

any trouble,' Perry said, his tone having lost all its bravado.

'What! Do you bring a charge against a church member, and then are unwilling to stand by it? How can you ever purify the Church on these indefinite charges? If these evils exist every true man, and every public-spirited citizen ought to help us to get rid of them.'

The young men seemed to be abashed, and Jack felt for the first time that he had been acting the part of a coward. He, too, had often criticized church members, but he would not want to be summoned as a witness—no, no! At length the other young man, Henry Rodman, found his voice.

'But really, Mr. Austin,' he began, 'the inconsistencies of church people are a serious matter. Some of them are guilty of conduct that many who make no profession would not stoop to do.'

'No doubt,' conceded Mr. Austin, 'I suppose there is someone outside of the Church whom you regard as a model?' he continued, half inquiringly.

'Yes, there are several such persons,' affirmed Henry. 'There, for instance, is Jack Sylvester, who has a good position with this firm. He is honorable in every way. He doesn't drink, or swear, smoke, or chew; he doesn't even go to balls and theatres. There couldn't be a more honest and upright fellow—a perfect gentleman in every respect.'

By this time Jack, who heard every word, was blushing violently on account of all this voluntary praise.

'Now, compare Jack with some of your church members,' pursued Henry, in a scornful tone. 'I should prefer to take him for a model, and take his chance for heaven, too. If a man can be so honorable without being a Christian, I don't see much advantage in being one, do you?'

'Wait a moment,' said Mr. Austin, kindly. 'You mean to say, then, that Jack Sylvester, because he is a good moral man and yet not a Christian, encourages you to remain away from Christ.'

'Well—I hadn't just thought of it in that light,' Henry hesitated; 'but, yes, that is what it practically amounts to. If he can live an upright life without religion, why can't I? Tell me that.'

'Then a grave responsibility rests on Jack Sylvester,' said the minister, seriously. 'I do not think I should want to rest under it. He believes the scriptures to be true, and yet by refusing to confess Christ before men he keeps others from coming to Christ. Do you see? In that way a moral man who is not a Christian may do a great deal of harm. His influence is on the wrong side.'

'I never thought of that,' replied Henry, doubtfully.

'Yes that is the principle, precisely. People who want an excuse for not coming to Christ will always select some poor specimen of a Christian, and a fine specimen of a moral man, and then contrast them. Now, if all our excellent moral men were Christians, see what an influence for good they would exert! God has given them their moral talents, and expects them to serve his cause. Instead of doing that, they use their talents only for themselves, and, whether they intend it or not, they are against Christ because they are not for him.'

A pause followed.

'Well,' said Perry Sales, presently, 'I hope no one takes me for a model on the wrong side. I should tremble at the thought of standing in the way of anybody's salvation.'

'Every man has his influence,' said the minister, solemnly. 'It is either for Christ or against him. On which side is your influence, my young friends? Good day. I shall leave you to think the matter over.'

For two days after Jack pondered the con-

versation which he had inadvertently overheard. His eyes had been opened. Perry Sales and Henry Rodman were following his example. Others were doubtless taking them as models. Where would his influence end? He trembled at the thought.

On the third day he called Perry and Henry into the office, and said:

'Friends, I have learned that you have been making me an excuse for not becoming Christians. I have resolved to follow Christ and put my influence positively on his side. I hope you will come with me.'

The young men looked at Jack, and then at each other in amazement, and could not answer.

'Pray over the matter, boys, as I have done, and your difficulties will soon vanish.'

His words produced their intended effect, for before many weeks Jack and his two friends made a public profession of Christ. One day soon after Jack met Mr. Austin.

'Your conversation with Perry Sales and Henry Rodman was an eye-opener to me,' he said, smilingly.

'I don't understand,' said Mr. Austin. And Jack explained.—'Christian Advocate.'

## Cicero's Call to be Missionary

(By Mrs. O. W. Scott.)

'Papa, this is Cicero Jefferson.'

Colonel Dent had visited the village school that afternoon to please his little daughter, and he now turned as she gently pulled his sleeve.

'Ah, so this is Cicero?' and he took the small black hand, and looked kindly into the shining black face.

'Cicero Lincoln Jefferson!' exclaimed the boy, with a radiant smile.

'I enjoyed your recitation,' said the colonel, 'You are wise to learn what great men think of your race. Perhaps some time you may go to Africa to teach or preach.'

'I don't know. Mammy hopes I'll be good for something when I grow up.'

'Do you know about Moffat and Livingstone and Stanley and Bishop Taylor?' asked Colonel Dent.

