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The Coming of Gillian:

A Pretty Irish Romance.

"Yes, yes. All right, thanks! Jump up, and let us be off."

But Gillian sits silent, gazing into the darkness and the trees as they emerge into the steep lane, and Patsy mounts to his driving seat, and the big mare goes downhill at a heavy, shambling trot.

She hears the men talking to each other in a desultory way, and though she does not lose an accent of George's voice, she cannot tell, in the whirlwind of her thoughts, one subject on which they speak. Despair, gladness, shame, joy, and pain are racking the poor child's heart in a tempest of the fiercest emotion of her life, and the misty night deepens, and the time goes on unheeded by her, until, after what seems to be miles on a rough, downhill road, they see the lights of the village twinkling at the foot of a further descent.

And Gillian sees the village lights and the outline of the Castle looming blackly against the gray night sky with a dull pang of hopeless bewildering, and no mistake." pain. Pain! which is keener for the shame of her knowledge of what it means to her.

"Here is Darragh at last, Miss Deane," George says, cheerfully. "It is a good road the rest of the way. You haven't had a very pleasant experience of your first ride on an Irish jaunting-car."

"The road has been very rough," Gillian says, in a tired, indifferent voice.

"The little lady is disgusted with Ireland and Irish ways," George thinks, rather cynically, "or—disgusted at my being in the way, I shouldn't wonder. Lacy is making his running, and no mistake."

The last hill is not steeper than the others they have passed, nor rougher, though loose stones are pretty thickly scattered over it, and the big mare stumbles more than once.

But they have nearly reached the foot which winds around by the Castle Hill, when Patsy, with an Irish driver's delight in dashing with fire and fury "before the people," administers a cut of the whip and a violent shake of the reins to the plodding mare, preparatory to driving past the village in great style.

And the big, heavy limbed mare plunges with amazement at this sudden interruption to her ideas, gets her hoof on a loose stone, and the next minute is down on her knees, with her nose snorting madly in the puddles of the road, and her big hind legs kicking at the jaunting car and her passengers, with agreeable impartiality.

Red-haired Patsy, with a howl of dismay, is flung into the road, just beyond the mare's kicking legs, from which position he is rescued with one swift pull of George's strong arm.

"You infernal young fool!" he mutters. "Didn't I warn you to hold the brute up well until we were on the level! Are you much hurt?"

"No—no, sir!" gasps Patsy, shaking in every limb; "is the lady and gentleman kilt entirely, sir?"

And George rushes round to the other side of the car to find Bingham Lacy slowly struggling to his feet, white and dazed, and Gillian lying, prone and stirless, face downward, on the grass by the roadside.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Is she hurt?" Capt. Lacy asks, faintly, staggering to his feet. "Archer, is she hurt?"

He has struck his head against the car and is partly stunned, but his senses rally in the shock of the terror it gives him to see George on his knees in the wet grass beside the prostrate figure, which he has lifted in his arms, where it lies limp and still.

George's hat has fallen off, and his face is as white as the white, upturned face he bends over.

"I'm afraid she's killed," he says thickly. "Strike a light, will you?"

And then, by the fitful blaze of the match that is struck, they see the white, fair face resting on George's arm, with the innocent, parted lips, the upturned, white throat, and the head with its ruffled, shining locks fallen helplessly back.

"I think she is dead," George repeats, slowly, through his teeth. "Get help, Lacy, we must carry her out of this. ; Ay, get that brute up first, and send for the doctor."

Lacy hesitated an instant, with a frown, and his hand to his aching head, and then he helps frightened Patsy to unfasten the shafts from the harness of the fallen mare, who, after a few plunges, gets on her feet once more, hardly a scratch the worse, and then he comes back to where George is kneeling still, with Gillian in his arms.

He has pulled off her hat, and unfastened the close linen collar she wears, and is stooping over herwith breathless anxiety, trying to feel if her heart yet beats.

"You tell the boy where to find the doctor, Archer," Lacy says, curtly. "I will hold her until he comes."

George's lip tenses and his blue eyes gleam.

