

LOVE ON THE ROAD.

CHAPTER I.

Many persons maintained that Madam Gould's front kitchen was prettier than her drawing-room, though her drawing-room was as pretty as any in the county. There was something so comfortable about the red-tiled pavement of the kitchen, and the splendid rows of brass pans and copper moulds glowed with such mellow radiance, and the order which reigned everywhere was so soothing, that it was certain no man could enter that room without feeling how happy his lot would be could he but hang up his hat in the hall, and call himself home.

On the 22d of June, 1815, just eighty-one years ago, this kitchen was brighter still, for Madam Gould and two young girls were making preparations for a party. Such pretty girls they were, but Margery was the prettier. Agnes was Madam Gould's daughter, and tall, slim and fair of face, and Margery, a niece, who was paying her a visit, and never was niece more likely to work havoc in a quiet neighborhood. The party was a gipsy party—picnic it would now be called—and due to the fact that it had been provided for in this wise: Ten ladies, having been invited, had met together, and after much consultation, ten slips of paper, with the names of ten dainty and satisfying dishes written on them, had been carefully folded and shaken up in a bag. Each lady in turn drew one of these lots from the recesses of the bag, and read the name of the dish she was to provide. The ten gentlemen were to supply fruit and carriages. Madam Gould was to send a pigeon-pasty, but she, being the Squire's widow, considered it due to her position to interpret her obligations liberally, and was bent on contributing a veal and ham surprise, a Solomon's Temple in dumplings, a bride's pie, and many a good thing besides. Agnes had drawn the lot she dreaded, and was now beating the eggs for some sponge cakes.

Lieutenant Bromley calls them flannel cakes, and says he would as soon eat a bit of blanket," said Margery, who was wiping cream from her face.

"Nonsense, Margery," cried Madam Gould emphatically. "Whip that cream towards you, and remember that there is a right way and a wrong! Don't laugh till we have leisure. You must whip that cream until the whisk will stand straight upright in it."

Margery had thought of her own to occupy her—pleasant thoughts, too, apparently, for once or twice she smiled. Agnes was watching her, and thinking that she could guess what was in her cousin's mind. Suddenly Agnes saw the tips of Margery's pretty little ears turn red—the moment before she had turned away as if to listen to something, so that her face was hidden. "The fire is too warm for you, Margie," she said, "move a little further away from it."

A minute later she heard footsteps on the gravel outside and a manly form strode past the windows; there was hope and eagerness in his very tread.

"A visitor!" exclaimed Madam Gould, who up to this time had heard and seen nothing. "Well, whoever it is, we are not at home! Say so, Mary," she added as the servant passed through the front kitchen to answer the bell. "Explain that we are too much occupied to allow our selves the pleasure of seeing any one."

"But, mother, it is Lieutenant Bromley!" It seems a pity to send him away.

"Not a pity at all, Agnes; it is the only thing to do. Make my best compliments to Lieutenant Bromley, Mary, and tell him we are particularly engaged. Ask him to come and take a fad at Boston this evening, instead."

Agnes looked at Margery—Margery looked at Agnes, and her bright blue eyes were piteous and pleading. Agnes ventured to say, "Is he really to go?"

"Of course he is. Those Barretts declare that no one can make a Solomon's Temple but themselves—besides Lieutenant Bromley can't have much left to say to us, he was here yesterday at here the day before—I wonder what brings him so often—not but what he is a very agreeable young man."

Margery had moved away from the fire, but her face was now redder than ever. Madam Gould, stirring the custard, saw nothing.

"Please, Madam, said Mary returning, 'Lieutenant Bromley's very best compliments to you, and he will wait upon you this evening with the utmost of pleasure, but he wants to know if you couldn't make him useful now. He thinks you mayn't have people to run all your errands when an unreserving wait turns up. Will you let him come into the kitchen beside you, he says, and he will be ready to go to Wolsingham to fetch you anything you may require from the shops.'

Before Madam Gould had selected a sufficiently decisive form of words to effect his dismissal, a step was heard outside and he was at the door, which, as Mary said, was 'only hanging on the jar.'

He did not attempt to open it wider, but said, "Let me come in—I promise not to disturb you and I will be so useful."

"Come in then," cried Madam Gould gaily, "you will wish yourself away when you see us."

