



URL: www.natstand.org.uk/pdf/DeCrespignyEC001.pdf
Person: De Crespigny, Eyre N. Champion (1821 – 1895)
Description: His father's "troubles"
Reference:

Source: British Newspaper Archive
repository:
Transcription date: 2014 December 10
Annotated by: Richard Middleton
Copyright:



Creative Commons Attribution-
NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0
International License.

All transcriptions reproduced with kind permission of The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

HEATON CRESPIGNY

1828 July 18: Stamford Mercury

Sunday's and Tuesday's Posts. The Rev. Heaton C. de Crespigny was held to bail on Saturday at Bow-street, for again challenging Mr Long Wellesley. The latter gentleman stated that "though resolved to pursue every legal means for the recovery of parental authority over his children, he was determined never to give 'satisfaction' for anything arising from the subject." -

This, under the circumstances, is considered the white feather. It was on Wellesley's own information that Mr. de Crespigny was brought before the magistrates, and held to bail, himself in 1000l. and two sureties in 500l. each. The Reverend Gentleman disclaimed entertaining feelings of animosity towards Mr. Wellesley; having lived on terms of friendship with him, he said, for a long time, it gave him great pain to be engaged in an affair of this sort with him: but there were circumstances, with which the Magistrates could not be unacquainted, which made the sending of the letter in question to Mr. Wellesley an imperative duty in him, Mr. de Crespigny.

1828 September 24: London Standard

SIR W. DE CRESPIGNY AND MR. LONG WELLESLEY.

In the affair of Sir W. de Crespigny and Mr. Long Wellesley, it is said that Sir William de Crespigny has sent over to Paris Mr. Nixon, of Lincoln's-inn, to urge the immediate return of his son Mr. Heaton de Crespigny, stating that the legal proceedings against Mr. Long Wellesley cannot proceed without his evidence. We are requested, says Galignani's Messenger, to insert the following copy of a letter, written by Mr. Heaton de Crespigny to his brother, upon the subjects:-

Paris, Sept. 18. "My dear Herbert- I received your letter yesterday, delivered to me by the hand of Mr. Nixon, and, in reply, assure you that I am resolutely determined not to return to England for the purposes of giving evidence in a court of law against a man who was once my friend; in doing which I should break through the sacredness of an implied confidence, which subsequent circumstances do not in any way emancipate me from: Mr. Long Wellesley not having attended to those rules himself, is no reason to me for following his example. I would not act a dastardly base part towards the worst of enemies, much less towards the individual who, however numerous may be his faults, has, upon the subject of your letter, met me honourably and like a man in the field, and rendered that satisfaction which his and my honour, placed in the hands of two most highly respectable gentlemen, both of whom are well known in the world and in their profession, deemed sufficient.

"After this, could I possibly become the sneaking and contemptible tool of others, and go into a court of law, and give, at the best, unsatisfactory evidence? No, I should despise myself ever afterwards if I did so, and should justly deserve to be despised by others. But let me ask what evidence could I give? It is absurd to term what I hear repeated evidence; it is no evidence at all, and would only lead to confusion. Bear in mind, I have hitherto merely repeated a story communicated to me, certainly under such colourings as at one time led me to the belief of its being true, and I made my own comments upon it, which may have strengthened the conviction of Mr. Wellesley, who was the original

propagator of the story, whether true or false, as you would naturally repeat any information that created astonishment in yourself, or would excite surprise in others. That this person should believe it, and that discredit it, is not difficult to account for; the mode, the manner, and the man who tells, operating with or without effect accordingly: then the corroborating and circumstantial circumstance, known to one and not to another, biasses the mind, of which few of us have sufficient to keep the whole and entire part uninfluenced. But enough of this, my dear Herbert: you are a good-hearted fellow, and would, I well know, do all in your power to serve your friends; so would I, but not at the sacrifice of my opinion of justice and of honour, and you are the last that would wish me to do so, but which I should certainly forfeit if I revealed any conversation connected with Mr. Wellesley and our family, which may have taken place previously to the duel, and which I consider sacred. I shall be very sorry to increase my father's displeasure, but in this case I must be undutiful, and protest against returning to England. Really, with his evident mental infirmities, occasioned by two apoplectic fits and three paralytic strokes, that any body should recommend him to enter upon a law-suit, is to me extraordinary, and certainly not friendly towards him. He had much better rest contented with the opinion which his family and friends express of the affair; for my own part, I am unshaken in my resolution, and am firmly determined not to cross the water for the purposes of yours and my family's invitation. My father had better come here and attend the performance of Rossini's beautiful opera of Comte Ory; it would, I am sure, recall to his mind many pleasing reminiscences of his early life, and do him much more good than law will in England.

