement had told fearfully
upon his constitution, and the coarse
food, ill-cooked and indigestible, that
had been regularly provided for him by
the ex-parson's sad-eyed wife, had added
little to his comfort.

"The prisoner will stand up!" said
the learned judge.

The heavy manacles that clanked
about him made the task a difficult
one, but the prisoner stood up.

"Morris Morrison, you stand in the
august presence of the judicial ermine,
charged with the gravest of all crimes,
the murder of one of your fellow be-
ings. You are of sound mind and of
mature years. You are yourself cog-
nizant of your guilt or innocence. It is
the wish of the Court that you provide
yourself with a counsel. Have you done
so?"

"No, sir."

"Are you unable to procure counsel?"

"No, sir."

"Then make your choice."

"Your Honor, I have the pleasure to
introduce myself."

"You are not a lawyer, and you must
run no risks. I appoint Esquire Law-
maker as your attorney in the name of
the commonwealth. Of course you un-
derstand that you are to pay for his
services in case you possess the funds.
If not, the State will meet the expenses,
for you must have a fair trial."

"Indeed, your Honor, the State is
very kind, but I do not wish the ser-
vices of Mr. Lawmaker. I prefer to
plead my own case, unaided and un-
feared."

"The Court regrets its inability to
grant your request, sir. Human life is
too sacred to be thus entrusted to an
irregular proceeding. Esquire Law-
maker, take your seat beside the pris-
oner."

The Esquire obeyed with an alacrity
that was possibly suggested by promp-
tings of humanity, and possibly by pro-
spective duanets. The opposing counsel
took a seat upon the other side. Both
attorneys looked to be, and indeed were,
played-out politicians (excuse the slang)
of the opposing schools. One was a
thin, wiry, excitable and impotent look-
ing individual, with a thin head, nearly
bald, upon which a few sickly hairs
were struggling to eke out a feeble ex-
istence, and the other was a broad,
thick-set sovereign, with protruding
stomach, and a round, chuckle head,
surmounted by a pate as sleek and des-
titute of hirsute covering as a varnished
watermelon.

The prisoner looked at both and shud-
dered.

"What say you? Guilty or not
guilty?" said the urbane judge.

"I should be guilty of self-murder
should I plead guilty," was the firm re-
ply. "This, however, is the first time I
have had opportunity to answer the
official question. I am not only not
guilty, but I know that the man of
whom murder I stand accused is alive
and well—or, rather, that he was alive
and well at the time of my incarceration,
as I could long ago have proven
had my witnesses been considered leg-
ally competent to testify to the truth."

"This is a very irregular proceeding,"
said His Honor. "A prisoner is not
usually allowed to make voluntary as-
sertions. Be careful, lest you criminate
yourself."

The prisoner smiled.

"Now, answer only such questions
as are propounded. Do you plead
guilty, or not guilty?"

"Not guilty."

"Very well. The attorneys will now
call the witnesses, and proceed at once
with the trial."

So saying, the urbane judge leaned
back in his official chair, by some inex-
plicable misnomer dubbed a bench, and
began to read the morning paper.

Have patience, kindly reader. We
shall not inflict upon you that intricate
description of the trial which we know
you are preparing to skip. A cloud of
witnesses were brought forward and
sworn, and there followed the usual
questionings and cross-questionings,
questions that bore not upon the ques-
tion, and questions that were often a
direct insult to the questioned, and still
no positive information amounting to
anything; but the most round-a-bout

circumstantial evidence could be, in
common Western vernacular, made to
stick.

The depositions of Jason Andrews
(he could not come to the court because
of his illness), relative to the missing
man, the threats he had overheard, the
meeting he had almost witnessed be-
tween the supposed deceased and the
accused, the cast-off clothing found in
the Molalla, which had been exhibited
till every man, woman, and child in
the community could swear clearly as
to its quality without again seeing it,
all failed to elicit anything new; but
the suspicion of the prisoner's guilt had
wrought conviction in the minds of the
multitude, who were eager for the
shedding of human blood; and there
seemed to be scarcely a ray of hope for
his acquittal. Madge had stolen the
little time wherein she dared to leave
her patient at the farm to attend the
trial as a spectator, resolved to volun-
teer nothing herself unless it were found
necessary to thus attempt to save her
friend. Closely, though furtively, she
watched the eyes of the jurors, and could
read nothing but decisive condemnation
there. The last witness had endured the
inquisitorial torture of divers cross-ques-
tionings, and then, with all eyes upon
her, Madge walked through the aisle,
leading Sara Perkins by the hand. A
few words were whispered in the ear of
the opponent of Esquire Lawmaker,
which gave that dignitary a new idea
that he acted upon at once.

Sara Perkins was sworn. With her
testimony the reader is already ac-
quainted. She had met George Hanson
and talked with him two weeks after
the time of the alleged murder. Her
statement was given in an unwavering,
modest way that charmed the judge
and jury. Then came the cross-ques-
tioning. The witness took her turn
upon the rack.

"You are a married lady, I believe?"

"No, sir."

Sara blushed scarlet.

"Pardon me, I hear that you are a
mother."

Alas, the wronged mother of a man's
child had no manly protector to appeal
to. So she only blushed in silence.

"I learn also that there were tender
relations at one time between you,
madam, and the prisoner at the bar.
Am I rightly informed?"

"We can't escape that, I have more
than we can our thoughts."

"It's lucky for us that they are harm-
less things," answered the young man,
with a smile. "I shouldn't think you
would want to escape your thoughts,
Mrs. Rachel. I'm sure I shouldn't.
And if you have no objection, I'll walk
in your shadow, as you seem to be go-
ing my way."

