



*William Frost Crispin*

# A BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CRISPIN OF THE BRITISH NAVY,

TOGETHER WITH

PORTRAITS AND SKETCHES OF MANY OF HIS DESCENDANTS

AND OF

REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME FAMILIES OF ENGLISH CRISPINS;

ALSO

AN HISTORICAL RESEARCH CONCERNING THE REMOTE ANCESTRY  
OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN CRISPINS

AND A

TRACING OF THE NAME, CRISPIN, FROM 361 B. C. TO THE PRESENT,  
INCLUDING GENEALOGIES OF THE CRISPIN FAMILIES, AND  
SOME ACCOUNT OF RELATED FAMILIES—THE  
PENNS, THE HOLMES, THE MASONS;

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A SECTION ON GENEALOGY AND ANCESTRY;

---

BY REV. WILLIAM FROST CRISPIN.

---

AKRON, OHIO, U. S. A.  
THE COMMERCIAL PRINTING CO.

worth the living." But he realizes that evil is deep-seated and far-reaching and that the problem of evil is of vast proportions and demands of every Christian persistent and faithful service, not alone in alleviating the sufferings of the unfortunate, but in *preventing* wrong. How different life has been to this man of real Christian purpose, this man who has lived a long, laborious life, yet not given over to the worldly spirit that despoils men of the true enjoyments of life—I say how different from the lives of shylocks, plutocrats and aristocrats with greed-and-grab proclivities—men who are unhappy without wealth and more so when they get it. The pity is that most men who get wealth the wealth gets them, turns their heads, their hearts, their lives, into channels that are hurtful to them, to their families and the world about them.

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,  
Where WEALTH accumulates and MEN decay."

As says Paul the Apostle, to Timothy, (I: 10, 17): "But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts," . . . "For the LOVE of money is the root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves thru with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness." . . . "Fight the good fight of faith." . . . "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they be rich in good works," etc. This is not, however, any encouragement to the other extreme, of idleness and improvidence, for the Bible explicitly enjoins us to be "dilligent in business."

It was in this spirit that this man who has held no exalted position in society or state and who was not a rich man, as men of to-day count riches, pursued his life-work. He sought to do his duty and was well-to-do, prosperous and happy and was one of the best in his chosen occupation—farming.

REV. WILLIAM FROST CRISPIN.  
(For Portrait See Frontispiece.)

[It is due the author of this book to say that it was his full intention to omit the biographical sketch of himself, but he has yielded to repeated requests to give an account of himself. The claim that it is natural for our patrons and our kith and kin to desire to know something of the author of the book which gives the history and genealogy of the Crispin families, of which he forms an integral part, has had weight in reaching this decision.]

In this sketch we excerpt portions from Lane's History of Akron, published 1892:

"Rev. William Frost Crispin, son of William and Mary Ellen (Van-kirk) Crispin, was born Nov. 14, 1833, near New Martinsburg, Fayette County, O., being of English ancestry, the remotest known being Captain William Crispin of the British Navy, brother-in-law of Sir Admiral Penn, the American ancestors being Friends; with his parents he removed to



Highland County when young; early education very limited and acquired in log schoolhouse; at majority borrowed money at ten per cent. to go to Ohio Wesleyan University one term, working for his father at \$18 per month to pay off the note, then taught summer school in home district; next winter taught in Knox County, Ills.; returned to Ohio and chopt wood at 50 cents a cord to get money to go to National Normal University, Lebanon, O., where by self-boarding [part of the time], and by teaching during winters, he received the Teachers' Degree (I. J.) in 1860. After partly completing the senior course was called home on account of his father's illness; later teaching, in all, about five years. . . . His first business adventure was in the grain trade at East Monroe, in 1862, with Wm. Cherry, a good Quaker; and while the partnership was pleasant, the enterprise was not profitable and was discontinued at the end of one year."

May 25, 1865, he married Drusilla D., daughter of Hugh S., and Mary (White) Evans, of Greenfield, who bore him three children—Mary Frederica, Fanny Forrester, and Willie D.,—the latter dying in infancy, the mother preceding the babe, dying May 16, 1872, of puerperal fever. He was again married, June 28, 1876, to Miss E. Emma Reed of Sabina, O. After first marriage he embarked in the drug and grocery trade, continuing until 1876 when he sold his business.