"You've the right to be jealous of anyone else touching her, I suppose," he says, scornfully; "but it is rather a queer time to show it. Here, take my place if you can."

Lacy answers the words as a challenge, he being much the slighter and muscular man of the two.

"I think I can," he says, coldly and determinedly, pushing George aside as he attempts to take the insensible figure into his own guardianship.

"You are hurting her! You are hurting her!" George says, angrily, as a moan breaks from the white lips as they try to change her position. "Let her alone, Lacy, and don't be a fool. I think her arm is broken—I thought so from the first. Patsy, run for Dr. Coghlan as fast as you can, and don't tell anyone else a word, or you and I will quarrel."

"Haven't you got any brandy about you?" Lacy asks.

"No; haven't you?" George retorts, sharply. "Well, then, we can't do anything till the doctor comes, only stay quiet."

"She is in dreadful pain," Lacy says, in an unsteady voice, as moan after moan comes faintly and slowly with each struggling breath. "I can't stay quiet. I'll run for brandy to Murphy's publichouse."

"Do," George says, eagerly; "but for Heaven's sake take care, or you'll have the village at your heels!"

And Lacy hurries away, and George is left alone again, with poor little Gillian's slight, helpless form lying across his supporting arms and knees.

"If I can do nothing else, I can at least keep her from getting very cold and wet, poor little soul!" he mutters, pityingly, comfortably conscious of being slowly soaked through with the mud and wet grass.

The minutes drag on slowly, as George glances hopelessly on the village lights, and up at the gray, cold sky, from which the clouds begin to blow away, and the stars to peer out here and there.

His eyes growing accustomed to the strain on them in the dim light enable him to see quite clearly now.

There is no sight nor sound to be discerned but the jaunting car, with its lowered shafts, in the middle of the road, the mare cropping the grass along the hedge, calmly indifferent to her late misdemeanor, and the white, fair face of the girl resting against his breast.

"I may look at her, I suppose," he mutters, bitterly, "as a reward for playing proxy for Bingham Lacy in an interesting situation? One would think that fate was playing tricks with me! I've tried to keep out of her way—tried this last fortnight, and made up my mind to keep out of her sight for evermore, after making the fool of myself I did that evening in Anne's parlor; and now this thing happens!"

He stoops lower and closer to the fair, still face, but he does not dare to touch it with his lips, unconscious and helpless as she is; and as he gazes, the heavy-fringed eyelids unclose, and Gillian looks up at him—blankly and dreamily at first, in a long, wistful gaze, until he speaks.

"You are better now, are you not, Miss Deane?"

And then he sees—he cannot but see, even in the faint starlight—how the dark eyes fill with light, and the white face quivers and glows in a sudden, speechless delight.

"There has been an accident," George says, mustering up a careless laugh—"a regular Irish spill! We've all tumbled off ignominiously, but you are the only one hurt, I am sorry to say. You feel better though now, don't you?"

"Yes," she says, faintly and dreamily, as if answering in obedience, and without comprehension, eyes and lips smiling up at him in soft gladness, as a waking child smiles up in a loved face.

And her eyelids close wearily once more, when the slightest movement of George's position rouses her into pain.

"My arm!" she gasps, with a faint cry. "What ails it? I cannot move it, and, oh! it hurts dreadfully!"

"I am afraid your arm is hurt," George says, gently restraining her as she tries to struggle up into a sitting position. "You had better try and lie quite still until the doctor comes. They have gone to fetch him long ago. He'll be here in a few minutes. Can I make you any easier by altering my position?"

"No, I think not," she says, faintly, the pain almost making her swoon again.

And so perforce she rests where she had first lain, with her head on his breast. She can feel his heart beating fast and strong beneath her own, and his warm breath is on her cold cheek, as he stoops in anxiety over her, watching her and looking for the help that is so long in coming. He almost fears she has fainted again, or she lies so still, with closed eyes, for the delight of his presence is enough to thrill her with happiness in spite of her physical sufferings and a thousand maidenly shames make her shrink from meeting the gaze of those keen blue eyes, so coldly kind, lest he discover the secret of the trembling little heart pressed close to his own.