"Adieu, my dear Herbert, affectionately yours, &c " Heaton C. De Crespigny."

1828 October 4: Oxford Journal

LONDON, Oct 2. ... It appears that Sir Wm. De Crespigny has commenced legal proceedings against Mr. Long Wellesley for the affair connected with the Long family; and that Sir William's son, Mr. heaton de Crespigny, has gone to Paris to be beyond the jurisdiction of a British Court of Law, and, therefore, to escape being made a witness.

1828 December 19: Cambridge Chronicle and Journal

REV. HEATON DE CRESPIGNY.

Melton Mowbray, Dec.10. -This town, which has been thronged by the gentlemen of the chace ever since the commencement of the hunting season, has, within the last few days, been thrown into a state of the greatest possible excitement, in consequence of the apprehension, examination, and committal for trial of a clergyman well known in the metropolis - the Rev. Heaton de Crespigny - the gentleman who made himself so conspicuous in the affairs of Mr. Long Pole Wellesley, and the son of Sir Wm. de Crespigny, Bart, for sending a threatening letter to the Earl of Plymouth, who is now enjoying the sports of the Melton Hunt. The circumstances the case are these:- A week or two ago the of Plymouth received a communication from the Rev. Heaton de Crespigny, who was staying somewhere near Northampton, in which it was stated that a Rev. friend of his (Mr. Crespigny's) was on the eve of publishing a work, similar in its character to the Memoirs of Harriette Wilson, in which the amours of his Lordship and those of Lady Hamilton would be most particularly treated upon. The letter went on to state that he (Mr. de Crespigny) thought his Rev. Friend was a great blackguard, and no doubt his Lordship would be of the same opinion; but be that as it may, said the writer, the best plan for your Lordship to adopt would be, to purchase the copyright of the work, which is to be disposed of for two thousand pounds; and if your Lordship thinks proper to forward me fifteen hundred pounds, I will advance the remaining five hundred. His Lordship, perusing the letter, immediately perceived that it was a deep-laid scheme on the part of the Rev. Gentleman to extort money from him, and resolved that the writer should not go unpunished. His Lordship accordingly repaired to the house of Fletcher Norton Norton, Esq. magistrate for the Bramland Hundred of Leicestershire, and a resident of Melton Mowbray, to whom he stated the circumstances, and a warrant was subsequently granted for Mr. de Crespigny's apprehension. The warrant was entrusted to the hands of Mr. George Ouston, the high constable of the borough of Leicester, and he immediately set off in a post-chaise to Oundle, Northamptonshire, and with difficulty apprehended him at a village called Oundle Wye, where he was staying. The constable lost no time

