

The Minister's Wife

By MRS. HENRY WOOD

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

Jaquet put on the child's hat and cape, and Mr. Baumgarten escorted Lady Avon to the carriage.

"Where are we going, grandmamma?" asked Cyras, as they turned into a green lane, which led to a cross country road in the opposite direction to the fair, near which Lady Avon would not have gone had she been bribed to do so.

"It is very pretty this way; perhaps we shall see some haymakers," she said. Cyras was quite satisfied; all roads were pretty much alike to him. They saw haymakers, and they saw some gypsies.

In returning home, when driving across a strip of waste land or common, an open carriage containing an old lady encountered that of Lady Avon. Both carriages stopped abreast, and the ladies entered into conversation. It chanced that they had stopped exactly opposite a gypsy encampment, the sight of which gave Cyras unbounded delight. He had never seen one before.

"Grandma, look. Do look. Isn't it nice?"

Lady Avon turned to Cyras' side of the carriage and saw the settlement. She had not before observed it. "Dear me," said she, "a gypsy encampment! I wonder they are not at the fair. The men are, I suppose. I see none about."

"What is it, grandmamma?"

"A gypsy camp, my dear. They are people who rove about the country, and sleep in the open air at night, or in caravans."

"I wish I could. Do you see the fires, grandmamma? Couldn't we go to them?"

"Oh, dear, no," said Lady Avon, very decisively. "Little boys must never go near such people."

The carriage deposited Cyras at the rectory gate as the clocks were striking one. Lady Avon watched him inside, and then drove on. Charley came running out-of-doors to meet his brother.

"Oh, Charley, I wish you'd been with us!" began Cyras. "We've seen something beautiful."

"What is it?" asked Charles. "Jam?"

"It was gypsies. They'd got fires all blazing on the ground—on the grass, you know."

"Take me to see it, Cyas! Please take me!"

The little boys dined at the luncheon table. That day it happened that a clergyman from a distance was present at the meal. He and Mr. Baumgarten went into very deep converse about some public church matters which were not giving satisfaction. Lady Grace joined in it; thus Cyras found no opportunity to tell of his experience touching the gypsy camp, as he would otherwise have done.

Luncheon over, Mr. Baumgarten went out at once with his friend. Lady Grace proceeded to the nursery and the boys ran to their swing—a perfectly safe one—at the back of the house.

CHAPTER X.

About 4 o'clock Jaquet went to see after the boys. Her mistress had said they had gone to the swing. Jaquet could not see them anywhere and ran round to the front lawn. They were not there.

"Do you know where the children are, Moore?" she inquired, meeting the man in the hall.

"No, unless they're with my lady in the drawing room; they were there when I took in the tea and cake," answered Moore.

"Oh, then they are sure to be there; trust them for stopping where there's any cake going on," said Jaquet. And she went back to her nursery and to the baby, then just waking up out of sleep.

It was 5 o'clock when the carriage was brought round and the guests went away. Lady Grace ran up to the nursery. A maid was carrying in the tray containing the children's tea and Jaquet's.

"Where are they?" asked Lady Grace, looking round.

"They have not been up here," said Jaquet. "I thought they were with your ladyship."

"They must be at the swing," said Lady Grace.

But the children were not at the swing; they were not in the front garden; they did not seem to be anywhere.

Lady Grace began to feel somewhat uneasy. She went outside the gate and looked down the avenue which led to the high road; still she did not think they would run off of their own accord; even Cyras had never done that.

Moore, Jaquet and one of the housemaids went about, searching the house and grounds thoroughly; all in vain. In the midst of the commotion Mr. Baumgarten came home.

"The children are lost," said Lady Grace.

"Lost! The children! Oh, nonsense," said Mr. Baumgarten.

It appeared that the last seen of them was when Moore took the cake and tea to the drawing room. Lady Grace was not very clear as to how soon afterward they left it.

"Perhaps they have gone off to the fair," said Mr. Baumgarten to his wife. "I suppose this comes of our having promised your mother in their hearing that they should not go to it."

"Then it's Cyras who is in fault," said she. "Charles would not have the sense to do such a thing, or the courage either."

"Of course not. He is too young for that yet awhile."

to dispatch Moore by that route, though it was hardly likely the children had taken it.