Cicero shook his head.

'You ought to know about them. Fay, don't let me forget to send him some books.'

'No, papa,' replied the little daughter.

And it was Fay who had to remind him of the promise, and finally carry the big package in her own small arms to Aunt Ilsy's tiny house under the hill.

But she was a dear little missionary worker, and quite sure that Cicero's ignorance about Africa was rather disgraceful.

'You'll be surprised to find how strange African people are,' she said, balancing one dainty foot on the threshold, as she rubbed her tired arm; 'but you'll be interested.'

And he was. It was now vacation, and Cicero spent his spare time over the books, missionary magazines, pamphlets, and one large illustrated book which made for him a perpetual feast.

Sometimes he laughed, and sometimes his tears fell upon the open page.

'What do all you, Cicero?' asked Aunt Ilsy as they sat on the doorstep late one summer afternoon. He was reading, as usual, she was smoking her short pipe, and the clothes she had been washing hung flapping to and fro on the long lines which crossed and recrossed the small yard.

'Don't know, mammy,' replied Cicero, wiping his eyes. 'Seems like I want to do something. If I was a big fighter like General Napoleon or General Grant, I'd go out there and take care o' things. I'd stop the rum ships, and I'd build meetin'-houses an' school-houses, an' houses to live in. See,

Mammy, how'd you like to live the way they do?'

She was fond of pictures, and looked eagerly over his shoulder.

'O now, Cicero! do black folks in Africa live in dose beehives?' and she pointed to one of the kraals, as they are called, where a chief lives with his family and followers. Small huts, like bowls, turned upside down or old-fashioned beehives, form a ring with a space in the center.

'Where's the chimneys?' asked Aunt Ilsy, scornfully.

'They don't have any,' replied Cicero.

'Where's the winders?'

'Don't have any.'

'Where's their do'steps?'

'No doorsteps either,' said Cicero. 'They stoop low, and crawl in.'

'No do'steps? Where do they set to look at sunsets and thank de good Lord for his most excellent glory?'

Real pity was in her tone as she lifted her comely face toward the beautiful sky.

'Oh, Mammy, they don't have any Lord! That's the trouble. They can't go to meetin'; they can't hear the big organ play, nor bells ring. The children don't go to school like I do.'

'For pity's sake!' exclaimed Aunt Ilsy.

'An' they're afraid of the awful witch doctors that live in the bush. Sometimes the witch doctor makes 'em take poison, if anybody complain, an' they die jest for nothing. They wear charm things round their necks—bones an' teeth an' bark—an' think they'll save 'em. Hear this Mammy!'

Then Cicero read how the king of one of their tribes died, and when he was buried ten of his slave wives were buried with him.

'While they were alive, Cicero?' his mother inquired, in tones of horror.

'Just as much alive as you be this minute,' replied the boy. 'An', Mammy, here's a picture of some slaves that's bein' stolea from their homes. See that long line? See the chains? See that woman with a baby in her arms, an' two more right behind?' Aunt Ilsy groaned.

Cicero's voice sank to a whisper, as he continued: 'If they get awful tired an' fall behind, the driver whips 'em till they stagger along. Sometimes when the babies can't walk, they leave 'em behind—to die on the ground.'

'Pore things! I wish I could do something fer 'em,' sighed Aunt Ilsy.

'I 'most wish the cunnel hadn't sent the books,' said Cicero, huskily, 'cause now I'll have to go out there as soon as I grow up.'

Aunt Ilsy instantly sat erect, and took the pipe from her lips. 'Cicero Lincoln Jefferson,' she said, 'quit that talk. Has I any chile but you?'

'No, Mammy.'

'Hasn't I washed, an' f'oned and scrubbed to keep you slick and neat?'

'Yes, Mammy,' Cicero assented.

'Hasn't I been waitin' fur you to be wuth somethin' fer me? Don't I need the only boy I has? Is you goin' to be a stiff-necked, ongrateful chile, leavin' yo' mammy, to go to the ends of the earth?'

Aunt Ilsy's voice rose higher and higher, and shook with mingled grief and anger.

She rose from the doorstep and disappeared, but Cicero remained until the last line of sunset red disappeared.

It may have been midnight when Aunt Ilsy suddenly awoke. Cicero was calling, 'Mammy, what you want?' from his small chamber.

Aunt Ilsy was at the foot of the stairs in a moment.

'I never called, honey; what you mean?'

'Why, yes, you said, "Cicero Lincoln Jefferson, I want you," persisted the boy.