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WAS IT CURRIE OR CRISP?

THE QUESTION THAT HAS BEEN INQUIRED INTO

By a Committee of the Conference—The Story of Scotchtown and the Trials of Rev. D. D. Currie—Mr. Crisp Called to Answer the Same Charge—A Scene in a Court.

Whether D. D. Currie or Rev. Robert Crisp is guilty of the grave charge of which the latter is accused, and which has just been investigated by a committee of the N. B. and P. E. I. Conference, is a question that a good many people are trying to solve for themselves, mainly from hearsay evidence and rumors that circulate about the streets. The secrecy with which the investigation was conducted added to the number of rumors. But very few facts relating to the actual evidence have reached the public, and it is doubtful, no matter what the verdict of the committee is, if much of the evidence is permitted to get out.

Both of the principals in the affair, Messrs. Currie and Crisp, are as well known as any two of the ministers in the Methodist denomination. While a member of the conference Mr. Currie was admitted to be one of the very ablest of his associates. He occupied in turn the pulpits of most of the important churches in the conference. His work was recognized to be most effectual, and his energy and persuasiveness were in demand in every quarter. Some of the handsomest structures belonging to the churches of the denomination were built under his supervision, and many congregations in the maritime provinces owe their numerical strength to the influence exerted upon the members by Mr. Currie while among them. He was as good a talker privately as he was eloquent upon the platform. A delightful, entertaining companion, he was at home with old and young, with grave and gay; he could be merry with the joyful and sad with the sorrowful. In fact he was a minister of the people, a man who understood human nature thoroughly and who used his knowledge to the advantage of himself and his church.

The reputation of Mr. Crisp as a platform speaker was also marked among his own people, and when the conference met he was usually one of those ministers somewhat in demand by the leading Methodist churches. He lacked the magnetism and the force of Mr. Currie and failed to gain the same popularity among the people whom he dwelt with.

In the little village of Scotchtown in the year 1885 the Rev. Mr. Crisp was stationed, and he enjoyed all the pains and pleasures of a minister working in a rural district. He was thoroughly at home with the people knew them intimately and personally and what their manner and living was.

It was about this time that D. D. Currie, at that time an honored member of the Methodist church, paid a visit to the Scotchtown district where Mr. Crisp was stationed. Mr. Crisp knew he was coming and, as his brother in the ministry was on a collecting tour for the church, made preparations for his reception. In the light of what has transpired since, Mr. Crisp is now accused by Mr. Currie of having laid a trap for him into which, if he did not fall he was to be and was pushed.

The Moore family lived in Scotchtown. It was composed of Mr. and Mrs. Moore and their daughter Eliza, a fresh buxom, country girl who possessed all the attractive qualities of a village maiden save, perhaps, modesty. She was thought forward and whether she deserved it or not this circumstance gave a tinge to her reputation that is not desirable. The Moores were not well to do, in fact they were otherwise. They lived in one of the smallest houses in the village which was not considered one of the best places for a guest's comfort.

In spite of these circumstances and of the fact that there were many well to do people in the place willing and anxious to entertain any visiting ministers, Rev. Mr. Currie was shown to the humble Moore dwelling where the only visible attraction was the fascinating Eliza.

The meeting at which he was to speak was held that evening, and in the meantime Mr. Currie moved around among the people doing his work so far as he could. He had not much opportunity to improve his acquaintance with Eliza had he so wished, before the hour arrived at which he was to speak and he was promptly on hand. Miss Moore attended the same meeting and when it was over did not even return to her home in the company of Mr. Currie. According to the evidence presented at the court in Gagetown, when Eliza reached home on that particular evening, Mr. Currie was already there and had evidently been there for some time since he was seated comfortably with his coat thrown off reading. Then it was according to the evidence given by Eliza in court, that Mr. Currie evinced such affection for her. It is scarcely to be wondered that the jury found him "not guilty" at that time when it is considered that his acquaintance with the girl was but a few hours old; that she swore he assaulted her in the sitting room which was separated from the room where her parents were by

simply a thin board partition and that the child which was born about seven months later should be fully developed and healthy.

This trial was in the county court at Gagetown and both parties were represented by counsel. Medley Wetmore represented the Moores and one of the amusing incidents of the case was, when he demanded that the child should be brought into court seeking to show some resemblance to its alleged father. He had made the mistake of not inspecting the infantile witness before he asked that it be brought in court. Miss Moore was a brunette and everyone who had seen D. D. Currie knows that his complexion is dark almost to swarthy and when the child with its bright auburn locks was presented to the jury a roar of laughter by the court made considerable uproar and Wetmore ordered his damaging witness removed in no good temper.