Rachel Moffatt bowed, but the young
man, glancing into her face, saw that
she accepted his company with resigna-
tion.

"I presume you have received George
Reynolds' cards, said the young man,
after a pause.

"Yes," Rachel answered, gravely.
"They are very stylish," she added,
with an effort.

"Miss Maurice is said to be wealthy,"
the young man continued.

"Ah!" Rachel exclaimed, with a curl
of lips that was full of scorn.

With a delicate intuitive sense that
which she had done honor to men in finer
clothes and a loftier sphere, Walter
Gibbs changed the subject with the re-
mark:

"I have the book of yours that I bor-
rowed, in my pocket, Miss Rachel. There
were scraps of paper in it, and
some bits of faded flowers. I have saved
them all, and return them with the
book."

"Thank you; it did not signify,"
Rachel replied, indifferently.

She turned the leaves of the book and
gazed at the faded motion of the
restless hands, and then dropped from
the gilded leaves the faded flowers.
They were all alike, mere bits of pink
coloring on a woody stem—pink not so
deep as the color that glowed on Rachel
Moffatt's cheeks at sight of the flowers.

"It is the *Cereus canadensis*, or Judas
tree," her companion remarked, pick-
ing up one of the fallen bits and pulling
it in pieces.

"The Judas tree," echoed Rachel
Moffatt, all her tones full of scornful
wonder.

"Yes," the young man said, answer-
ing the wonder in her tones. "In the
spring it is a tree of promise, with all
its rugged branches crowded full of
blossoms; but the blossoms die, and there
is left a spring-time promise. There is but
one in the village that I know of, and
that is in Squire Reynolds' garden."

Looking up to see if Rachel Moffatt
remembered the tree, Walter Gibbs be-
came painfully conscious that his re-
mark had dyed her face with tell-tale
blushes, and the tale they told was
about George Reynolds. Then he re-
membered how he had forced his com-
pany upon her, and his conscience
smote him when he thought how his
careless words might have added to the
trouble of the girl he loved. At least
she should be relieved from the annoy-
ance of his society, and, with a sigh, he
remarked:

"It was unwell of me to join you,
Miss Rachel, when you came out to
walk alone. I beg your pardon. And
I have an errand down to the widow
Brown's, and am going around that
way. I will leave you here."

"I would be glad to have your com-
pany," Rachel Moffatt felt constrained
to say.

"Thank you, but my errand is urgent,"
Walter Gibbs answered. "Glad to be
with you company!" he muttered, as he
walked away, "a pretty story that,
and she wishing me ten miles away, and
the moment I joined her! What a poor
blind fool I have been!"

The woman whose happiness George
Reynolds had trifled with so wantonly
walked slowly to her home and sat
down on the little low porch, watching
the moon come up. She overheard her
father's words as he talked to her
mother:

"There's as good fish in the sea as
this."

Rachel Moffatt's Shadow.

Reuben Moffatt and Kezia, his wife,
received a triplet of white wedding
cards from the hands of their daughter
Rachel, and fell into serious chat over
the bits of card-board. George Rey-
nolds, who had been discussed with posi-
tive knowledge gained by acquaint-
ance with him from boyhood. Kate
Maurice, the bride, was discussed with
the speculative knowledge that charac-
terizes remarks concerning stranger
brides.

Rachel Moffatt had left the room
while George Reynolds was under dis-
cussion, and her mother's careful eye
had observed that there was surprise,
singer, almost tears in the girl's face.

"I say, Reuben," began the good
man's wife, after Rachel had gone.
"Yes," assented Reuben Moffatt, sig-
nifying his readiness to hear what his
wife had to say.

"I want to call your attention to our
Rachel."

"You needn't call very loud," was
Reuben Moffatt's answer. "My atten-
tion goes a good deal that way natu-
rally."

"To be sure," answered Kezia Moffatt.
"How could it be otherwise, and you
the father of such a girl as our Rachel?
I am sure I wonder that a young man
like George Reynolds should look far-
ther than such a trim, handsome girl as
Rachel is, and he knows all about her
house-keeping, too."

"Look farther and fare worse! is an
old proverb, you know," rejoined Reu-
ben Moffatt.

"And it's my opinion he's done worse,
and deserves to do worse," said Kezia
Moffatt, with anger in her eyes and
tones. "I am sure I hope Rachel will
get over it and go to the party."

"Get over it?" repeated Reuben Mor-
fatt. "You don't mean to say that
Rachel—"

The old man paused and surveyed his
wife critically.

Kezia Moffatt nodded her head af-
firmatively.

"Oh, nonsense, Kezia!" exclaimed
the old man. "You feel unpleasant like
because George Reynolds should prefer
any other woman to our Rachel. It's
my opinion that Rachel hadn't a
thought of George Reynolds, except—"

A shadow fell on the porch, and the
old man suddenly changed the subject of
his remarks.

The shadow that had fallen on the
porch was Rachel Moffatt's. It followed
the young girl across the green field,
where she walked, magnifying her sun-
bonnet into an unshapey thing, and
lengthening her slight figure into ex-
ceedingly lank proportions.

"Which way, Mrs. Rachel? Are you
running, or are you from your shadow?"
asked a young man, stepping out from
an oak tree that stood midway in the
field.

Rachel Moffatt gave a side-long glance
at her shadow, and said, with an effort:
"We can't escape that, I have more
than we can our thoughts."

"It's lucky for us that they are harm-
less things," answered the young man,
with a smile. "I shouldn't think you
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