conveying his prisoner in a post-chaise towards Melton Mowbray; but on their arrival at Leicester, the prisoner expressed a wish to walk the remaining part of the distance, which is fourteen miles. The officer said, that he was willing to grant every indulgence to him consistent with his duty as an officer; but if he did walk, it would be on condition that they would walk arm-in-arm. This was agreed to; and they proceeded very regularly together for upwards nine miles. reaching the Melton Canal, on the opposite side of which several roads project, and which lead to various parts of the country, Mr. Crespigny hinted that it would be more comfortable to both, and particularly to him, if they were to walk more asunder from each other. The constable, having had strict commands from Lord Plymouth to treat his prisoner in every respect as a gentleman ought to be treated when under arrest, said to him, that if he did allow him to walk by himself, hoped that he would act like a gentleman, and not endeavour to escape. Mr. de Crespigny promised he would not attempt to get away; and they proceeded leisurely along, side by side, for a considerable distance, when the Rev. Gentleman suddenly turned round, and aiming a blow at the head of the constable, felled him to the ground. The constable was stunned; and the Rev. Gentleman, wishing to beat a retreat as soon possible, jumped into the canal, and swam across. Having gained the other side the canal, the Rev. Gentleman took the road leading to Harborough and ran, dripping wet, till he arrived at the village of Kerrington, a few miles distant, where he hired post-chaise, and ordered to driven direct to Market Harborough, at the same time telling the proprietor of the chaise that he had a vehicle there, which was in readiness to convey him to London. The constable, after recovering from the effects of the Rev. Gentleman's blow, gave chase to the prisoner, and with much difficulty he ascertained that the prisoner had set off, in a post chaise, for Harborough. The constable was close in pursuit; and having succeeded hiring another chaise, immediately followed him. On arriving at Harborough, the constable speedily found where the Rev. Gentleman had deposited himself, the other chaise having not been in long; and proceeding to the Three Swans posting-house, apprehended the prisoner in the act of exchanging his wet clothes for an elegant suit of black. The constable was determined that his prisoner should not escape a second time; he therefore took the necessary precaution of handcuffing him, which having done, he accompanied him in a chaise to Melton Mowbray, where, without delay, he underwent an examination before Fletcher Norton Norton, Esq. and several other county magistrates. The Rev. Gentleman, it is said, confessed that he was the Rev. Gentleman alluded to in his own letter, and that no work of the kind alluded to was going to be published, though we cannot vouch for the fact, as the examination was strictly private. Earl Plymouth was bound over to prosecute, and the prisoner was committed to Leicester county gaol, to take his trial at the next assizes.

On Saturday last, the prisoner arrived at Leicester gaol, in a post-chaise, and the circumstance has created a considerable degree of excitement in Leicester as well as Melton Mowbray. Ever since the Rev. Gentleman's incarceration, he has been in a high state of delirium, supposed to have been caused by taking a severe cold from jumping into the canal, in his endeavours to escape the clutches of the officer. Dr. Freer and Dr. Arnold, two eminent physicians of Leicester, are in constant attendance upon the prisoner, who is pronounced to be in an extremely precarious state. The prisoner, we understand, is a relative of the Earl of Plymouth, and is acquainted with most of his Lordship's private concerns, which it appears he had taken advantage of by insinuating, unless he was bought of, would be made public. Mr. Heaton de Crespigny's brother, who had come post haste from London, on hearing of the unfortunate situation in which he was placed, visited him at the county gaol this day (Wednesday,) after which he immediately repaired to Melton Mowbray, for the purpose of communing with the noble Earl the subject of his brother's misfortune.

1828 December 31: Bury and Norwich Post

The Rev. Heaton de Crespigny was conveyed from Leicester goal on Sunday evening, in custody of the gaoler, in a chaise and four, to London. He appeared before the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, and obtained bail, in four sureties of 500l. each, to appear at Leicester assizes in March. Immediately afterwards, the Rev. Gentleman was taken by his friends to a lunatic asylum.

1829 January 7: Inverness Courier

DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE. LONDON. It is said that Lord Plymouth has humanely consented to forgo all proceedings against Heaton de Crespigny for writing him a letter to extort money, if he will remove himself out of England - a condition which he doubtlessly will gladly accede to; whether with his clerical gown on his shoulders or not, depends, we suppose, upon higher powers.

1829 February 5: London Standard

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, Feb. 4. DE CRESPIGNY V. WELLESLEY. This case came before the court on demurrer to the defendant's pleas, and was appointed for special argument this morning. Mr. Sergeant Wilde, in support of the demurrer, stated the case, and said that the action was brought against the defendant for slander, in publishing statements in the newspapers which were not true. The defendant having pleaded that the slanderous matter had been told him by a third person, the learned counsel cited many cases to show that the plea was therefore bad, and could not be supported in law. The matter of fact was this, that a person, who for aught he knew was a lunatic, had made a communication to Mr. Wellesley, of which Mr. W. made a minute, and submitted it to his informant for correction, who struck his pen through part of it as incorrect; but, notwithstanding this, Mr. Wellesley published the whole of the minute, with a note, stating that part of it had been struck out, and the most material part, because it stated that the plaintiff had had an intrigue with Miss Emma Long. The defendant had not pleaded a justification of this fact, or an allegation that it was true, but that Mr. Heaton De Crespigny had published this statement, although he had actually put his pen through the matter when he was asked to correct the minute of the conversation. Mr. Sergeant Spankie, in support of the pleas, cited several cases in contradiction to those quoted by the opposite side, and argued that the pleas were not bad, because the defendant had given up the name of his informant in the pleas, and therefore it was not necessary to plead a justification, as there was a justification upon the face of the pleas. After hearing the arguments of counsel, The Chief Justice said he would read over all the papers, and certainly give judgment in the course of the present term.