Before this trial came on Mr. Currie's counsel was approached by the Moores' with offers for a settlement, but the accused man scoffed at the idea. If, at that time, he had been willing to pay \$200 in cash the matter would have been hushed up, but he persisted that it was simply a plot to injure him and extort money, and he proposed to take his reputation in his hands and go into court to fight it out. The result proved that so far as that trial went, he was right. The evidence on oath before a judge and jury was not sufficient to convince them that Mr. Currie was guilty.

But the ministerial trial came later and there, before a company of men untrained in receiving evidence, Mr. Currie did not stand the same chance because the evidence



REV. ROBERT CRISP.

was not sworn to and, it is pretty generally understood now, his whole character was under inspection. The Scotchtown incident was the basis of an investigation which was so sweeping in its character that a majority of the committee considered that he was guilty. The vote stood 8 to 4. An appeal was taken to a committee of nine senior ministers and they decided by a vote of 6 to 3 that the evidence did not justify the conviction. The conference then ordered a new trial for the following year. At that trial Mr. Currie was acquitted of the seduction charge by the usual committee of 12 by a vote of 8 to 4. On the question of adultery the committee stood a tie, 6 to 6. Then another trial was ordered for the same year. At this third church trial, Mr. Currie desired to put in documentary evidence from the civil trial on the charge of seduction, in order to show the alleged discrepancies in the woman's testimony. This documentary evidence the chairman of the committee of trial ruled out. Then Mr. Currie asked for three days to proceed to St. John and Queen's county to secure the officers of the civil court to give oral testimony. The request was also refused, and then Mr. Currie, under legal advice, applied to the supreme court of New Brunswick for an order of injunction restraining the conference from proceeding to trial. This injunction was granted by the court. All this was in 1886, and in the fall of the same year, after the events described above, the general conference of the Dominion was held at which an important change, for Mr. Currie, at least, was made in the discipline, Mr. Currie not being present at this general conference meeting. The change in the discipline affected Mr. Currie's case as follows: Up to that time the preliminary committee of enquiry on the case of an accused minister was analogous to a grand jury in the civil courts, and their action was subject to the conference, which, if the preliminary committee put the accused on trial, appointed another committee of 12, analogous to the petit jury in the civil court, to try the case. This session of the general conference changed the discipline so that the former preliminary committee became the trial committee, and the trial committee of 12 was abolished. Shortly afterwards, about January, 1887, the charge of adultery, not including seduction, was again laid before the president of the New Brunswick conference, who referred it to a new committee under the changed discipline. The new discipline was not made public until after this trial before this last named committee and Mr. Currie and his friends assert that they were unaware of the change. He, it is claimed, assumed that as hitherto the case would come before a committee of 12 at the annual conference at which he

supposed he would defend himself, but the committee, under the new discipline, tried the case in his absence and a majority of them ordered his removal from the ministry. The action of that committee being final, Mr. Currie, was thereupon in 1887 deposed from the ministry.

This was a crushing blow to a man with such a nature as Currie's. He was proud of the position he had held in the conferences of his church, proud of the work he had accomplished in these provinces and for this disgraceful expulsion to be the end of it all was enough to make all the retaliation that was in him come to the surface.

For five years he has been working on the case, never permitting it to die out of the mind of the public. In the newspaper which he publishes in the town of Shelburne he has frequently presented such statements which called Rev. Robert Crisp to account for the offence of which they found Mr. Currie guilty that he has been brought to his trial which has just ended. At the time this is printed the case has not been summed up by both parties and of course the finding is not made.

Crisp does not figure in it to advantage. Enough facts have been presented to prove that he and the Moore girl were well acquainted and if the committee should not consider it evidence sufficient to convict, enough has been said to emphasize the reports quite prevalent during the end of his sojourn in Carleton, that his affection for the gentler sex was apt to bubble forth at inopportune times and places. PROGRESS printed the story of what may be termed his osculatory indiscretions while in Carleton, the reports of which were quite carefully investigated. The point of whether it is right or wrong for a minister to salute the fairer members of his congregation is still unsettled.

NEW BRUNSWICK'S PARKHURST.

Mr. Gunter Explains His Position—He Thinks "Progress" and His Church Have Injured Him.