She was thinking of the large white aprons which enveloped all three of them, but she was a comely old lady with an immaculate mob cap rising above clusters of "Coronation curls" and as for Margery and Agnes, though they were sitting on chairs set in the centre of large white dust sheets lest any flock of eggs or cream should alight on the red tiles, and though they had their sleeves turned back and showed their plump white arms, they did not on that account present a picture which was displeasing to the young man. Agnes had a bowl of frothed-up eggs on her lap—Margery one of cream which would not yield to treatment.

"I suppose," he said, "that all the ladies about here are as busy as you are. What are they making at the rectory?"

"I forgot," replied Agnes; "nothing half so critical as sponge cakes, I am sure."

After a brief silence the young man began to hum the "Maid of Loch" fixing his eyes the while on a lovely bit of blossom pink dress not quite covered by Margery's cooking apron. No one spoke now, but a change had come over the occupants of the kitchen—every one of them was conscious of it. Madam Gould wished that she had been firm and kept that young man out. Agnes seemed to be working, but was always looking at Margery—Margery never

raised her eyes from the cream, but it was obstinately quiescent and Madam Gould feared that the girl's heart was not in what she was doing. Madam Gould had no precise accusation to bring against her, but let that everything was going wrong. "Work as if your heart were in it, child!" she said impatiently. "It sengers me to see you look as if you were in a dream."

"It doesn't seem to come," said Agnes, taking pity on her. "Mother, the tian never be able to whip that cream here—the kitchen is far too hot! Hadn't she better go into the still-room; there is no fire there?"

"Or the garden? Let me carry that heavy bowl into the garden for you, Miss Margery," said Lieutenant Bromley, rising with wonderful alacrity. "Didn't I tell you that you would find me useful?"

"Shall I, aunt?" asked Margery, doubtfully.

"Well, perhaps you may as well—but it is hot in the garden, too—find a shady place to sit in."

He took the bowl, and she silently followed him.

"This is not a bad place!" said Margery, stopping in a shadow cast by the house.

"We can find something better than that," said he, and led her onwards to a retired seat hedged in by a thick screen of yew. Then she recommenced her labors. "I wish you hadn't that to do," he said: "I want to talk to you."

"Talk," she answered, calmly. "This is up none of my mind."

"Perhaps not; but I want you all to myself—I come here on purpose to tell you something."

"What is it?" she inquired and stopped to listen, and then remembering that she was not to stop, made up for the momentary delay by using the whisk with such vigor that she dashed a spoonful of cream on his hand. He was so full of thought that he did not even observe it. This alarmed her—what could he be going to say? How anxious he looked, and what a long silence he was keeping! It was everything so bad as that how had he contrived to put on an everyday appearance in her aunt's presence? Why didn't he speak and get this difficult thing said?

Agnes must have been right about the kitchen being too warm for the cream, it was thickening now in the most marvellous way, and very soon it would be time to try if the whisk would stand upright in it. Again she looked at her companion. If he were not quick that difficult thing would not be said, for in another minute or so, she would have to return to her aunt and Agnes.

The cream she had splashed on his hand was growing thin again and beginning to trickle down on his clothes; he was quite unconscious of it. "If I might venture," she said, and rubbed it off with the corner of her apron. Even that scarcely roused him. He was, to use a Marton expression, "going at her," with all his eyes, and there was something unpeppably mournful to them.

"What is it?" she asked pitiously. "Why do you look at me like that? Are you going to tell me something very bad?"

"I am ordered to join my regiment in Belgium. I fear things are not going well there. I am to start the day after tomorrow—the order came this morning—I shall only have today and tomorrow with you."

For a moment she could not speak; she shivered with extreme cold while the June sun was shining so brightly. "Going away! To fight—to—"

"Yes, perhaps," he answered, guessing at the word which she could by no possibility bring herself to utter. I shall have to take my chance with the rest."

She turned as white as the cream on her lap. He took the bowl from her and set it down on the lawn.

"Thank you," she said simply; "I was just feeling as if it would fall. This is so sudden and war is so terrible? Ought you to go? Are you well enough? Your wound—"

"Oh, yes; the doctor says I may. It is not that—it is not having to go, though of course I hate it now—that is troubling me, it is leaving you. I have been a great deal at Marton since you came. I have felt as if I could not keep away."