1820 June 12: Cambridge Chronicle and Journal

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, June 4.

LIBEL. DE CRESPIGNY V. WELLESLEY.

[Before Lord Winford and a Special Jury.]

The declaration charged the defendant with the delivery of certain false and scandalous libels with a view to their publication in the Sunday Times and Age newspapers; and the declaration further charged that these libels were published in the aforesaid newspapers.

Mr. Sergeant Wilde said that he appeared as counsel for Sir William De Crespigny, who now applied to a jury of his country for justice, and for redress of the injury which he feels has been deeply inflicted on him by the defendant, Mr. Wellesley. The nature of the charge had already been explained to them. Mr. Wellesley procured the publication of certain libels, imputing to the plaintiff the crimes of incest and adultery. The plaintiff was 65 years old, yet at that stage of life he was compelled to call on Mr. Wellesley to establish, by some proof, so foul a charge, and if Mr. Wellesley should not answer that call, then the plaintiff must appeal to the jury for the reparation which justice can afford - namely, compensation damages for these injuries. In this case the jury could have many advantages they could have the author of the libel before them, and would hear from him his motives for the publication. In many instances juries were at a loss to ascertain these motives, but here there could be no such embarrassment. Mr. Wellesley could appear before them to explain his motives, and it would for the jury to say whether they would furnish any mitigation for his conduct. As for the libels, they could, without his assistance, sufficiently disclose the history of the transactions out of which they arose. It would appear that two ladies, sisters the late Mrs. Wellesley, thought it right to institute certain proceedings for the purpose of determining who should have the guardianship of the children of the defendant and Mrs. Wellesley, the late Miss Long. The Court of Chancery decided that Mr. Wellesley was not a proper person for that trust. The whole matter was judicially investigated, and the decision was unfavourable to Mr. Wellesley; nothing remained, therefore, but that the judgment of the Court should be carried into effect, unless Mr. Wellesley could deter those

by whom the proceedings were instituted from acting on the decision of the Lord Chancellor. For the purpose of effecting that object Mr. Wellesley published the present libels. The parties against whom they were directed were females, and the jury must be aware how powerful the motives must be which would make ladies run the hazard of having their names mixed up with such calumnies, and associated with such licentiousness. They were aware that innocence could afford no shield against such charges; and that, though proved to be malicious and false, they must pain every honourable breast. Threaten a female, therefore, with a crime, and more than the consequences of actual guilt will attach from the mere charge. Mr. Wellesley, however, knew that though he might attempt to terrify these ladies, they were surrounded by respectable friends who might rally round them, and by their confidence in the innocence of the ladies go far to defeat the object of the slander. It occurred to Mr. Wellesley, therefore, that his object could not be attained without separating them from their friends. He was obliged to resort to such expedient. He mixed these respectable friends up in the charge, thinking that, if he could bring them also before the public, his end would be gained. The learned Sergeant then stated, that Mr. Heaton De Crespigny, the son of the plaintiff, was the friend and partisan of the defendant in the proceedings in the Court of Chancery. It further appeared that Mr. Wellesley had that influence over Mr. Crespigny which enabled him to make the strongest impression by the weakest possible means. Mr. Wellesley, knowing the extent of that influence, goes to Mr De Crespigny and represents to him that he has the strongest proofs, such as no understanding could resist. This statement of the proof owing all its force to the influence of Mr. Wellesley, and being often repeated to Mr. Crespigny, the latter gentleman, relying on the existence of his proofs, makes certain remarks, which Mr. Wellesley carefully treasures up; and when he is afterwards called for the proofs, he refers to these very remarks as furnishing the full proofs. Mr. Wellesley, it should be kept in remembrance, was a man not to be taken off his guard; from the very first moment that he contemplated any object, he kept his end steadily in view. Thus he made a minute of all his conversations with Mr. De Crespigny, without one word to indicate by what remarks of his own the observations were elicited. Mr. De Crespigny at length communicated the charges to his respectable father, and on receiving from him the most unqualified assurance of their falsehood in every particular, he naturally enough called on Mr. Wellesley for his proofs: but what does Mr. Wellesley do? He actually turns and rests for his proofs on the admissions made by Mr. De C. himself. Mr. Crespigny might be a weak man, a bad man, it might be that he was a mad man; the charge against the defendant was, that he duped that gentleman into a conversation and filled his mind with charges, of which Mr. Wellesley himself well knew he had no proofs; and that having elicited remarks from Mr. De Crespigny, he afterwards put forth these very remarks as affording evidence of the truth of the charges. The learned Sergeant proceeded to read the alleged libels as they appeared in the Sunday Times and Age newspapers, and commented on those parts which reflected on the character of the Misses Long. With reference to the duel between Mr. De Crespigny and Mr. Wellesley, he said that he could as little account for the circumstance of the Rev. Mr. De Crespigny being made the confidant of his own father's crimes, as he could defend the Rev. Gentleman's conduct in fighting a duel, because proof these crimes were not furnished by Mr. Wellesley when called on to do so. All the learned Sergeant had now say was, that Sir William De Crespigny, as the nearest male relation of the Misses Long, felt himself bound to come forward thus publicly to challenge their common calumniator the proof of his charges. He trusted that the jury would mark their sense of the plaintiff's injuries in the only way in which they could—namely, by the amount of the damages; not that compensation in money could afford any reparation, any more than it showed what view the jury took of the malignity of the charge, and its tendency to destroy the character of the party against whom it was aimed. That view was to be ascertained by the amount of the damages alone.

