

THE BOYHOOD OF CRISP.

HIS STORY IS MORE ROMANTIC THAN ORDINARY ROMANCE.

His Parents Star Actors in Their Day. His Patron, James Davis, Then Rich, but Reduced by the War—Heroic Struggle of the Future Speaker.

[Special Correspondence.]

NASHVILLE, Dec. 17.—Though Georgia has been the scene of the evolution of Charles F. Crisp from a well nigh briefless barrister to the plethoric practice of an acknowledged leader at the bar, and though Georgia ballots elevated him from the dreary routine of a circuit judgeship to the potent arena of the halls of congress, yet his experience on Tennessee soil is doubtless remembered by him as the most unique of his life.

At that time one of the richest citizens of Nashville was James Davis. His clothing and dry goods establishment was known far and wide as the largest between Louisville and New Orleans. Many a plantation was supplied from his ample warehouse in exchange for cotton and negroes, for the Cumberland river was a very important artery of commerce in those antebellum days.

As his wealth increased, a natural fondness for travel asserted itself, and Davis made many a pleasure trip to Louisville, Cincinnati, New York and the far east. The stage was his hobby, and he was an habitue of the best resorts wherever he went. On one occasion he strolled into the Niblo Garden theater, New York, when Macbeth was on the boards.

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The father was a scholar of no mean attainments, a man of versatile talents and extensive observation. His wife was a woman of matronly dignity, high moral worth and marked culture. They frequently appeared before the footlights and were soon installed prime favorites with this theater loving public.

Soon after moving to Nashville the Crisps brought their children here. Of the sons, Harry evinced a decided preference for the stage and bent his energies to fit himself for it as a profession. He succeeded well, becoming in time leading man with Salvini.

The lad accepted the situation cheerfully and went to work with a will. His boyish "belongings" were moved to the Davis homestead, and he entered on the new career with the determination to earn as a merchant the money which his parents had failed to wring from the stage.

The early pedestrians who passed the Davis establishment often beheld the future speaker of the house of representatives of the United States with coat collar turned high about his tingling ears in winter, or in his shirt sleeves in summer, by the dim light of awaking day sturdily shoveling snow from the door of his patron, or wielding a broom as tall as himself to clear away the dust from the rude pavement.

His companions, now gray haired, say that he shirked no duty, and his old employer pays tribute to his steadiness and morality. Regardless of the weather he was always prompt in his presence at the store, and worked unremittingly month after month at the side of the big force of men under the rich merchant.

But the lad evinced attention to other matters than those in line with business. He loved books, and gathered about him such as his scant purse would allow and his friends could loan. Shakespeare was his ideal. Doubtless this taste for the Bard of Avon had been created by seeing his productions presented on the stage by Mr. and Mrs. Crisp in leading roles; but the boy admired his works more as his own reading of them extended.

This monotonous life was kept up until 1859, when a great misfortune befell the Crisps. The father's eyesight almost completely failed him as the result of a cataract which defied treatment. Then, too, his theatrical ventures went amiss. He had overshot the mark in providing stars too expensive for the period.

A single incident which occurred while matters were in this predicament, well illustrates the keen sense of honor of the parents of the speaker. Mr. Crisp had, as a last resort to stem the tide of losses, engaged a star from the east for an engagement at \$175 a night, which he hoped would refill his empty coffers, but the experiment was a sore disappointment.

The next morning Mrs. Crisp appeared at his counting room, closely followed by a negro who bore a heavy trunk, which, at the lady's order, he deposited at the feet of the merchant. She quickly removed his wonder at the scene by explaining that the trunk contained all the silverware which she and her husband owned, and that they desired to leave it with him as a guarantee, at least in part, that as soon as they were able they would repay every dollar of his loan.

Some of the silver was in the shape of handsome testimonials to Mr. Crisp from theatrical friends; the others had either been brought from England or purchased in flush days in this country. It is needless to say that the warm hearted friend of the family saw to it that the Crisps did not lose their silverware; but, it is proper to add, they repaid after awhile every cent of the debt.

When Mr. and Mrs. Crisp decided in their extremity to leave Nashville they resolved to make their home in Georgia. The question arose as to what disposition should be made of Charles. His employer had promoted him by degrees, was personally attached to him and would take pride in advancing his fortunes in mercantile pursuits.

Little did he and they dream that this act of filial devotion marked an era in his life; perhaps changed its whole current and opened the avenue to fame. Had he remained here, he would in all probability have become a staid merchant and trod in the paths of his patron.