Margery was strangely troubled, but she neither spoke nor moved.

"And to think that I shall have to go so far away from you the day after tomorrow?"

"It does seem far!" said poor little Margery. She was sitting with downcast eyes and her hands trembled. "He took one of her poor trembling hands in his, and said, 'Right or wrong, it is this, I can help thinking that it would not seem quite so far if—'"

At this very inopportune moment the stalwart form of Madam Gould's kitchen-maid, Martha, appeared from behind the yew-tree hedge, saying, "Miss Margery, the mistress has sent me to say that she thinks you must be making butter instead of whipped cream, and that I am to manage it somehow, and you are to go in this very moment, for she has something else she wants you to do."

Margery rose as if she scarcely knew what she was doing, but Lieutenant Bromley spoke. "Take that cream in, if you please. Miss Margery and I will follow you immediately."

No sooner was she gone than he turned once more to Margery. "I was just going to say that Belgium would not seem quite so far off, Miss Margery, if I could but hope—"

A hasty step was heard. Was that officious servant coming back? No, this time it was Madam Gould herself. She strode almost angrily forward exclaiming, "Don't waste more time than you need, Margery, there is more than enough work for all of us!"

She had a letter in her hand. She had probably just received it, for having a contempt for letters, she had made an arrangement by which none reached her until noon, when the business of the day was well-nigh over. Margery got up at once, and reluctantly prepared to follow her aunt into the house.

"Am I not to come, too?" asked Lieutenant Bromley who had hitherto believed himself a privileged person with Madam Gould, and now saw himself on the point of being left behind.

"I think not, if you please," she replied, "work is work, and there is a danger of its not getting done."

"Why a woman who has half a dozen competent servants need imagine that she has work to do, I can't conceive," was his next thought, but Margery gave him a look that made his heart bound with delight, and he went back to Alderac censing himself with the thought that he would see her in the evening. He would see her again at the gipsy-party next day, and after that—after that heaven alone knew what would happen.

Madam Gould conducted Margery back to the house. "Child," said she, after examining her face narrowly, "tell me the truth. Has that young man said anything of a particular nature to you or not?"

"What do you mean by a particular nature?" asked Margery.

"Has he offered you his hand?"

Margery blushed crimson, and said no. "Thank goodness, then," said Madam Gould; but it was quite evident that she had only just come in time.

CHAPTER II.

Margery was not in the drawing-room when Lieutenant Bromley arrived at the hall, nor did she appear. One or two of Madam Gould's neighbors had been invited, and they seemed to think the evening a delightful one. Boston was played, and the gay variations of this good old game were much relished, but not by Lieutenant Bromley. "Where is Miss Margery?" he asked when he found that she still did not appear.

"In her room, she has some arrangements to make before tomorrow," Madam Gould replied with severity, and Lieutenant Bromley feared from her manner that he himself was the cause of Margery's absence, and that something very painful of which he was to be kept in ignorance had occurred.

"Will Miss Margery not come down at all?" he ventured to ask when the clock struck nine.

"I think not," answered Madam Gould, pursing up her lips as one might do who knew many things which she did not intend to impart.

He had not informed any one of his approaching departure, he had no heart to speak of it—if they kept Margery away from him tomorrow as they were keeping her to-night, he might never look on her dear face again.

He began to think that Agnes knew something of what he was feeling, for he saw her gaze at him with evident commiseration, and gradually, by dint of showing his need of it, he became conscious that she was willing to give him her sympathy if he could but find an opportunity.

"The garden looks very tempting!" he remarked, when at last the game was over. "Let us go and look at those immense evening primroses."

He was speaking to Agnes, and she at once stepped out of the open window, but unfortunately every one else did so, too. Nevertheless Agnes and he were first, and soon found a path which took them away from the others.

"What has happened?" he asked, "Do tell me. Why has your cousin stayed in her own room?"

"She is busy," said Agnes faintly. "Surely she need not trouble herself about this gipsy-party. Whatever she says she will do."

"The gipsy-party! She is not to go to it! She is packing. She is to go home tomorrow morning—her father insists on it. He has written poor mother such a letter, and she is so angry and unhappy."