The following evidence was then produced:— Thomas Gaspey, examined by Mr. Pollock :— I was editor of "The Sunday Times" In June last. In consequence of some communication from Mr. Wellesley, I waited on him. A letter signed by Mr. Wellesley's name was given to me, and when I afterwards saw him, and was in conversation with him, I referred to that letter. I afterwards got a statement in writing from Mrs. Bligh, in the presence Mr. Wellesley. This occurred on Thursday the 26th of June, at Mr. Wellesley's house. The manuscript was here handed to the witness, who said that it had been given to him for publication, and that it was

accordingly published. The witness read over the above-mentioned paper to Mrs. Bligh and Mr. Wellesley. I wrote a few remarks as preface the letters which the paper contained. Mr. Wellesley approved of these remarks as an introduction. I subsequently received other papers. I objected to one word the letters - that word was 'obscene.' Mr. Wellesley wished rather have asterisks substituted in the place of it than that any more mild expression should be used. On my saying that although the statement furnished by Mr. Wellesley might be true, as the strong vouchers he then produced warranted me in thinking, but that I could not run the risk of inserting it, both Mrs. Bligh and Mr. Wellesley assured me that they would bear me harmless in the publication. The Sunday Times and Age newspapers were put in, and several letters inserted in it referring to the same subject were also given in evidence as part of the libellous matter.

Charles Molloy Westmacott proved that the matter inserted in the Age was furnished the defendant.

This was the case on behalf of the plaintiff.