"Tho raised a Democrat, he early espoused the anti-slavery cause, allying himself with the Republican party soon after its organization; served as Census Enumerator for his township in 1880, but for the past ten [now (1901) twenty] years he has been a zealous Prohibitionist."

Mr. Crispin's parents, after middle life, espoused Universalism and their son, William, now heard much preaching and discussion, pro and con, and gave much study to the Bible teaching concerning that doctrine and became convinced that both the Bible and reason taught it, and with the poet he felt that:

"One adequate support  
For the calamities of mortal life  
Exists, one only;—an assured belief  
That the procession of our fate, howe'er  
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a being  
Of infinite benevolence and power,  
Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
All accidents, converting them to good."

While yet in mercantile pursuit Mr. Crispin, being zealous for the cause of the Master, was a worker in the Church and occasionally preacht and lectured. Tho not ordained to the ministry of Christ until 1890, yet his initial sermon was preacht in the Universalist Church at Leesburg, O., in 1870. In that day and locality great prejudice existed toward people holding such theological views and this fact, together with the fact that he had early arrayed himself against the drink habit and the drink traffic, caused him to be, to a large extent, ostrasized in business, social, and church



circles, and his fearless course cost him all his worldly possessions, so that when he sold out and turned over to his creditors all his worldly belongings he still owed about \$700. Instead of going into bankruptcy, he surrendered all, to those he owed, even the little home which sheltered his little family, believing that somehow God would bless the deed. And by the help of a smiling Providence and a determined purpose, the \$700 of debt was paid and the wolf kept at bay, besides.

Many people lookt askance at what they regarded his conscientious but unwise course. A few, however, honored him and commended his conduct. To all appearances he was stranded. The needs of his family were pressing and caused him much anxiety. But being a man of strong Christian faith he did not falter. He believed that in the long run faith and pluck would win and in this he was not mistaken. His little family were brave and home affairs were frugally managed. While his family were deprived of many luxuries they have always had something to eat and to wear and a bed on which to sleep. The mistake of Mr. Crispin was in embarking in a business so commonly debased to the retailing of intoxicants as is that of selling drugs. The same energy applied in other lines of trade would have enabled him to lay up a competence. Tho he has not done this, yet he has kept his integrity and that certainly is better than money secured by dealing out intoxicants which debauch and ruin men and defraud their wives and children. As T. B. Reed says: "Doing your duty and facing the consequences, is success itself." And are not his family the better and happier because more industrious and useful than if a fortune had been laid up to dissipate their energies or to misdirect them? He has no regrets for his course. He feels he has only done what all, who love their fellows, should do. Religion and business should never be divorced. Civic duty is, in large measure, identical with religious duty. Said Gerrit Smith: "He whose politics are rascally has a rascally religion." Had Mr. Crispin adopted the tactics of his competitors in trade he could easily have amass a competence. But wealth gotten in such ways always burns somebody's hands, and he scorned, as all should, to take wealth at the hands of those who rob their families to quench their thirst for intoxicants. And he was soon relieved from anxiety, by an unexpected call from the Williamson and Cantwell Publishing Company of Cincinnati, to travel for them, and at the end of two years, the junior member of that firm—Rev. J. S. Cantwell, D.D.—recommended Mr. Crispin for the position of Financial and General Agent of Buchtel College, located in Akron, and he was at once employed on a commission, but succeeding well he was soon employed on a salary, with expenses paid. He continued in this work for six years, securing to the college at least \$100,000 and a large number of students whose faces were turned toward Buchtel by his lectures before High Schools and Churches and by personal interviews.



