

**IN THE
GODS' SHADOW**

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In the Gods' Shadow by George Macdonald

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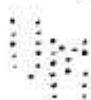
GEORGE MACDONALD

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GODS' SHADOW**

IN THE GODS' SHADOW

BY

GEORGE MACDONALD MAJOR



NEW-YORK

PRINTED AT THE DE VINNE PRESS

1891

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Denison
Wendell
D 26 37
25 May

"In the Gods' Shadow" and "The Background of Mystery" have lain in my desk for the past three years. Some time I had expected leisure and inclination to revise them,—but upon re-perusal lately they seemed lacking in unity of construction or possibly are essentially unpoetical; at least I felt that I could not work out the idea I had in my own mind. It is probably folly to print what is unsatisfactory even to one's self, but I could not consign them to oblivion without some little epitaph to mark their grave. The text for that epitaph will be culled from the critics.

January 25, 1891.

Argument.

GALLUS POLLIO, a Roman gentleman of eminent ancestry, having loved the lady JULIA, marries her and discards his mistress VISTILLIA. After three years the latter, discovering that JULIA has become a convert to the religion of Christ, betrays her to the pagan priests upon the occasion of the annual sacrifice and festival given by the Pollio family. This she does in the hope of regaining the affection of GALLUS, but only accomplishes thereby his death and her own.

Persons.

CHORUS OF PRIESTESSES.

CHIEF PRIEST.

PRIESTS.

GALLUS POLLIO.

JULIA, his wife.

VISTILLIA, formerly his mistress.

FLACCUS, brother to Vistillia.

NEIGHBORS in attendance, and BACCHANTES.

Invocation.

*A lady in imperious beauty vain
Reminds me ever of the partial Muse
Who scoffs his love who loves her most and sues
To be the humblest vassal in her train.
She scorns sobbed prayers and the incurable pain
Of burning, haunting thought, that vainly woos
Expression, since she does all aid refuse,
Or mocks with echoes of elusive strain.
What have I done that she should chase me thus —
At wakening Morn, still Noon and whispering
Eve?
What unpurged crime, save loving her too well,
Thus to be doomed of song the Sisyphus,
Or Tantalus, when Hope has turned to leave?
O Muse, grant just one song imperishable!*

January 22, 1888.



IN THE GODS' SHADOW.

A hill set apart for sacrificial purposes on grounds of Gallus Pollio. Chorus of priestesses and priests in attendance, and while the neighbors, dressed in holiday attire, are assembling, the action begins. Time — Morning.

Chorus of Priestesses.

First Priestess.

The day has arisen
In beauty and light;
The sunshiny heaven,
The dew-beaded sods,
No shadows imprison,
No hint of the night.
As Nature were given
The smiles of the gods,