In any kind of suspense time seems to move on leaden wings. When an hour had elapsed and did not bring the truants, Lady Grace grew very uneasy. In her restlessness, she put on her bonnet and went down the avenue to where the high road crossed it, and stood there looking out. All the stragglers, passing by, were going toward the fair; none coming from it.

About half past 6, standing again in the road, she saw Mr. Baumgarten hastening back. But he was not leading a child in each hand, as she had fondly pictured; he was alone.

"I cannot see or hear anything of them," he said, in answer to his wife's impulsive question. "I don't think they can have gone to the fair."

Mr. Baumgarten was utterly fatigued and quite at a loss to decide which way would be the best next to start upon. Grace shivered inwardly, picturing the harm which would come, or had come, to Charley.

"Do you think they have been kidnapped, Ryle? Both are beautiful boys."

"No, no," said Mr. Baumgarten. By degrees they became aware that sundry people were speeding along the highway one after another, not toward the fair, but in the other direction.

"Where can they be going?" cried Grace. "Has anything happened?" she inquired, running to arrest one of them—a working man from a cottage hard by.

"It's reported that there has just been a great landslip in that cutting they were making for the railway, my lady, and some people are buried under it," answered the man. "One boy's killed."

Lady Grace cried out in terror. "Oh, Ryle, Ryle, do you hear?" she moaned. "That's where the children are gone. The other day when I had them out with me I could hardly get them past it. They wanted to go down into the cutting."

Mr. Baumgarten turned very pale. "Hush, my dear!" he said, in a low, tender tone, "we must hope for the best. Go indoors, my love; keep yourself as tranquil as you can, while I go on with Brice."

Indoors! In that suspense? No; Lady Grace could not be tranquil enough for that. She paced about the avenue, and sat down on the bench, and stood in the highway watching the runners speeding to the scene, all by fits and starts. Twilight was coming on when she saw her husband returning. Mr. Brice was with him.

The landslip had not been so bad as reported. Landslips and other mishaps rarely are. Two men only were injured, and the boy spoken of; none of them mortally, and Mr. Brice had attended to them. No trace had been found there of the children.

"I'm sure I don't know where to look now," said Mr. Baumgarten, his voice betraying his weariness. "Grace, I believe I must snatch some refreshment before I go out again."

She put her arm within his at once, and led him down the avenue. "Are you coming, too, Mr. Brice?" she said, holding out her hand. "That's right. I'm sure you must need something."

Just as she was speaking the gate opened and a group came in. A tall man, with flashing black eyes and a yellow skin, evidently a gypsy, and—the two boys. He was carrying Charley in his arms; Cyras trotted beside him.

"Mamma, mamma!" cried Charley. And Grace Baumgarten wondered whether she had ever before given such heartfelt thanks to God.

Instead of advancing to meet the children and the man, Mr. Baumgarten suddenly sat down on a garden seat. The same curious sickness, or pain, or oppression—he hardly knew what it was—which had attacked him once or twice before, seized him now. Mr. Brice and Lady Grace were asking questions.

"Yes, master," said the man, addressing Mr. Brice, "when we got back to the women and children this evening these two little gents was there with 'em round the fire; so I set off again and brought 'em home."

Looking white and ill, Mr. Baumgarten came forward. The paroxysm had passed. He spoke a few heartfelt thanks to the man and rewarded him, and took him indoors that something to eat and drink might be given to him.

"I shall never speak against gypsies again," impulsively declared Lady Grace Baumgarten.

CHAPTER XI.

The shades of twilight were fast gathering on the aisles of the old cathedral, and the congregation, assembled in the choir for afternoon service, began to wonder whether the chanter would be able to finish without a light. The beautiful colors of the painted east window were growing dim—exceedingly beautiful they were when the sun illumined them. It was a full congregation, unusually numerous for a winter's afternoon, and one that threatened rain.

The service concluded, the bishop gave the blessing, and the congregation left the choir; but they did not leave the edifice; they waited in the body of the cathedral to listen to the music, for the organist was treating them to some of the choicest among his voluntaries. He was an eminent player, and now and then chose to show them that he was so, and would keep them, delighted listeners, full half an hour after the conclusion of afternoon service.

Cyras, an indulged boy and willful, had

scampered out to the cloisters, the moment he could steal away from the paternal surplice, drawing his brother with him.

"Charley," quoth he, "it's come on to pour cats and dogs, and I promised Dynevor to go out with him after college. You go in, and bring me my top coat."

"Oh, Cyras, don't send me! Let me stop and listen to the organ."