"I am a poor, wicked, foolish girl," she thinks, sorrowfully ashamed, "but he will never know, she will never know, what he is to me. It cannot vex them or wrong them, when they will never know."

She knows, poor child, to the depths of her fond, innocent soul, that all the love of her tender nature, all the upspringing passion of her womanhood has been given, given utterly, to this man, unsought, unvalued, unknown.

Deep in her soul she knows the bitter-sweet truth, that for the coldly-kind smiles of his blue eyes, for the charm of his pleasant voice, for the touch of his hand, for those three kisses, half-gallant, half-tender, she has given the love of her life to him.

Presently George, staring anxiously still, discerns Lacy's figure coming toward them, running steadily.

"Hurry! For goodness sake!" he shouts impatiently. "You have been gone an awful time. She came to once, and now I think she has fainted again."

"I told you I was hurt and could scarcely walk, much less run," Lacy returns, angrily, "but since you stayed here I had to go."

"You told me nothing of the kind!" George retorts, roughly. "Don't talk like a fool about who went and who stayed! Where is the brandy and where is the doctor?"

"I don't know anything about the doctor!" Lacy says, sullenly, handing George the flask of brandy and water.

For the truth is, he has been more hurt than he was first aware of. His head is cut, and he is rather sick and faint with the pain of the blow.

Meanwhile George assiduously tries to minister to Gillian, encumbered and rather helpless as he is.

"You might do something for her!" he says, in a fierce contemptuous tone; not noticing poor Lacy in the least where he stands dizzily trying to recover himself. "I wouldn't play dog in the manger, Captain Lacy, if I were you!"

Lacy kneels down, puts the flask to Gillian's lips in silence, and then stands up again as Patsy comes back breathless and despairing.

"I've run every fut, sir!" he gasps, "an' the docthor's not in, and they dunno when he will be! He's gone to Ceashmore an' they don't expect him back till tin or eleven o'clock!"

"What on earth shall we do?" George exclaims, rather overwhelmed. "We must get her out of this somehow, Lacy."

"We had better send somebody to Mount Ossory for the carriage and lots of cushions and things, and take her home," Captain Lacy says, rather helplessly, tying his handkerchief around his cut head.

"Well, but we can't leave her lying here for another hour," George says, sharply. "What are you thinking of?" And then for the first time he notices his friend's plight.

"I beg your pardon, old fellow!" he says, frankly and earnestly. "I'm afraid I've been rather savage with you, and you so much hurt! I never noticed you, you see, or noticed anything but her."

"So I see," Captain Lacy says, dryly.

And George's face flushes visibly in the gloom, for, looking down, as the retort is uttered, he meets Gillian's eyes gazing up into his.

"Do you feel better now? Do you feel able to stand?" he asks, and in spite of himself he cannot help asking it tenderly and softly—he cannot help a slight involuntary pressure of the slight form in his strong arms.

For that wistful, shy look, innocent as a child's, soft as a woman's, seems to set his heart on fire.

"Yes," she says, in a whisper, "if you will help me."

With a struggle she gets on her feet, and then George formally relinquishes the charge of her to Captain Lacy, whose arm she takes—looking after George as he gropes for his muddy hat under the wheels of the car.

"Now, I'll tell you what I propose, Lacy, if Miss Deane thinks well of it," he says in a much gentler tone than he has before spoken. "We can't wait here, that is certain. So if we can get up as far as the castle, Patsy can take my horse and ride off to Mount Ossory at once, and—"

"And break the news to them all?" interrupts Captain Lacy, sarcastically. "That will be a kettle of fish!"

"Well, I will go and break the news then," George says, as quietly as before. "Now, if we could possibly get Miss Deane on the jaunting-car again—"

"No, no!" Gillian shudders. "I will walk, please—I think I am able."

And she does walk, bravely, determinedly, though the way seems a mile of tortured steps. And when the castle is reached at last, and lights are brought, they see what that walk has cost poor Gillian. The very sweat of agony standing on her brow, and the mignonne face is pinched and pallid as death with suffering.