Sir JAMES SCARLETT, for the defendant, said, that though not unaccustomed to the discharge of duties of this nature, he never had so much serious difficulty to contend with as in the present instance. This was rather a candid avowal to make in the outset; but when he explained that difficulty, the jury would see that it was not founded on any idea of abandoning his client. The difficulty so much had been said and written of Mr. Wellesley - the public had been much nauseated by all they had heard and read of him, that no one could come into Court respecting whom a jury could be more likely to have a prepossession in all that concerned him. He entreated the jury to dismiss all those considerations from their minds. To the learned Judge, who was in the daily habit of controlling his feelings and subduing all heat of temper, that task was easy, but to gentlemen taken generally from society it was more difficult. His learned friend stated that the object of the defendant was to deter the Misses Long from prosecuting the proceeding respecting his children; he denied that assertion and undertook to disprove it. His learned friend stated that the defendant, engaged as he was in the atrocious object of getting the possession of his own children, had invented these falsehoods against the Misses Long; but the jury should bear in mind, that the Misses Long, or their character, were not now before the Court. How ever entitled they might to maintain an action in their own name against the defendant, still the attack on them ought not to be taken into the reckoning - if reckoning there were - in an action between Sir W. De Crespigny and Mr. Wellesley. It was, perhaps, an indiscretion to have introduced their names in the publication, but the jury must deal with the present question as if they had never heard of the Misses Long. Now his learned friend declared that this publication took place in order to terrify the Misses Long, but it did not take place until the contest between Mr. Wellesley and the Misses Long was at an end. This dispute between them had been settled as far as a judicial declaration would settle it; the matter was finally judged. The learned gentleman, after further observation on that part of the case, denied that any direct charge of guilt was made against Sir William Crespigny, other than in the admissions of his own son, or in communications made to Mr. Wellesley by others. Mr. Wellesley did not pretend to say that he had seen any thing with his own eyes; nor had he put that on the record. He pleaded that the libellous matter was communicated to him the Rev. Mr. Heaton De Crespigny; the plaintiff, however, demurred to that plea, and this Court very properly allowed the demurrer, on the legal grounds that, even if the plaintiff's son proved, in the witness-box, that he communicated the matter to Mr. W., that circumstance would not be a defence to the action. The plaintiff, therefore, it was, who prevented Mr. Wellesley from producing the individual from whom the information came in the first instance. There was, besides, another course open to the plaintiff by which the case could be fully inquired into. He might have put on the record what the lawyers call the inducement to the libel - that was, he might have set out the motives and object of the defendant, and by that course he could have afforded the defendant the opportunity of negating the imputed motives. If, for instance, the declaration charged the defendant with having fabricated these charges, and with having communicated these charges to the Rev. Mr. De Crespigny, it would have been open to the defendant to bring forward the plaintiff's own son to disprove that inducement. The learned gentleman, in going through the libel, and commenting on the bearing of the several parts of it, put it to the jury whether it did not appear that the publication took place in a hasty moment, and was deemed necessary by Mr. Wellesley, as explanatory of the motives which led him to adopt the

extraordinary course of fighting a duel with clergyman. The publication was, no doubt, an indiscreet proceeding, and if Mr. Wellesley had the advantage of legal advice at the moment, he, perhaps, would have refrained from exposing himself to the consequences that might attach to it. On the whole of the case he asked them whether it ought not to be viewed without reference to these prejudices, either in favour of or against Mr. Wellesley. He must put to them to say, did they or did they not, think that the publication was resorted to for the sole and express purpose of injuring Sir William De Crespigny. Could any man come to any other conclusion than this, that he made these letters public, because he was charged with having fabricated malicious reports and with refusing to retract that report on being called on to do so? His own character, a man of honour, was at stake. Let the jury but look at the transactions in that point of view, and the alleged motive of attacking the character of Sir William De Crespigny would be negatived the moment it was seen that Mr. Wellesley's object was to defend himself. He did not put in a justification of the libel, because he had never, for a moment, intended to say that he himself knew this charge to be true. The learned gentleman did not think he went too far in asking verdict of acquittal for Mr. Wollesley; but if the jury should think otherwise the next question was, what the amount of the damages ought to be. Sir William De Crespigny had sons, one of whom had already fought a duel with Mr. Wellesley. This was an atonement which, in the minds of all honourable men, went far to mitigate a party guilty of an indiscretion. Why then offer up Mr. Wellesley as a sacrifice in vindication of the plaintiff's character - why not look to his own son - why not see whether all this was not the result of his son's folly or wickedness.

Lord Winford then proceeded to charge the jury, and told them to dismiss from their minds all parts of the libel which did not refer to the plaintiff and to him alone. His Lordship, however, could not but think that the defendant's object seemed be, not alone to defend his own character, but also to defame that of other persons. Under all the circumstances, he was of opinion that the libel did not contain a charge of incest against the plaintiff, though it certainly went to the full extent of charging him with having committed adultery with Miss Emma Long. So far the publication was a libel, and it was for the jury, upon an attentive consideration of the whole case, to say what damages they would award plaintiff. In estimating the damages, they would bear in mind the station in life of the parties. One was a baronet, and the other, it would appear, was the son of nobleman. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff damages, One Thousand Pounds.