"You stupid little monkey! Come, be off; or else you know what you'll get. I'll allow you three minutes."

Master Baumgarten took out his watch, an appendage of which he was excessively proud—as he spoke; and Charley, knowing there was no appeal against his imperious brother, laid hold of the prayer book, and flew off through the covered passages which led into the deanery from the cloisters.

Cyras amused himself with hissing and spitting at an unhappy cat, which had by some mischance got into the cloister graveyard; and, just before the time was up, back came the child, all breathless, the coat over his arm.

Cyras snatched it from him, thrust an arm into one of its sleeves, and was attempting to thrust the other, when he discovered that it did not belong to him. Charley had by mistake brought his own, and Cyras could not, by any dint of pushing, get into it. His temper rose; he struck the child a smart rap on the cheek, and then began to buffet him with the unlucky coat. But he took care not to hurt him. It was all show.

"You careless little beggar! What the bother did you bring yours for? Haven't you got eyes? Haven't you got sense? Now, if—"

"Hallo! what's up? What's he been at now, Cy?"

The speaker was Frank Dynevor. Cyras Baumgarten's especial chum when he was at Denham. He was considerably older than Cyras, but the latter was a forward boy of his years, and would not acknowledge a companion in one of his own age.

"I sent him in for my coat, and he must bring his," explained Cyras. "A tanning would do him good."

"Of course it would," said Frank Dynevor. "What's he crying for?"

"For his sins," said Cyras. The tears stood in Charley's eyes; nothing grieved him so much as for Cyras to be angry with him.

"He cries for nothing," went on Cyras, "and then they get him into the nursery and give him sugar candy. Mamma and old Jaquet make a regular molly of him. Now, Master Charles, perhaps you'll go and get the right coat. It's his fault that I kept you waiting, Dynevor."

"I am not going," said Dynevor. "They began a row at home about my running out in the rain, so it's stopped, and I came to tell you. Here, Cy, come down this way."

The two boys, Dynevor's arm carelessly cast on the shoulder of Cyras, strolled off together along the cloisters toward the obscure exit which led to the Dark Alley, Cyras having tossed the coat on to Charley's head, nearly throwing him off his legs. Charley disengaged himself, and spying some of the college boys with whom he kept up a passing acquaintance when at Denham, he joined them. They were emerging noisily from the school room, after taking off their surplices; music had no charms for them, so they had not remained amidst the listeners in the cathedral.

Now, there was a charity school in Denham for the sons of small parents, where plain learning was taught. It was a large school, its numbers averaging four or five times those of the foundation school in the cathedral; and from time immemorial the gentlemen on the college foundation, called the King's scholars, and the boys of the charity school had been at daggers drawn. The slight pastimes of hard abuse and stone throwing were indulged in, whenever the opposition parties came into contact. Antipathy at the present time ran unusually high, and, in consequence of some offense offered by the haughty college boys in the past week, the opposition boys had ventured on the unheard-of exploit of collecting in a body round the cloister gate to waylay the King's scholars on their leaving the cathedral at the close of afternoon service. The latter walked into the trap and were caught; but they did not want for "pluck," and began laying about them right and left.

The noise penetrated to the other end of the cloister, to the ears of the two lads parading there, and away they tore, eager to take part in any mischief that might have turned up. The first thing Cyras saw was his brother Charles struggling in the hands of some half dozen of the enemy, and being roughly handled.

All the hot blood of Cyras Baumgarten's body rushed to his face and his temper; if he chose to put upon Charley and "tan" him, he was not going to see others do it. He flung off his jacket and his cap, threw them to Dynevor, and with his sturdy young fists doubled, sprang upon the assailants.

What would have been the upshot, it is impossible to say, had not the master of the opposition-boys come up; a worthy gentleman and martinet, whom the whole lot dreaded more than anything alive. The very moment his portly figure was caught sight of off flew the crew in ignominious alarm, the college boys raising a derisive shout after them, and then decamping to their own homes.

(To be continued.)

The First Thing.

"What is the first thing to learn about running a motorcar?" asked the curious friend.

"Economy in everything else," answered the man who is always getting into trouble.—Washington Star.

In the Cannery.

The New Employee—If you p-please, sir, I-I've got these can labels mixed up.

The Foreman—That's all right. Stick 'em on just as they happen to come.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.