Mr. John B. Gunter of Fredericton, was in town this week and in the way of business he called at PROGRESS office several times. Mr. Gunter has a grievance, which he carries about with him with considerable difficulty. He thinks PROGRESS was "rough on him" in its remarks on the conclusion of the Crawley case before the county court, and he has a serious, well-defined idea that a libel suit is about the proper thing. He has consulted a lawyer of whose full opinion PROGRESS is not cognizant but with commendable good sense, Mr. Gunter has approached the editor before he gave his final instructions to the attorney.

His chief desire is to induce PROGRESS to publish his side of the case which is, however, so severe a criticism of the acts of several Fredericton gentlemen necessarily connected with the case, that they would have very much more occasion for feeling incensed with, and injured by PROGRESS than Mr. Gunter has. Therefore it does not find a place in these columns.

Mr. Gunter disclaims any personal spite in what he has done and claims that Dr. Parkhurst of New York might just as properly be called a persecutor, because he crusades against vice, as for that name to be applied to John B. Gunter. He states to PROGRESS that his chief aim is to elevate the standard of public morality and to expose those in high places who are guilty of wrong doing.

No one who has heard him talk on this subject can doubt his earnestness, at the same time fail to conclude that he does not appreciate the position of an individual who seeks in a public way to correct the morals of a community. If the people could disassociate Mr. Gunter's efforts to convict Mr. Crawley from his feeling against what he deemed as great injustice to him in his church connection, then they would, no doubt extend greater encouragement.

Figures That Will Be Of Interest.

The city accounts for the past year have not yet been made public, but it is understood that the departments have not been shining examples of retrenchment and reform. The street account is now overdrawn to the extent of \$30,000, while the ferry account shows a deficiency of some \$20,000. The assessment for the fire department was \$29,000 last year, or \$1,000 more than it was the previous year, but the department is now \$8,577 behind where it was, \$6,005, in 1891. The difference is not due to the furnishing of the engine houses, etc., as some imagine. In the police department the assessment last year was \$25,500, or \$500 more than for the preceding year, but the deficit is \$8,024 where it was \$6,369 in 1891. These are only one or two examples of the figures that may be of interest to the ratepayers when they get hold of them more in detail.

Looks Like Extravagance.

A Halifax despatch to Thursday's Sun gives currency to the report that the wholesale firm of T. & E. Kenny will retire from business. As this was announced in PROGRESS a week ago, the Sun's expenditure for a telegram several days afterwards looks like dreadful extravagance.

TAKING IT EASY SO FAR.

CANDIDATES FOR CIVIC HONORS ARE HOLDING BACK.

The Aspirants to the Mayor's Chair are Hasting but the Aldermen are Quiet—Characteristics of Some of the Present Representatives.

Mayor Peters wore two styles of hats—one style at a time—between breakfast and dinner time the other day, though, the weather was fine and there was no apparent necessity for a change. One of the hats was a democratic, though jaunty, soft felt, calculated to gain favor with the plebeians, while the other was a cinnamon colored bean-tosser of a more patrician stamp, though not wholly in harmony with His Worship's complexion. Those who watch the signs of the times predict from this that His Worship has no idea of retiring from the civic contest, so long as he has any hope of winning.

Just what his chances for a third term are would be a little difficult for him to ascertain at present. Three others are in full chase after the office, and there are indications that, so far, Candidate Sturdee is in the lead. Candidate Jones is, however, carrying on a vigorous and aggressive warfare, and is to be seen around the streets at all reasonable hours. Candidate Tufts is not so conspicuous and is believed to be relying on the merits of his reform platform.

Supposing that neither of the two latter gentlemen should be the successful candidate, the important question arises as to whether the votes they received would affect the chances of Mayor Peters or of Mr. Sturdee. There is a general impression, shared by some of the mayor's supporters, that the advantage would be with Mr. Sturdee. The Tax Reduction Association may put a man in the field, however, and their candidate may put still another complexion on the contest.

The aldermanic contest has been started by a requisition signed by a large number of the prominent electors of Queens, asking ex-alderman T. Nisbet Robertson to allow himself to be put in nomination, and he has consented to become a candidate. Mr. Robertson made a good representative when he was in the council, and his return to the board will be a benefit to the whole city.

It is understood that Ald. D. R. Jack will not be a candidate in Queens this year. During his term at the board his keenest critics cannot aver that he has been guilty of "pernicious activity."

Ald. McLaughlan has not been given to flights of oratory during the past year, but he seems to have made a good representative and is likely to keep Mr. Robertson company for the next year.

Kings ward generally has several candidates, but the opposition to the established government generally enters the field too late to do much. Ald. O'Brien is probably safe enough for re-election, and that may be why he takes things so easy at the board. As a reform candidate a good deal more was expected of him than has materialized. Mr. O'Brien is one of the "McCarthyites," who are ready for a motion to adjourn at any stage of the proceedings.