"Packing! Going away in the morning! What do you mean?"

"I mean that Margery is going. Uncle Nettlesford will meet her at Darlington. He says he will never speak to mother again if Margery does not appear. He is a hard man—she will have to go."

"Alone?"

"Oh, no, not unless she is forced—she is very particular about what girls do. Mother is to send a servant with her—Thompson is going—my old nurse."

"You have taken places?"

"No, mother says that it is not necessary. Besides, how could we take places so as to do any good, unless we sent off a man on horseback to Kirkley where the coach starts? The Highflyer passes our lodge gates every morning, and if it is not filled up at Kirkley when it sets off, we can always pick out the seats we want before the Wolsingham people get a chance."

"But why does she go?" he said, returning to the point.

Even by the dim light of a late summer's evening, he fancied that Agnes blushed. "I can't tell you," she replied, "it is Uncle Nettlesford's doing, I will never forgive him! It is too bad to make her go when such a delightful party is coming off, and she has written for it too!"

"There must be a reason for his doing it."

"Of course he thinks there is—the silly old man has taken all kinds of fancies into his head—that's all. You must not seem to know she is going—I felt as if I must tell you, but mother would be so angry if she knew that I had. She is coming—I hear her voice. Promise not to let her know that I have told you."

"I promise—I promise most faithfully. Stop—tell me something else. I have been looking at that light—is that Miss Margery's window?"

"Yes, that is her window. They are all coming now."

So they were, but Lieutenant Bromley might still have taken her somewhere else if he had more to say, or if he stayed where he was, he had time to send some message to Margery. Agnes wanted him to do that—that was why she had told him so much. He did not speak. She waited for his message and wondered why he was so long in giving it, but when he did speak he only said, "I shall always be grateful to you—it was very good of you to tell me."

The others joined them and the opportunity was gone. Agnes could have killed him ten minutes later for he actually began to talk and laugh with the rectory messes.

When he bade Agnes good night, he said, "Tell Miss Margery how sorry I was not to see her this evening; and that was all. Every one might have heard what he said, and every one did hear. Agnes had a swelled. She had firmly believed that he was in love with her cousin—the chances were that he would never see her again, and he had nothing to say to her but that! When every one was gone, Agnes went to Margery, and it would be hard to say how many bitter tears were shed at Marton Hall that night.

At nine next morning, the Highflyer would pass Marton. Margery's luggage had been taken to the lodge betimes; and now she, with Madam Gould, Agnes and Thompson, the trusty maid who was to accompany her to Darlington, were pacing backwards and forwards waiting for the coach. Margery looked pale and her eyes strayed far and wide in search for some one who might perhaps feel sorry that she was going and come to Marton to say Good-bye. No

one came. No human being but those who already stood by her side came within range of her vision. It was a heavenly June morning; never had Marton looked more lovely than now she was leaving it.

"The coach is late!" said Madam Gould, who rarely lost sight of the matter in hand. To Margery, whenever it came, it would come too soon.

"Perhaps that's because it is full," suggested Agnes. "I hope so, and then Margery will have to wait till tomorrow."

"No, she won't! If the coach is full, I shall hire a post-chaise at my own expense," answered Madam Gould; "her father has given his orders and they shall be obeyed. Why have you put on that bonnet, Margery? Anything is good enough to travel in."

"It's old-fashioned, aunt! Its name tells that. I want it worn out. One can't wear a retreat bonnet, so long after the Empress's death."

Fashion in Yorkshire lagged far behind London and Paris, but in June, 1815, it was rather late in the day to be wearing a bonnet named in memory of poor Josephine's retirement to Malmaison.

"It may be old-fashioned, child, but you look sweet in it, and you can't say that shaded mistake ribbon isn't just as good as new."

"Never mind my bonnet, aunt," said Margery, with eyes full of tears. "I shall be leaving you in a minute—I see the coach!"

It was coming fast—Margery would have to go, and go unsatisfied. Was this to be all? He had seemed to love her so much, and did it even take the trouble to say good-bye.

"Well, good-bye, love," said Madam Gould, kissing her. "Your going away is none of my doing, and I don't mind how soon you come back."

The coach was quite empty, so Margery and her maid got in, nothing doubting. But no sooner was the baggage in the boot, than the guard said, "Begging your pardon, Madam, every seat in this coach is taken but one."

