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**SAMUEL CROWTHER, SLAVE-BOY AND BISHOP.**

Many books have been written showing how from lowly circumstances men have risen to positions of great honor and usefulness. Perhaps you have read "From Poor-house to Pulpit," or "From Cabin to White House." The story we are about to tell might be called "From Slave-pen to Bishopric." It is a wonderful story of high attainments by one of humblest birth.

Some seventy-five years ago, the great supply of slaves for the markets of the world came from the west coast of Africa, and especially from the kingdoms bordering on the Gulf of Guinea. One of these kingdoms is Yoruba, and about a hundred miles inland from what is now the port of Lagos, there lived, in 1821, a family consisting of father and mother and three children, one of them a boy of eleven years, named Adjai. One morning a cry was heard in this rude African village: "The men-stealers are coming!" In the fight which followed, the father fell in defence of his home, and the children and mother were bound together with cords about their necks, and were driven away from their home, which was left a smoking ruin. The mother and baby were allotted to one of the warriors. Adjai and his sister were assigned to a principal chief, but were soon bartered away for a horse. Inasmuch as the horse did not suit the chief, Adjai was taken back, but was subsequently sent in chains to the slave market at Ijaye to be sold. Within a few months he was sold four times, generally being bartered for rum and tobacco. All this time he was in terrible anxiety lest he should be sold to white men and carried off, as so many of the slaves were, to a foreign land. He often purposed to strangle himself, and once actually attempted to throw himself into the river. But God kept him in life, for he had a great use to make of him.

The fourth master of Adjai did sell him to the white men, who put him with the others into the slave barracoons, or sheds, where he lay stifling for four weary months. This was at what is now the flourishing town of Lagos. But one night Adjai and his companions, to the number of 187, were carried on board a slave ship, and stowed away in the hold for the purpose of transportation to Cuba or Brazil. Shortly after the slave-ship went to sea she was captured by a British man-of-war which was seeking to suppress the slave trade, and the slaves were taken on board to be carried to Sierra Leone. But of course these poor creatures did not understand the merciful purpose of their deliverers, and when on board the rescuing ship they were filled with horror at seeing joints of pork and cannon balls about the deck, for they had no other thought than that these were the heads and flesh of murdered negroes, and that it would soon be their turn to be thus cut up.

These freed children were placed at Sierra

Leone, in a school under the care of young men, and Adjai was so eager to learn that when the first day's school was over he begged a half-penny and bought an alphabet card for himself. In six months he could read the New Testament well. A little girl with whom he was associated in this school, named Asano, afterward became his wife.

After exhibiting marked intelligence and showing evidence of Christian character, Adjai was baptized, in 1825, by the name of Samuel Crowther. He was then taken to England by one of the missionaries, but returned shortly after to Sierra Leone and became a student, and soon an assistant teacher, in what was called the Fourah Bay

men marvelled as they heard one of their own race preaching in his native Yoruba, and the whole church rang with the cry of "Ke oh sheh!"—"So let it be."

At this time many of the Yoruba-speaking tribes, after suffering greatly from men-stealing wars, had built a city about a hundred miles from Lagos, calling it Abeokuta, and many of the slaves who had obtained their liberty in various parts of Africa made their way back to this their native land. Mr. Crowther was appointed to labor at this city, and went thither with four other Christian Yorubas. In 1846, three weeks after he had reached the city, he met his mother, after a separation of a quarter of a

she held me by the hand, and called me by the familiar names by which I well remembered I used to be called by my grandmother who has since died in slavery. We could not say much, but sat still, and cast now and then an affectionate look at one another—a look which violence and oppression have long checked—an affection which had nearly been extinguished by the long space of twenty-five years. My two sisters, who were captured with us, are both with my mother, who takes care of them and her grandchildren, in a small town not far from hence, called Abaka. Thus unsought for, after all search for me had failed, God has brought us together again, and turned our sorrow into joy."

It seems that his mother had long given up all hope of seeing her son, having been in slavery herself more than once, though not taken from Africa. She afterward became one of the first fruits of the mission, and was baptized by the name of Hannah, the mother of Samuel.

In Mr. Crowther's journal of August 3, 1849, is this record:—

"This mission is to-day three years old. What has God wrought during this short interval of conflict between light and darkness? We have five hundred constant attendants on the means of grace, about eighty communicants, and nearly two hundred candidates for baptism. A great number of heathen have ceased worshipping their country gods, others have cast theirs away altogether, and are not far from enlisting under the banner of Christ."

We have not room to follow the subsequent life of Mr. Crowther in detail. He prepared a grammar and dictionary of the Yoruba language, and was known as a diligent and thorough scholar. He translated the Bible and school-books into his native tongue, and gave himself unweariedly to efforts to elevate his people. He led a second expedition up the Niger, which was a signal success, making important additions to the geographical knowledge of the world. But he was engaged chiefly in the missionary work, and in 1857 the Niger Mission of the English Church Missionary Society was established. When the English bishop died, no one could be found so fitted for the position as Mr. Crowther, and he was consecrated bishop in 1864. The last report of this mission says that "no other mission started so recently as 1857 can show equal visible results in large congregations of professed Christian worshippers." There are nearly four thousand Christian adherents under the care of this bishop, and though the people have suffered much from the



BISHOP SAMUEL CROWTHER.

College of the English Church Missionary Society. He was invited to accompany the celebrated Niger expedition, undertaken by the English Government in 1841, the object of which was to explore that important but then unknown river of Africa. The expedition, though it made valuable discoveries was disastrous in its results, for nearly one third of the hundred and fifty persons connected with it died within two months. Mr. Crowther, however, escaped, and in 1843, just twenty-one years after he was put on board the slave-ship, he was ordained clergyman in connection with the mission of the Church of England. His country-

century. In his own journal he makes the following record for August 21, on which day he met her:—

"Thou art the Helper of the fatherless. I have never felt the force of this text more than I did this day, as I met my mother, from whom I had been separated about five and twenty years. My brother in law, who was with me she trembled in her own eyes, looking at each other with astonishment. My mother was emaciated and feeble. My people so

of their neighbors, for the faith. She died only twenty years after she had been a slave. I am, of the