

**THE HOUSE OF
QUIET; AN
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649021116

The house of quiet; an autobiography by Arthur Christopher Benson

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

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

**THE HOUSE OF
QUIET; AN
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

I (34)

7807

THE HOUSE OF QUIET



~~5474~~

THE HOUSE OF QUIET

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

FELLOW OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

"The name of the chamber was *Peace*, where he
slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sang."
—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

82489
—
4/5/07

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1906

First Edition . February 1904
Reprinted . . . March 1904
Reprinted . . . April 1904
Reprinted . . September 1904
Reprinted . . January 1905
Reprinted . . January 1906
Reprinted . . . April 1906
Second Edition . October 1906
Reprinted . . November 1906
Reprinted . . December 1906

PR
4099
B5H6
1906

INTRODUCTION

A FEW words of explanation are, I think, needed, when a book which has been anonymous for several years appears with an author's name on the title-page. My reason for putting my name to the book is in this case the simple one, that it seems foolish to go on trying to keep a secret which is no secret at all, and to persist in holding the mouth of the bag close, long after the cat has leapt out of it. There may, perhaps, be critics who will believe that I had a bad motive for originally withholding my name, just as the King in *Alice in Wonderland* triumphantly announces that the absence of the Knave's name at the end of the anonymous copy of verses proves his guilt. And there will perhaps be other critics, or more probably the same, who will think that the publication of my name now is a dodge or a device to achieve some end or other. Indeed, an amiable journalist said as much to me the other day, and hinted that to issue anonymous

▼

books, and then to announce one's name, was an ingenious way of increasing one's circulation.

I indicated to him that, from the author's point of view, such could not possibly be the motive. If one publishes a book with one's name attached, there are a certain number of people who are likely to buy it out of motives ranging from interest to compassion. But if one publishes a book anonymously, there is always a risk that it may fall absolutely flat; and if so, there is not much to be gained by announcing from the housetop a fact which no one desires to know, and claiming the authorship of a book in which no one is interested.

My own motives were of a far simpler kind. The book was an attempt to construct a picture of a life that should succeed in being, or in appearing to be, useful and happy under heavy and hampering restrictions. If I had possessed any dramatic or narrative capacity, I would have made a novel out of it; but I have no gift for combining or interlacing character, or for painting a varied scene on a large canvas. I can sketch in a background, and even design a few typical characters; and thus the only plan open to me was to put my hero in suitable surroundings, and to draw a few

personalities, which I may add were in this case entirely imaginary, to provide a contrast. Moreover, I felt that if one gave the book an air of reality, there were many readers who would forgive a certain dulness and heaviness of movement and reflection, which could not be so easily pardoned in a work of fiction.

There may be people who will think it disingenuous to give to what is in a sense a fiction an air of veracity. But here again I was in a difficulty. My experience of the world and life has of necessity, owing to circumstances, been a limited one. If I had the inventive or creative faculty, it would be different; but I am forced by the limitations of experience and imaginativeness to draw a good deal on my own slender stock—and thus the subjective part of the book may well wear an air of veracity, for it is mostly true, while on the other hand the intimate nature of it gives every excuse for my attempting to take refuge in anonymity. I have no sort of wish to force my impressions or experiences on the world because they are mine; but I have as much right as any other artist to paint pictures of the things that have seemed to me beautiful or strange or impressive; and if I choose to hang them up in a public place, thinking that