"Then! But that's extraordinary! How can they be taken?"

"Can't exactly speak as to that, Madam; all I can say is that they are. They settle these things at the booking-office. The seats are for travellers who will get in later on."

"Haden't I better wait till tomorrow?" suggested Margery, whose heart was bounding at the thought of a reprieve.

"What—after that letter of your father's, and when he is to meet you at Darlington?"

Margery silently took a bunch of violets which Agnes had gathered and watered with many tears; it was the only sweetness Margery would bear away with her. Thompson thrust a basket of sandwiches in her hand and got out.

"You will take no harm, my love," exclaimed Madam Gould. "After all, what's a coach journey of thirty or forty miles by daylight with a father to meet you at the other end? If he thinks it wrong, it is his own doing." Then the stage drove off.

Poor little Margery, who had borne up bravely in her aunt's presence, pulled her veil down and gave herself up to her distress.

"How cruel—how satanically cruel, old people can be to young ones!" she said to herself, and then summed up the whole of her experience of life. She doubted Lieutenant Bromley no more than the doubted herself, but everything had gone against them. She might see him for a few moments at Wolsingham, but after that they would meet no more. She dried her eyes for he must not see what she was suffering; besides, Wolsingham was the place where all the people who had engaged places would probably take possession of them.

At Wolsingham, some men were standing before the inn with a team of bright bays, but no one else was there. Some luggage was put into the boot, but no passenger got in.

Once more the coach was on its way, and now Margery was lying huddled up in a corner in a fit of passionate grief.

The Highflyer might have gone half a mile farther, when after walking his horses up a steep hill the coachman pulled up altogether. A voice, dear and well-known to her, cried, "All right! the door opened, and Lieutenant Bromley dropped into a seat by her side, exclaiming, "Thank God, here I am at last!"

She hastily tried to assume the appearance of a young lady unaffected by any particular emotion and said, "But you won't be able to stay! Every seat in the coach is taken. That's why I am alone. Aunt Gould's maid was coming, but there was no seat for her."

"I will wait till they turn me out, anyhow," he said, smiling. "You surely didn't think I could let you go without bidding you good-bye."

"What else could I think when you didn't come either to Marton or Wolsingham?"

He did not speak. He seemed as if he could do nothing but silently enjoy the delight of being with her. She must have partly understood this, for she said, "You will have to get out in a minute, I know you will."

"Suppose I am the person who has taken all the seats?"

Margery flushed crimson. "You! what can you mean?"

"They wouldn't let me see you, but I was determined I would; so I rode over to Kirkley last night after I left your aunt's, and engaged every place in the coach between Kirkley and Darlington where you are to meet your father."

Margery was too much startled to speak. "On my way to Kirkley your candle was still burning. It was dawn when I returned, and then I hoped you were asleep."

"What have you done? Didn't Agnes tell you that we are to see each other no more?"

"See each other no more, when I love you so!" said he, taking her hand. "Margery, dear, I have loved you from the very first."

She could not speak, but left her hand in his.

"If they had behaved differently, I might have kept this to myself, but they seem to want to part us altogether. And yet they are perhaps right—perhaps we ought to be parted, for I stand a very good chance of being killed before a month is over."

She laid her other hand on his, and said, "Don't say such terrible things—why tell me? Why keep it to yourself, if it is true? Surely we can bear the misery of your going better, if we know we love each other."

In this simple fashion did she reveal her heart's secret. For some time they were as happy as if their future were all brightness. At last Margery said,

The Little Ones at Home.

ARE THEY FRAIL, RESTLESS AND NERVOUS?

Paine's Celery Compound Will Make Them Bright and Happy as Larks.

As a rule, parents are to blame if their children are puny, weak, nervous and irritable. The little ones may be well clothed and amply fed, and yet sadly neglected.

It should be remembered that the children inherit many of the troubles that parents suffer from. Thousands of little ones suffer from weakened nerves—a legacy from father or mother. This nervous condition begets irritableness, bad temper, headache, indigestion, stomach troubles and impure blood.

If your dear ones are afflicted with any of the troubles mentioned above, how can you expect them to be bright, happy and healthy? They need your best and most intelligent care, or they will grow up in disease and utter wretchedness.

