

THE SHADOW OF DESIRE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649238439

The shadow of desire by Irene Osgood

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

IRENE OSGOOD

**THE SHADOW
OF DESIRE**

THE
SHADOW OF DESIRE.

BY

IRENE OSGOOD.

PUBLISHED BY
THE CLEVELAND PUBLISHING COMPANY,
No. 19 UNION SQUARE,
NEW YORK.
1893.



60196

Copyright, 1893, by

THE CLEVELAND PUBLISHING COMPANY,

19 Union Square,

New York.

(All rights reserved.)

PS 2509

Q6 54

1893
MAIN

" And yet, I swear, it angers me to see
How this fool passion gulls men potently;
Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,
And an unnatural overheat at best.
How they are full of languor and distress
Not having it; which when they do possess,
They straightway are burnt up with fume and care,
And spend their lives in posting here and there
Where this plague drives them; and have little ease,
Are furious with themselves, and hard to please."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.



THE SHADOW OF DESIRE.

CHAPTER I.

"Gone! Wholly gone! How cold and dark,
A cheerless world of hope bereft,
The beacon quenched, and not a spark,
In all the dull gray ashes left!

No more, no more a living part
In life's contending maze to own;
Dead to its kind, an empty heart
Feeds on itself, alone! alone!"

G. J. WHITE-MELVILLE.

So he was dead. Ruth Parker shivered and drew her crape closer about her as the panorama of her life revolved.

Just a year ago she had gone away in the night with only her maid, a young negress,

and married Wythe Parker, a tall, handsome man, of twice her years; she was only seventeen then. How frightened she was after the ceremony; but he tried to comfort her. What ideal days they passed traveling! For only one cause was her happiness overcast: when as time went on, she still did not hear from her mother, sisters, or brothers, her heart began to grow heavy.

"They will never forgive me," she said. Then Wythe Parker would laugh, and cheer her up again.

Through many foreign lands they roamed. Slowly he grew to neglect her, as old, bad habits returned. Often she would grow faint with homesickness, while she waited for her husband's return until daybreak, when he would rush in, stupid with wine. One night he came back, looking tired and troubled. "We must return to-morrow to the States," he said, huskily; "the tables are too much for me." They were then at Monte Carlo. After that the ocean voyage; the long journey south, and the rest in New Orleans with his aunt, a maiden lady, whose gentle soul was

filled with love for her dead brother's child. Wythe Parker returned her love by wild extravagances. One night a report reached her that he was killed in a drunken brawl in a gambling den. The news shocked the poor lady so severely that she survived only a few hours. When her will was read it was found that she had bequeathed all her fortune, consisting of cotton and sugar plantations, to her nephew, Wythe Parker. He recovered from the wounds received that night, but his disgrace was so great that he and his wife had to flee New Orleans. Fate overtook him at Memphis, and there he died, a victim to yellow fever.

Ruth Parker felt as if God had forsaken the town and all the poor souls there. She could never forget the sullen boom of the cannon which was fired regularly to purify the air of the streets, and the bonfires which burned before each fever-stricken house, to indicate contagion; and then the bell of the death-cart, and the monotonous cry of the man: "Bring out your dead!" to be driven off and be thrown in a ditch all together, before they

were cold. People died so fast that it was hard work to bury them at all. She would never forget the tramp of the men, as they carried her husband's body away to be cast in the trench with the others, while she lay burning and tossing with fever. Ah, God! it was horrible! And she covered her face with her hands and groaned. After she had recovered, she telegraphed to her mother, Mrs. Milson, in Virginia; and the answer was: "Return at once, my child." And now she was going home. She looked out of the window of the rumbling old carriage, with listless interest in her big, gray eyes, that were set in the purple shadows which grief lends. Her brown hair, under the little black bonnet, waved away from the broad, serious forehead, and lay in fluffy rings of russet about the blue-veined temples. As they passed the old, familiar scenes, she trembled, and drew her veil closer about her. How different, alas! was her return from her going away. Some little negroes were picking basketfuls of corn-ears, tearing them from the tall stalks. The sun was bright upon them, and they laughed