"Poor little girl!" George exclaims involuntarily, and half under his breath; but she hears him, and smiles faintly, and George colors confusedly once more. "I will hurry off now the minute I see you more comfortable," he says, hastily. "Nelly, my old housekeeper, is getting you a cup of tea. If you could lie down without hurting your arm"——

He glances in embarrassment at Lacy, as he wheels out the easy, wide old sofa.

"Couldn't I—couldn't we help you, or lift you on to the sofa, Miss Deane?" he says, with a slight falter in his tones, looking from her to Captain Lacy.

But she never notices Captain Lacy.

"Thank you, yes; I will try and lie down—I feel so faint," she says, feebly rising from the chair into which she has dropped, and clutching at the table for support.

"By Jove! I won't give him another chance this evening," George says, between his teeth; and the next moment he puts his big sinewy arms around her, and lifts her up like a child, and carries her across the room, and lays her softly and easily down on the couch by the fire, which has been newly kindled and is sparkling gayly.

"There!" he says, flushed and smiling, but not as Gillian flushes.

The white face is suddenly rosered up to her disordered locks of hair, but she does not venture to glance at him now.

"Thank you," she half whispers, with drooping eyelids and tremulous red lips.

"If I only dared to kiss her just once!" George thinks, rather madly; and he is rushing out of the room, with some incoherent assurances of his immediate departure for Mount Ossory, when he runs against the doctor who is running in.

"Why, George, my dear fellow! I thought you had broken your neck, by young Mahon's account!" he exclaims, staring amazedly but in a tone of genuine relief. "I am delighted to see you. Oh! I beg your pardon."

"I am sorry to say you needn't be delighted, Dr. Coghlan," George says, gravely, leading him up to the couch. "Miss Deane, Mr. Damer's cousin, from Mount Ossory, has met with an injury; and Captain Bingham Lacy as well."

The doctor bows, with a quick look of interest at his fair young patient, for he, as well as the country round, has heard of the young heiress, whose enormous fortune has been variously stated, in higher and lower circles, as from "a quarter of a million"—this has such a splendid sound as to be a rather favorite sum—to "crocks o' goold," which, in the village of Darragh, is adhered to as solemnly as an article of faith.

He speaks a few words to Captain Lacy, and then, coming back to Gillian, deftly slits her sleeve open to the shoulder with slender and glittering scissors.

"That young limb of a Mahon gave me such a fright I brought all the instruments I could lay my hands on," the doctor says, laughing pleasantly. "I thought I'd have to sew your hands on and mend a few broken backs at the least—ah, allow me, Miss Deane—George hold the light!"

George compresses his lips and sets his face like steel, so that not a muscle shall betray what he feels.

"Lacy is either a cold-hearted ass or a coward!" he thinks, savagely. "I'll not bother my head about him again."

For Lacy is lying rather helplessly in the arm-chair at the other side of the room, staring moodily at the floor, and George has the role of surgeon's assistant all to himself.

And there, on a fair, soft little arm, rounded and rosy-white like an infant's, the very arm that George had kissed in that moment's passion, for which he has reproached himself so bitterly ever since, there is a hideous, purple bruise, swelling up in a great shining weal.

"A simple fracture," the doctor says, calmly and reassuringly; "we'll put that all right presently. I'll have to hurt you, my dear young lady; try and bear it like a brave girl."

"I will, doctor," Gillian says, steadily, with one piteous little frightened look at George.

The doctor looks at him, too, and sees the compressed lips and the set face, and certain knowing wrinkles about his mouth and eyes deepen humorously.

"Hold her other hand, George," he said, presently, after a minute or two of some preparation, "and keep your hand on her shoulder—so."

This is lest some spasmodic action of hers, in her torture, derange the surgeon's movements.

And so George has to hold her down with one strong hand, whilst the poor little soft fingers are convulsively clinched on his other hand.