"Gumeridge isn't a man I've a great deal of use for," remarked the citizen with the protruding waistband. "I've only met him a few times, just when you've brought him in to lunch, but I'm free to confess I don't like him. You know I never beat about the bush. If I like a man I like him and if I don't I'm as liable to tell him so as I am to tell anybody else. I know he's a friend of yours, or you think he is; but he makes me tired, and that's all there is to it."

"Why, what's the matter with him?" asked the thin man with the bushy black beard. "I never heard of anybody who had any particular fault to find with Gumeridge. I think he's one of the finest fellows that ever stepped. I've known him for twenty years and I've never seen anything wrong with him."

"No, I don't suppose you have," said the citizen of circumference. "Still, I should think you'd have got sick of it in that time."

"Sick of what?"

"Taffy, soft soap, flattery; that's what I mean. That's what I don't like about him. He puts it all over you with a spade. That sort of thing sickens me."

"I didn't notice him putting it all over you. He seemed to be pleasant, as he generally is with everybody, but I don't think he flattered you."

"No, he didn't flatter me. He was flattering you."

"Gumeridge?"

"Yes, Gumeridge. Take it at lunch the last time. 'Let Billy order,' he says, 'I think Billy can order a lunch a little better than anybody I know of. If Billy wasn't a corking good business man he'd have made the bulleest kind of a head waiter. When I want something extra good, just the right kind of combination of eatables,

I tell you I put my trust in Billy every time."

"Well," said Billy, "I guess I do know a thing or two in that line."

"There are others," said the large man. "I've got a sneaking sort of notion that I'm pretty good in that line myself. But you were a 'corking good business man' as well."

"Well, I'm not generally regarded as a slouch," said the thin man with the bushy black beard.

"Perhaps not. Mind you, I don't say you are. I don't think I'm any slouch as far as that goes, but I don't want a man going around in front of me with a trumpet proclaiming it. 'Billy's a good fellow,' 'Billy always was a good deal of a ladies' man,' 'You can't fool Billy on a diamond,' 'You couldn't get Billy to go into any crooked deal of that kind,' 'That's one thing I can say about Billy; I always know just where to find him. He'll stand by his friends, Billy will.' 'When I'm in doubt I always ask Billy's opinion,' and so on."

"I don't see anything particular for you to take exception to in that," said the bearded man.

"You don't?"

"I certainly do not."

"You like a man who flatters you, do you, then?"

"I don't see why you would call it flattery. I may have a few good qualities and Gumeridge may have discrimination enough to recognize them, but I hope that isn't any hanging offense. For the matter of that, he was a good deal taken with you and I heard him cracking you up no end the other day to some of the people at the club."

"Well," said the stout citizen with a slightly mollified air, "of course I may be mistaken in him. I wouldn't want to judge a man too hastily, and in other respects he struck me as a nice fellow. What did he say about me, Billy?"

—Chicago Daily News.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR TOGO'S FLAG-SHIP.



A JAP ENGINEERING TRIUMPH: THE RAISING OF THE MIKASA.

The Japanese never consider a vessel lost. All the battered hulks of the Russian navy have been recovered from the mud of Port Arthur, and are now efficient members of the Mikado's navy. Togo's flagship, the Mikasa, which took fire and sank in the harbor of Sasebo, has now, after months of patient engineering effort, been refloated. The hull was boarded up, all leaks stopped, and the water pumped out. The vessel rose to view mud-covered and rusty, but still capable of refitment, and very soon the admiral will be on his old bridge again. The fire is now known to have been due to spontaneous combustion caused by the decomposition of chemicals.

A Picked-Up Living.

A convict's complacent acceptance of life's possibilities is shown in a dialogue between the criminal and Captain Spencer, senior missionary of the English Church Army. To a question of the captain's as to what he did when out of prison, he replied:

"Well, in spring I does a bit of peap-plecking, and in the summer-time I does a bit of fruit-p-plecking, and in the autumn I does a bit of hop-p-plecking."

"Oh!" said the captain. "What happens after that?"

"Well, now, mister," replied the convict, "I may as well be honest, and

tell you that in the winter time I does a bit of pocket-p-plecking!"

The missionary furrowed his brow in amazement, asking finally, "And what happens then?"

The convict answered laconically, "Why, here I am doing a bit of oakum p-plecking."

He Needs More.

"That stage manager is a very good one, but there is one inconsistency about him."

"What is that?"

"He gives a bad actor more prompt attention than a good one."—Baltimore American.