Therefore fortune continuously smiled upon him. By quick stages he became solicitor general, circuit judge, congressman and now speaker, the third officer in point of dignity in the greatest government in the world.

And James Davis, the friend of his youth, what of him? Slaves and property vanished during the conflict of 1861-5, and today merely the wreck of his once princely fortune is left. But he still renders obeisance to Thespis, and is found as ever dwelling on the glories of the Adelphi when the speaker's father was in his prime.

Where that famous resort stood the Grand opera house now rears its head in the heart of a city of 75,000 population, and the name of the lad who forty years ago swept his store clean by the dim light of dawn is now heralded even across the ocean. It is needless to say that no letter of congratulation which Mr. Crisp has received was warmer or truer than that which gray haired James Davis sent from Nashville the day after his early protegee was nominated for speaker by the Democratic caucus.

GEORGE H. ARMISTEAD.

IT LOOKED SUSPICIOUS.

Evidence to Prove That the Other Man Was No Patriot.

He was reading a newspaper on a Fulton street surface car in Brooklyn, and after awhile the man beside him, who had a tin teakettle between his feet which he was taking down to be mended, kindly inquired:

"Much news in the paper today?" "Um!" grunted the other. "I can read, of course," said the teakettle man, "but my eyes is rather weak o' late years. Are them Italians sassin this government yet?"

"Um!" was the same discourteous reply. "What's this I hear about Chilly wantin' to fight the United States? Have we bin hurtin' her feelings, or has she simply got a cantankerous fit on?"

No reply. "I had sich a lame back that I didn't go to war when we fit the south," continued the teakettle man as he lifted the utensil up and rested it on his knees, "but I'll be right on deck in case any foreign power wants to try us on. Whereabouts is Chilly, and what sort o' folks are they?"

No reply. "If you want to know what's going on why don't you buy a paper?" crossly replied the other. "I don't allus think of it." "Then don't bother people who do?" "I wasn't a botherin', I was just askin' if there was any news."

"No, sir!" "Well, there hain't no use gittin' mad about it. I didn't know but Chilly was sassin us agin, and it wouldn't hurt you any to tell me."

No reply. "Does it look as if there'd be a war?" The man with the paper now folded it up and put it in his pocket, and his actions plainly showed that he was provoked.

"Is Chilly much of a fightin' power?" persisted the man with the teakettle. "The other got up and went out on the front platform."

"Well, I declare!" said the other, as he waved his teakettle around. "Jest everybody take notice of him! I'll bet nine dollars to a cent that if we have a row with Chilly that 'ere chap won't be none too good to pizen our wells and burn our barns while we are at the front fightin' to save this Union!"—M. Quad in New York Evening World.

Some Literal Interpretations.



"HAVING IT OUT."



"COMING TO A BAD END."



"A TREMENDOUS GIVE AWAY."

—Life.

A Brotherly Kindness.

Ethan and Joshua Perkins were brothers who lived together on a little farm down east. Joshua was not remarkable, but Ethan had a phenomenally long nose. It was not simply a rather over developed nasal organ, such as a man might carry along Washington street without being mobbed; it was a genuine curiosity—in modern parlance, a "freak."

One day in summer the brothers were at work in the barn, and Ethan began to twist his face into strange shapes and show signs of acute distress.

"What's the matter?" asked Joshua, astonished at his brother's extraordinary behavior. "Fly on my nose, Josh—jest tickles like all get out."

"Well, why in thunder don't you brush it off?" "Can't reach it, Josh. You brush it off for me, that's a good feller. You're nearer to it 'n I be."—Boston Post.

A Hard Thing to Do.

Aubrey had serious objections to chopping wood. There are many boys like him, I suppose. When he was called upon for the work he always found plenty of excuses, and the family had learned all the old ones so thoroughly that he had sometimes to rack his brain for a new supply.

"Aubrey," said his mother one day, "go cut a few pieces of wood. There are plenty of large pieces to cut. Your lame foot is well, and you haven't had a toothache since last week. You needn't change your shoes, for you've got on old ones. And the ax is behind the cellar door. I saw it there five minutes ago."

"Now, mother," said Aubrey in an injured tone, "have you looked at that ax? How do you suppose I can cut wood with an ax that has an edge like the coast line of North America?"—Harper's Young People.

In the Gloaming, Sing.

In the gloaming, O my darling, When I come thine eyes to see, Tie the dog up—tie him tightly— Then I'll feel it's safe for me. —Fayetteville (Ga.) News.

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