Ald. Barnes, too, will doubtless be elected, if he runs again. He is not particular whether he is there or not, and he is no more of an orator than his colleague or the representatives of Queens. His remarks at the board are usually confined to eulogies of P. Gleason and explanations of the lands committee's report.

Mr. James Knox was elected in Dukes last year because he was a practical business man, and it was expected that he would pursue an aggressive plan of campaign in the interests of retrenchment and reform. It may be that he did pursue it, but he does not appear to have overtaken it yet, for he has been as silent as a statue at most of the sessions of the board. He is considered a sound and reliable member, but like his associates already referred to, is no orator.

His colleague, Ald. Blizard, can do all the talking that is needed in the interest of Dukes ward. He is most eloquent when he is most indignant, but that is not very often. As a rule his face wears a placid smile, comporting well with his *tout ensemble* of eminent respectability.

So far there seems to be no disposition to dispense with the services of either of the alderman for Dukes.

Nor is there yet a ripple of opposition in Sidney ward. Ald. McCarthy is regarded, in the council and out of it, as one of the most level-headed men at the board, even though he and the mayor do not always agree on the interpretation of "Cushing's Manual." As for Ald. Lewis, he is—well, he is Ald. Lewis.

Ald. Shaw and White are understood to be willing to continue to represent Wellington ward. There has been an impression, ever since the famous dinner to Ald. McGoldrick, that Mr. Robert J. Wilkins would be a candidate in this ward, but it is now stated that such will not be the case.

There is a closely defined suspicion that Ald. McKelvey would be quite willing to represent Prince ward without the compan-

ionship of Ald. Nickerson. The latter does not say much, but he is a good voter, and he declined to vote for the reduction of rentals to the International steamship company, of which Ald. McKelvey's brother-in-law is agent. The measure seems to have been just enough, but Ald. Nickerson wanted the city to get all the money it could.

It is yet too early to know much about what will be done in the North End wards, but it is likely that most, if not all of the present members will be returned if they offer. It does not follow that they all ought to be, but that is the way the electors will let it be. The North End furnishes a large proportion of the orators at the board, and they are of all qualities, from the silver-tongued John Connor to somewhat prolix Lon Chesley.

In the West End, the chief talk of contest is in Brooks ward. Aids, Baxter and Davis will be to the front again, and so, it is understood, will be ex-aldermen Stackhouse and Lockhart. Mr. J. Herbert Wright, who was in the field last year, finds that his Mexican silver mines and his life insurance agency will not permit him to bother with civic politics.

There is plenty of time yet for fresh candidates in every ward. And in some wards they are badly needed.

IT IS STILL THE UNION CLUB.

The Breeze has Died Away and Harmony has Been Restored.

The Union Club will continue business under the old name and at the old stand.

Up to Thursday night there seemed some doubt as to whether there would not be a Disunion club organized, and that there would be a rivalry which could only result in the impoverishment of both, for St. John has not yet reached the stage where there can be room for two clubs with any pretensions to first class appointments. The Union itself has been under heavy expenses, and despite the fact that generous forbearance has been exercised in the use of the black-ball the club has never had a large surplus of wealth. It is a first class club, of course, and has one of the finest club houses in Canada, but the strict line of social position has never been drawn as it would be in Ottawa or Halifax, where society has sharper distinctions. A line is occasionally drawn, as when objection is made to a man, socially the equal of some of the members except for the fact that he violates the code of etiquette by taking money over his own bar, when he should allow that duty to be done wholly by his employees. Otherwise the money of any average man is supposed to be acceptable.

There were originally two clubs in St. John. That is to say, two clubs which had some tone about them. One was composed of old timers who smoked their pipes, read the English papers and grew reminiscent in Troop's building, while the other had the young blood and met further up town. Later, the two were amalgamated as the Union club, and until a year or two ago had quarters in the Walker building. The organization flourished so well, that it felt warranted in venturing on the experiment of the present palatial building, which was built and is owned by the Union club company. It is a fine structure and is well managed. The men who have the control of the affairs are of a stamp worthy of the house, and their standing socially and otherwise, cannot be questioned. J. R. Stone is the president, John McMillan vice-president, J. E. E. Dickson secretary-treasurer, while the committee consists of Miles Brown Dixon, Arthur W. Lovitt, Geo. H. Trueman, George McLeod, H. D. Troop and W. H. Thorne. This is a list to which nobody can object.