Mr. Crispin's opposition to the drink evil dates back to early life and for the last twenty years he has labored zealously for Prohibition WITH A PARTY BEHIND IT, claiming that so long as parties are elected to power whose POLICY it is to LEGALIZE the saloon, no headway can be made against it. His party has nominated him for various important offices and in 1900 he declined the nomination for State School Commissioner and has been talked of and written about for other state offices. But he has not been an office-seeker and thinks he can do more good when not hampered by the suspicion that he is seeking office. He has held many positions of trust at the hands of his party and since Oct. 13, 1899, has held the position of District Evangelist and Organizer in his home district (19th Ohio Congressional), which includes five counties in the Western Reserve and which has given him an excellent chance to preach and lecture against Government complicity in the drink traffic, and against the sin of legalizing it. He has preached in many cities and many churches within his bailiwick and has always had a respectful hearing and under his labors his district has advanced in party votes beyond the gain in any other section of his state. He has not *sought* popularity, for he realizes that preachers who *seek* popularity cannot be utilized to bring about reforms. They trim. They curry favor. Hence the *seeker after popularity should never enter the pulpit*. Preachers who are ambitious to please worldly men have missed their calling.

Mr. Crispin says too many people are mistaking commercial prosperity for moral and religious prosperity. He admits the world has advanced far beyond what it was in the days described in the book, "Quo Vadis," but asserts that ever since, in 1862, when our Government went into the saloon business by taking a revenue from the traffic, we have slipped a cog and are moving backward in morals alarmingly. And his contention is eloquently emphasized in many ways, but especially by the blistering facts published by the U. S. Treasury, in the Statistical Abstract, which shows the great increase in the consumption of intoxicants and the awful increase of crime, which all well-informed people know is mainly due to strong drink.

In 1860, the United States consumed only 6.13 gallons of intoxicants *per capita*, but in 1900 we consumed 17 gallons *per capita*! We have 240,000 places where intoxicants are sold and in 1889 we had but 3,567 murders in the United States, but in 1895 we had 10,500 and this deadly and dastardly record we are keeping up, year after year! Hence the need of a PARTY IN POWER opposed to the traffic.

He believes that when the pulpit becomes right and *opposes the legalization* of the traffic, the people will soon follow and outlaw it. In his lectures and sermons he has never appealed to the popular ear. But his most popular lectures have been: "Why? How? When?" (This was his first, and his family called it his "Cato" speech); "The Slums"; "What Next" and "The Saloon and How to Deal With It."



Mr. Crispin's open defense of the negro, and his arraignment of our Government for its slave-holding policy, were so distasteful to some of his rasher Democratic neighbors that he was threatened with ambush, but to him there was no "scare" in the threat and his movements were uninfluenced by it.

For about fifteen years the subject of this sketch has suffered much and has been greatly handicapped in his work by a bodily ailment superinduced by eight years of a too "strenuous life," added to an inherited predisposition thereto, from his mother.

While his ancestors and some nearer relatives have won distinction and the honors of warfare, he is too much imbued with his Quaker inheritance to favor war except as THE VERY LAST RESORT. And while the purpose which inspired our Cuban War met his concurrence, yet he has steadily opposed our Philippine policy and also the British war in the Transvaal against the Boers, as both un-Christian, and un-American.

He has published books and booklets, etc., as follows: "Universalism and Problems of the Universalist Church"; "What is Universalism and Why Preach It?" "The True Basis of Political Reform"; and various small, political leaflets. Also "Buchtel Leaflets" and "Solid Facts," the latter a small Prohibition organ, of 3,000 copies, monthly. And he has been a contributor to various papers on church, social, and political problems for many years.

Mr. Crispin epitomizes his history thus: My occupations have been:—Farming, Teaching, Merchandising, Lecturing and Preaching, Writing and Publishing. My isms have been:—Universalism (the truest conception of Christianity), Abolitionism (true republicanism), Prohibitionism (everywhere a recognized principle of law for the abatement of crime and of crime-breeding).

MRS. SALLIE JESSIE (CRISPIN) PATTON.

Jessie Crispin, eldest daughter of James Moreau and Amanda Leaverton Crispin, was born at the old Crispin homestead near Greenfield, Highland County, Ohio, March 18, 1869. Her education was obtained at the district school, the Greenfield Normal and the Hillsboro College. At the age of 17 she became a teacher, and followed this profession for two and



SALLIE JESSIE CRISPIN.