There is a minute of agony and a stifled scream which makes George bite his lip until it bleeds, and then the doctor is dabbing on a cold, faint smelling lotion and winding bandages around, until the fair little arm is like a mummied limb, and then the splints are put on and more bandages, and Gillian is told her arm is set.

"I should think it was," she says, hysterically laughing, whilst the tears are rolling down her face. "It feels more like a log than an arm."

"But you feel relieved, Miss Deane?" the doctor asks, anxiously. "Give her a glass of wine, George!"

"Oh, yes, I feel relieved!" Gillian says, sobbing and laughing weakly. "Could you find my handkerchief?" she adds imploringly, as George stoops over her with the wine knowing how utterly beyond her power is such a discovery in the cunningly devised skirt of her fashionable gown.

"I can't," George says, deprecatingly, after a futile masculine effort with cautious reverential fingers. "I don't think there is any pocket in your dress! I can't find it, anyhow," he adds, smiling, as he sees the glimmer of girlish fun in the sweet eyes so darkly shadowed with pain. "Might I offer you mine? It is quite fresh, as I have only taken it out a few minutes ago. I lost the one I had all day when we had the spill."

She takes the handkerchief with a gentle word of ladylike thanks. It is indeed scarcely unfolded and of fine, snowy cambric; like most men of his type, George, though rather disregarding all masculine fineries, yet cherishes a few dainty tastes which do not interfere with his hearty, healthy, out-of-door life, his love of rough cleanliness, cold water, and fresh air.

And Gillian is rather surprised at the delicate white handkerchief, with a faint scent emanating from its folds, and the beautiful embroidered "G" in white satin-stitch.

"Good-bye now for a short time," he says, "I shall be back with the carriage in half-an-hour, I hope."

"For what?" the doctor says, suddenly, looking around from his surgical employment on poor Bingham Lacy, who is as miserable as an uneasy conscience, intense dissatisfaction, vexed vanity, and a wounded head, can make him."

"To take Miss Deane back to Mount Ossory, of course!" George says, decisively.

"Miss Deane will not go back to Mount Ossory to-night nor to-morrow night, unless she goes in opposition to my advice," Dr. Coghlan says, sharply. "Certainly not to-night! Bring her maid, and whatever or whoever she wants, but leave her alone unless you want her to be in a fever with that arm."

"Very well," George says, very sedately and slowly. "I will tell Lady Damer what you say, Dr. Coghlan. Of course I am only too pleased if Miss Deane can be made comfortable in this rough bachelor den."

"Miss Deane will be a great deal more comfortable than if any one were to attempt to drag her off a couple of miles, enduring the jolting of a carriage" the doctor says, very gruffly.

"You deserve to be kicked, George," he says, internally, "if you're such a fool to your own interests—not to talk of mine! My Lady Damer is never so civil to me that I should oblige her and that fellow Gregory, whom she has taken up lately as her medical man!"

"Very well, doctor," George repeats, in the same grave, thoughtful tones. "I will bring you back Mr. Damer and Miss O'Neil, I dare say, and Miss Deane's maid."

He bows formally to Gillian as he reassures her with this list of guardians of conventional etiquette, and hurries out into the starlit night, his heart throbbing fast with passionate pleasure.

"I may keep you in my home for a day or two, my little darling! My little darling!" he whispers, with trembling lips. "I know what has happened to me now! I knew it the minute I held you in my arms, and saw the look in your sweet eyes! I love you, my little darling, my fair little flower, who is not mine, whom I dare not think of being mine, though I am afraid, my little darling, in your simple, tender heart you are innocent enough, and unworldly enough, to like me too well to give me up without pain."

(To be continued.)

Hydrogen as an Illuminant.

Oxygen and hydrogen are produced on a large scale in Germany by the electrolytic decomposition of water. The hydrogen so produced is largely used for inflating military balloons, but it is thought that it may soon find a new field as an illuminant. Experiments have been made with it to this end by compressing it in steel cylinders. With a proper burner the relative cost for equal illuminating power of hydrogen and acetylene is as 25 for hydrogen and 59 for acetylene.