Of late, however, there have been murmurings, and the result seemed to be the formation of two parties, the government and opposition, or as some have called it the aristocrats and democrats. The former has been composed of the officials named with Mr. Coker and other auxiliaries, while the latter has been led by the young element as represented by R. R. Ritchie, Charles Coster, Fred Harding, W. G. Lawton and others. One grievance has been, that though the table board was excellent the charges were too high, though the house committee appeared to think that they were no more than right.

The committee of nine is elected by the club at the annual meeting, at which the president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer are also chosen. The constitution can be changed by a majority vote. Quite recently the opposition were made acquainted with a government measure which provided for the committee to take the election of officers out of the hands of the members and provided for a rotation in the committee itself by three dropping out each year and three others being chosen in their places. The government proposed to pass the measure, by a majority vote, at a meeting called next Monday night.

This proposition created the liveliest breeze known in the club, since its organization. An opposition caucus was called, and it was resolved to head off the govern-

ment by calling a meeting for last Thursday night to amend the constitution by providing that changes could only be made by a two-thirds vote. In the meantime there was a large amount of talking and a good deal of canvassing over the matter. Some went so far as to predict that, whichever side carried its point, the result would be the secession of the other side and the formation of another club.

This would have been a step fraught with disaster to both sides, and the wise men of the club saw the danger. More than that, they averted it. When Thursday night came, a truce was arranged in the simplest manner possible. Both sides withdrew their notices of motion, and it was agreed that matters should revert to the *status quo ante bellum*.

Thus peacefully died away the breeze that had been agitating the club men all the week. The Disunion club will not materialize, and with a better understanding of the old Union club may flourish even more than in the past.

PASTOR WELTON RESIGNS.

He Leaves the Portland Church, and So Does a Number of the People.

Rev. Sidney Welton is out of a job. He has tendered his resignation to the Portland baptist church, and it has been accepted. He retires in good standing and retains his ministerial functions, so that he can continue to preach if any congregation gives him a call.

The decision of the council of the churches was that the Portland church should withdraw its fellowship from him. Had this been done he would not have been in good standing in the denomination, but though it is claimed the council was called at his suggestion, he declined to be bound by its recommendation. As a matter of law he was right, for the church alone had any authority to deal with the matter.

It is understood that when the church meeting was held there was a sort of a resurrection of people who had been canvassed to attend, and that the ladies were out in force. They too had votes. It was decided to accept Pastor Welton's resignation and to give him a letter of dismissal as in the case of any retiring pastor. The vote stood 84 to 77. It is now reported that a number of members have already applied for their "dimits" and that a number more will apply at the next meeting of the church. The retiring members are not of the 84 who decided that Mr. Welton should remain in good standing.

The Critic Was Not There.

The risk a newspaper runs in giving a notice of an entertainment without having a reporter there was amusingly illustrated by the Globe's notice of the sacred concert in Holy Trinity church, Monday evening. It is scarcely likely there would have been any attempt at applause under any circumstances, but the request of Father Walsh that the sacred character of the edifice be kept in mind was faithfully observed by the very large and mixed audience. The Globe, however, boldly avers that "several of the singers were given hearty encores," and this too on the face of the fact that encores with a programme of seventeen numbers would have been slightly trying on the singers.

They are Coming Again.

The Daniels' Specialty Company which gave such satisfaction in the Institute in December, open again in this city on the 21st for a short season. Since the company left here, Halifax has been giving them crowded houses and even greater success than they anticipated has been theirs. The show is a good one at a very popular price, and the features are free from anything that is offensive. An Irish comedian of merit furnishes another drawing card. Good houses await their coming.

A Pleasant Gathering.

The dinner of the Salvage Corps at the Stanley, Tuesday evening, was one of the most successful in its history. This was the eleventh occasion for the boys to gather about the festive board with their guests. The Stanley was equal to the occasion, the toasts were appropriate, the speeches short and fitting, and the gathering was just as happy as it could be on good fare and natural spirits.

Specimens of Good Work.

Mr. J. H. Connolly has called PROGRESS attention to the fact that he is doing some good photography now-a-days; witness the two photos of Hagen and Norseng in Scovill Fraser & Co's windows. A good many people know this without PROGRESS saying so, but this reminder may be equally valuable to them and the photographer.

Two Trips a Week.

The International Steamship Company's boats make two trips to Boston every week now, starting from this city every Monday and Thursday morning.

Several letters from Annapolis, in regard to the ball there, arrived too late for consideration in this issue, and are therefore held over.