1829 August 26: Bury and Norwich Post

LEICESTER ASSIZES. ... At the above Assizes on Saturday, the reconizances of the Rev. Heaton de Crespigny, on the prosecution of the Earl of Plymouth, were discharged.

1833 January 11: Morning Chronicle

INSOLVENT DEBTORS COURT.-THURSDAY. The Rev. HEATON CHAMPION de CRESPIGNY, formerly of Stoke Doyle, where he held a living, and latterly of Cheltenham, was opposed by Mr. Woodroffe, on behalf of Mr. Mash, and was supported by Mr. Cooke. The Insolvent, it appeared, held two Church Livings - Stoke Doyle, in Northamptonshire, and Neat's Head, In Norfolk. He resided from 1822 up to 1928 at the former; but never at the latter. In both he employed Curates; one it a salary of 90l. a year, and the other at 60l., beyond which, the value of the livings did not produce him much. His debts, as set forth in his schedule, amount to 7,500l.; credits he has none. Owing to his embarrassed circumstances, and to avoid being arrested by his creditors, he proceeded to France, and resided there for some time before he took up his residence in Cheltenham, where his wife, with whom he received a fortune of 3,000l. resides. She has a young family; and in right of her fortune, a marriage settlement was made in her favour by the Insolvent. The whole of his case consisted in his having received money from time to time from different persons on annuities of various descriptions, which he possessed; and he was charged by the opposing Counsel for Mr. Mash, with having not truly represented the value of one of his livings, on which Mr. Mash advanced him 1,100l.; and that he had done so by over-stating the amount of his receipts for tithes, which appeared to be 286l, but which was reduced to 140l per annum, by a deduction of the Curate's salary, and other expenses. This latter sum the

Insolvent insured to Mr. Mash, and paid the annuity himself for some years, from 1826; but when he ceased to pay it, the living was discovered not worth so much as In the negotiation it was specified to be.

It appeared that Mr. Lloyd, a solicitor, living in Northampton-street, had been employed by the Insolvent to raise him a sum of money on an annuity, and that he negotiated the matter with Mr. Mash, to whom he gave a specification of the value of the living, which he received from a Mr. Gibson, the insolvent's agent. It exhibited an account of receipts to the amount of 286l. per annum for some years, and he handed it, he deposed, to Mr. Mash in precisely the same state that he received it. The Insolvent, on the other hand, solemnly affirmed "that he had never altered the figures, and that if they had ever been altered, it must have been after the document had passed out of his hands." The charge was not borne out, and Mr. Mash, on whose behalf it was made, did not appear In Court to support it by his testimony. His money, however, appears to be secured to him, an Assurance Company having to engaged to advance him 5l. 17s. per cent, on the annuity until the arrears due on it by, the insolvent shall be cleared off. For those arrears (377l.) he is now imprisoned. Mr. Woodroffe further alleged on his (Mr. Mash's) behalf, that the annuity, deducting 32l. per annum, paid out of it as a premium on an insurance effected on the insolvent's life by way of a security for the payment of the, 1,100l., produced little more than 50l. a year during the last three years; and he, in addition, submitted in support of his argument, that the Insolvent had admitted in a certificate signed by him and drawn by Mr. Lloyd, that the living was not worth more than 120l. a year.

The Insolvent, in examination, admitted having signed the certificate, but it did not appear that he was aware it so specified the value of the living.

The next point was an annuity granted to the Miss Whittakers, of Cheltenham, who advanced him 1999l. on it. This large sum, it was stated, he required to enable him to pay a debt of 1055l. due from him to Sir Wm. Rawlins, together with a half year's annuity of 55l. to the same individual.

Mr. Prince, a Solicitor, of Cheltenham, deposed that he negotiated the transaction for the Insolvent with the Misses Whittaker. They were clients of his. The negotiation took place in August of the last year; and it having been alleged that the Insolvent had misapplied the money, Mr. Prince, in explanation of the disposal of the greater part of it, stated that 1000l. of it were paid to Sir Wm. Rawlins; and 310l. to himself, in return for cash to that amount, which he lent to the Insolvent while the negotiation was going on; also a sum of 150l. to himself, for professional services which he rendered the Insolvent. He further stated, that the Insolvent is now indebted to him about 200l. more for additional law expences, since incurred on his account; and also, in a sum of 800l. which he (Mr Prince) paid to a Mr. Welling, for another annuity of the Insolvent's, and which he now holds as a security for his debt. By having thus taken up the deed, Mr. Prince effected a saving to the estate of 5l. per cent. Mr. Welling having had 10l. per cent, on it, and he (Mr. Prince) having consented to hold it at five per cent. The Insolvent, who, it will be recollected, is the same gentleman who some few years back was engaged in an "affair of honour" with Mr. Long Wellesley, at Calais, accounted for the residue of the 2000l received from the Miss Whitakers, partly in travelling expences, partly in living, and partly in payments to creditors.