Give the children Paine's Celery Compound; it is the medicine that is particularly adapted for fortifying the nervous system, for building flesh, bone and muscle, and for producing pure, clean blood. Paine's Celery Compound is pleasant to take, it is entirely vegetable, and cannot harm the most delicate organism. It will banish every trace of sickness and disease

"It was that cruel letter of father's that made all the unhappiness."

Lieutenant Bromley was not unhappy just then. He was with Margery, and would be with her some hours longer—for the moment that was enough, and she did look so happy, and so bewitching in the "retreat" bonnet.

"I don't think you are listening," she said. "My Margery, yes; but I am so happy now that I am here—I suppose we ought to know that of other things, though. Can you give me any idea what was in your father's letter?"

"Can show it to you—I will."

"No, wait a little longer—let us have thirty minutes more of complete happiness."

"Isn't it beginning to be time for us to be miserable?" asked Margery, when three-quarters of an hour had passed—"there is father's letter."

"My dear sister," wrote Squire Nettlesford, "a friend of mine, who has recently been in your neighborhood, tells me what fills me with concern—namely, that you allow my Margery to be continually in the company of one Bromley, lieutenant in a marching regiment. No daughter of mine shall give her hand to a soldier, and God willing, my Margery shall be rescued from the danger to which your thoughtlessness has exposed her. This will reach you on Wednesday. I command you as you value my affection, at once to arrange to despatch her home to me on the following morning by the early coach. If you can accompany her, I shall relish your visit, if not, send some trustworthy female servant as far as Darlington, where I myself will meet her. Should you have no woman servant whom you can send, my girl's journey must not on that account be delayed; better trust to the care of the guard for the distance between Marton Hall and Darlington, than run the risk of her pledging her word to wed a soldier. Sister, I wonder at you! How could you let your brother's child be exposed to falling in love with a man who, now that the Cornish miscreant has broken loose again, and is carrying all before him, cannot call his life his own? All our reserves will have to be abroad, and who knows if that will arrest his progress. Being stationed to a soldier, in these days, means going to bed in anxiety and rising up in sorrow, and I had rather see my only daughter Margery's name in the militia register than let her condemn herself to such suffering. This monster has cost the lives of tens of thousands, and will cost more. Send my girl back by the first coach after you receive this, or I will never call you sister again. So help me God, I never will."

"Your father thinks as I do—I ought to have left you free."

"I was not free. I should have been a thousand times more miserable if you had said nothing. Don't wish it undone; besides our troops will conquer."

He shook his head. They may not conquer, Margery. The Prussians have been annihilated at Ligny and we have been beaten at Quatre Bras. Wellington has retreated to a place called Waterloo. That's the news that came this morning."

"Defeated?" Margery gazed at Bromley in despair. "Whatever happens I will love none but you," she said.

When the Highflyer pulled up at the "King's Head," Darlington, Margery's father, a thin, anxious-looking iron-gary man, was there. When he saw that his daughter had a young man with her instead of a staid maid-servant, he strode indignantly to the coach. "What's this?" he cried. "Where is the escort your aunt was to provide?"

"This is Lieutenant Bromley, father," said Margery. "Come inside, he wants to speak to you."

"Speak to me! What is he doing here? What right have you, sir, to be there with my daughter?"

"Sir," said Bromley, "I love your daughter. I want you to let us consider ourselves engaged to each other."

"Engaged to each other, with a great European war going on and you a soldier! You wait her to pledge herself to misery! We have had enough of that since Napoleon Bonaparte put himself at the head of everything. I have nothing to say to you, sir—be so kind as to get out at once. You must have played my sister some rascally trick, or you would not have been here. I shall never forgive her. Most women are fools, but she is the biggest I know of."

"Don't blame Madam Gould, sir, I engaged every seat in the coach all the way from Kirkley. My love for your daughter must be my excuse."

"The devil you did!" cried Squire Nettlesford with some admiration. "Well, having done what you ought to be ashamed of, will you please get out?"

"Sir, it is scarcely English to refuse a man a hearing."

"If I hear you, it shall be outside, I will travel outside for one stage. Say good-bye to my daughter; you will not speak to her again."

Then being a kind man in the main, though desperately in earnest