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NO 213

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SHADOW OF A NAME.

BARRY PAINE'S TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES CHADBAND.

Epitaph of a Talented Man Who Bore the Cognomen of One of Dickens' Celebrated Characters—Wrote Brilliantly, but Would Not Publish.

At 4 o'clock on the morning of Easter Sunday at his home near Malvern Well died Charles Chadband.

With the name of Chadband, thanks to Dickens, the reading world is familiar. It is associated with oiliness, hypocrisy and self seeking. At the very sound of the name the reminiscent grin starts on all faces. He is a national joke. But we pay for all our laughter, and we have paid for the Chadband jest. I do not mean to say that the unhappy accident by which Dickens selected the name of Chadband for his imposter was the cause of the death of Charles Chadband. It was not. He died of an ordinary disease—consumption, in fact. But that unhappy accident did overshadow the whole of Charles Chadband's life. It did prevent him from taking the place and fame to which he was justly entitled. It has prevented the general public from reading one single line of his very excellent works.

As his literary executor I have had no choice but to destroy every line of his manuscript, in accordance with his orders. Not a single copy has been taken, and not one word of his works that his friends remember may be committed to writing. I do not easily believe in the existence of genius, but I believe that Charles Chadband had genius. Some, far more competent to judge than I am, thought the same. As I watched the last sparks die out in the big pile of burned paper it seemed a pity that so much work and such wonderful gifts should be all wasted for such a stupid, ignoble, maddening reason—because the author had inherited the name of a character in Dickens.

He was very sensitive, but, unlike most very sensitive men, he was not affected or vain. When I was first introduced to him, he said, laughing, that he was no relation to the original Chadband. He reveled in Dickens and would quote the original Chadband freely. I had known him a long time before I knew that the coincidence of the names gave him any trouble at all. It was long before I could make out why he would not publish anything. He used to give the most absurd reasons for his reticence, and when driven into a corner he would say that he was going to publish, but not yet. One night, when I had just finished a long story of his, I implored him to let me take it away with me to London and see what could be done. "No," he said. "Nobody would publish it." I told him that it might be refused by five men out of six, but that the sixth would afterward be proud that he had accepted it.

Then, quite unexpectedly, the secret came out. "No serious work," he said, "could possibly do anything associated with the name of Chadband." He said it so light heartedly that I thought he was once more putting me off with a wrong reason, but I soon found that he was sincere. He imagined reviewers

making jests about his name and owned that he would not be able to stand it. This surprised me, for he frequently joked about his name himself, and so did his friends. He defended himself.

"That's different," he said. "That is in conversation, among men that I know. But I could not have some vulgar brute who did not know me at all doing the same thing in cold print. It would present my stuff from the wrong point of view. No, the associations of the name are too strong. If you are called Chadband, you are called Chadband, and there's an end of it. You may do what you like in private, but you can come before the public only as an intemperate, hypocritical, delicious ass, and in no other character whatever."

He would not hear of a pseudonym or of anonymity. If his work succeeded, the secret would be found out, and he would be ashamed. If it did not succeed—and he did not think it would—it was not worth his while to add to the annual output of bad books. "Why make all this fuss about nothing?" I said, angry with his obstinacy. "If you think it matters one straw—though it does not—change your name once for all and be done with it." He said that it would be sheer cowardice, and he could not dream of it.

Very unfortunately, he had private means. Poverty might have driven him to overcome his sensitiveness and to publish. Had he done so it would have been curious to watch the growth of an entirely new set of associations around the name Chadband. I think he was strong enough to have redeemed the name.

He was unmarried—said that he did not believe in the hereditary principles as applied to jokes. His real reason for not marrying was, of course, the disease of which he died. He worked exceedingly hard, and, as he knew, to no purpose. He would not own that he took pleasure in his work. "No," he said, "it's like smoking—I get no pleasure from it, but I should miss it if I gave it up." He took enormous pains with his work and finished it as thoroughly as though it were to constitute his appeal to the world on the following day. He kept the final copy of everything he approved, but his instructions were that it was all to be burned as soon as possible after his death.—Barry Pain in Black and White.

Making Antiques.

In a case before a London magistrate the question was as to the ownership of some antique ormolu articles, and two workmen, who stoutly claimed the articles, said that they "made" them. To prove their assertion they set to work in court and showed how ormolu was made "antique" with pumice powder.

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