The case having closed, the CHIEF COMMISSIONER observed that it was melancholy to see a man so respectably connected as the insolvent, and of so respectable a profession as he is a member of, in such a situation before the Court. He approved of the feeling which influenced the opposing Counsel, in not attacking the insolvent to his professional character. The complaint in the case against him was made by annuity creditors, not one of whom appeared against him; and of all classes of creditors making application to this Court, there was none so much bound to appear as the annuity class, for their debts were generally contracted in a very different manner from most other debts. A charge of having falsified the value of a living was made against the insolvent; but as far as the evidence before the Court went, there was not the slightest ground to cast an imputation on him, and the Court would not entertain charges in the absence of evidence to support them. The Court, however, could not determine clearly on the other parts of the case, in the absence of the Marriage Settlement (one of the annuities on which the insolvent raised money), and also of the deed in the possession of Mr. Prince; for the production of which it should stand adjourned. Mr. Commissioner LAW took the same view of the case; and the case was accordingly adjourned.

[A somewhat different account of the trial appeared in the Stamford Mercury of the same day which seemed to suggest that Rev. Heaton was duped into believing that his father was guilty but late became convinced of his innocence – explaining the duel. It does not mention his blackmail attempt ...]

1829 June 12: Stamford Mercury

Court of Common Pleas ... In the long run, the younger de Crespigny had an interview with his father, and became convinced of the falsehood of the charges against him, and of the countenance which he had given them by his own conduct. A challenge followed, and a duel was fought at Calais. ...

1833 February 2: Huntingdon, Bedford & Peterborough Gazette

INSOLVENT DEBTORS' COURT-Tuesday. The Rev. Heaton Champion Crespigny, son of the late Sir William de Crespigny, a report of whose case appeared in our paper a short time since, came to-day for final examination and adjudication. On the former hearing the case stood adjourned for the production of further accounts, and in order that certain abstracts of annuities granted by the Rev. Petitioner, on his livings at Stock Doyle and Neateshead, near Oundle, Northamptonshire, might be filed. An inventory since the last examination had been obtained the wearing apparel of Mrs. De Crespigny, and it was stated by Mr. Cooke, who supported the insolvent, that the surplus of the amount allowed by the Statute would be paid into Court. An inquiry respecting some fixtures at Stoke Doyle took place, when an affidavit of their value was read : they were estimated as worth 171.

Mr. Cooke hoped the Court would not require that sum to be paid into Court.

Mr. Commissioner Law – Why not this is like any other case.

Mr. Cooke said he not wish any difference to be made in this case.

Mr. Commissioner Law – Then let the property be accounted for to the provisional assignee.

After Mr. De Crespigny had sworn to the truth of his schedule and the amendments, The Chief Commissioner pronounced judgment: he observed that there were very meritorious creditors on the schedule, creditors of nearly every description, who would, from the conduct pursued by the insolvent, be very considerable sufferers. The insolvent had expended a somewhat large sum money not long since in a manner that could not be justified. In May last he had a considerable sum in his possession, raised as detailed on former examination: he did not distribute it, as was his duty, among his creditors, and for that misconduct (the Chief Commissioner) did not think him a fit object for his immediate discharge, and his learned colleague concurred in his view of the case. The learned Commissioner then adjudged the insolvent to an imprisonment six months, from the date of filing his petition.

1833 November 8: Stamford Mercury

On the 19th ult, the Bishop of Peterborough instituted the Rev. John Shillibeer, M.A., to the Rectory of Stoke Doyle, Northamptonshire, vacant by the resignation of the Rev. Heaton Champion de Crespigny; on the presentation of George Capron, Esq.