THE MYSTIC BEST TRANSFORMED SES

"My head is aching fit to burst," said she, despairingly, "and all that ironing to be done to-dayl"

"Never mind about the work just now," said I, as I settled her on the lounge and found her a fan and a copy of Thomas a Kempis. "What can't be done to-day must be done to-morrow."

And darkening the windows and closing the door, away I ran downstairs to the laundry.

The great baskets of rough-dried calicoes and linens stood, heaping, on every side.

Electa had made a good, roaring fire for the irons, and Dorcas was setting out the blanketed boards:

"Come, girls," cried I, "J'anna's got one of her tantrums to-day, and your mother's no more fit to work than a sick kitten."

"We'll have to put our shoulders to the wheel in good earnest this time, cousin," laughed Electa; while little Dorcas began to sing in a voice sweet and clear as a bobolink's:

"Clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Clar de kitchen, old folks,
folks,
Old Virginny nebber tire!"

keeping time all the while with

the lively thud of her flatiron.
We worked like beavers for two
miortal hours, till the overflowing baskets waxed empty, and the c'othes-horses groaned

shows, shining weight.

Hot and busy were the irons, however, my brain was hotter and busier still, trying to evolve some immediate plan for ridding Cousin Susan of her sanctimonious hand-

It was plain as the sun in the heavens that she would never give her up or put her out — that she would go on hugging her and her delusions to the litter end — unless a special Previdence snatched her "mystic" out of her arms, and delivered her over to the tender mercies of some shrewder and more practical mistress. Even if I could discover

From it 1 count discover not 'J'anna "the lighter place" she had touched on that morning, "where things would be aisy-like" for the overburdenea ('J'edevotee — where could I get a girl to take her place? "Help" was scarce in that out-of-learner Western quarter; and Susthe way Western quarter; and Susan must have at least an apology for a raid in the rougher work of a farmer's house.

Lunch-time came - two o'clock came — and found the ironing fin-ished, but my bright idea still to be materialized. By that time the dear little girls, chipper and plucky as they were, declared themselves too tired to stir, and as their mo-ther proved to have fallen asleep on her lounge in the cool, shaded room, I bathed and dressed and took to the road alone on my bi-

I had not gone half a mile before I Het the post-boy on his wheel, bringing me a letter from the

I dismounted — it was a bad bit of hill, anyway — and read my letter as I walked.

correspondent was a good Mv girl at home—a protege of mine in our Catholic Guild for Working Women. She had just buried her mother, she wrote — and as her last home-tie was broken, and the old house full of sad and painful memories, she would like to go West, and begin life among new scenes. Could I get her a place for general housework on a farm Shortrod? he was not afraid of work, as I knew, and all she wanted was moderate wages,

for a mistress. I could have gone down on my knees in the dusty road and thanked Heaven for this at least partial answer to my prayers. It seemed a miracle of Divine Providence that the good girl should have offered herself unconsciously at this cru-cial moment to fill J'anna O'Leary's place.

a good home, and a kind lady

O'Leary's place.

But how to create a vacancy—
how to get rid of the remarkable
hypochondriac at that moment
sleeping the sleep of the just on
Cousin McIntyr's lest bed?—how
to be off with the old love, in short, before we were on with the new—ahl there was the rub. I was still in a brown study over

the question when I reached the rectory; but once in the office, I was soon pouring out my worries and perplexities to Father Harri-son. He was the sort of man—

door a forlorn face begrimed with

dirt and tears.
"What is it now, Johnny?" said
the priest. "Is the mother worse?" "She's dyin', Father, she's dyin'l.' he blubbered, "and Granny says will you please come right away?"

"Just wait for me a while in the "Just wait for me a while in the parlor, Miss Maria," said Father Harrison, seizing his hat and waving me towards the adjoining room. "You'll find The Catholic World and The Review of Reviews on the table to pass your time."

And away he hurried for a long half-hour.

When he returned, some one can

When he returned, some one can with him into the office. Peeping over the top of my magazine, I saw him to be a tall, stout, farmer-looking man, with a decided pro-file, but a good-humored mouth. "I'm vanting a match, Father,"

said he.

said he.

"Just step into the kitchen," returned the priest, "and the house keeper will give you one to light your pipe."

"Who's talking about pipes, your Reverence?" laughed the man with a pleasant humor, "Sure, it's not a Lucifer-matches "m lookin" for at all—but one of the kind that's made in Heaven."

"Isn't this Roger Kennedy of Rosemount?" said Father Harrison, evidently much amused, as he

son, evidently much amused, as he turned his visitor around to the

light.
"The same, your Reverence You mind that you tended my poor wife on her death-bed, and gave her the

"I remember her well, my mangood woman she was," said the priest.

"Good?" cried Roger Kennedy. hoarsely. "There was none better! And here am I, ever since I lost her a year ago, a poor widowman with a houseful of children, and the home and the farm going to ruin without her."

without her."

"And you want a wife?" said
the priest, kindly.

"Well — yes," hesitated Roger

"If I can find the right sort; and if I can't, at least a housekeeper for the present."

Father Harrison began to walk thoughtfully to and fro.

"There's a woman over at Mrs. McIntyre's," said he at last, "who might suit you, Roger, if you're not too particular."
"Who is she?" asked the man.

"Who is she?" asked the man.
"She's Joanna O'Leary," returned the priest; and then his walk brought him to the door of the parlor, and he added, with a wave of his hat in my direction:
"Here's Mrs. McIntyre's cousin—Miss Maria, Mr. Kennedy, She's just been telling me that Joanna wants to change her place, and if you're willing to give her trial—"
"I'll be more than glad to get her!" cried Roger heartily. "Do you think Miss she would he ready

her!" cried Roger heartily. "Do you think, Miss, she would be ready to start with me (I live ten miles away, and I have to pass Mrs. Mc Intyre's farm on my road home if I call for her in an hour's time? One of my horses cast a shoe coming here to-day," he explained further, "and I must stop at the blacksmith's, and at one of two other places, before I can get to McIntyre's."

"I promise to have her ready for you in half an hour," said I resolutely, trying hard to keep down the gleeful exultation that would bubble up into my voice and

And without waiting for longer parley - almost dr ading that Roger Kennedy night read my thoughts on my jubilant face, and change his mind on the subject, I to him and Father Hurrison, and sprang to my wheel with the joy and agility of a girl of sixteen.

Some remorse tugged at my conscience strings, nowever,

away.
What was to become of that hon-the mystical Joanna took up her abode under his roof and ruled the destinies of his household?

but he looked like a man with

will of his own, who would brook no trifling or masquerading. Suddenly a brilliant thought

Suddenly a brilliant thought broke upon me. "I'll do it!" I cried, almost aloud, and nearly upset my wheel in the excitement and rapture of

my new conceit.
Then I dashed wildly on, consum ed with my eager desire to reach the farm.

I remember I only made two stons between Father Harrison's and Cousin McIntyre's.

The first was at the telegraph of-fice where I despatched this mes-sage to my Catholic Guild's girl in the East: "Come at once: I have a place waiting for you."

— and don't wake your mother for the world!" I exclaimed; and then, in a few trenchant words, I told the girls the whole story. They actually clapped their hands and jumped for joy. "Bring me a comb and a brush," I began, issuing my orders like a general. "And a towel—and some

general. "And a towel-and some hair-pins; there's no time to lose. Let's go to the laundry at once!" And marshalling my forces, I led

And marshalling my forces, I led the way through the entry. A freshly-ironed pink calico wrapper of Susan's — of the genus known as the "Mother Hubbard" — hung on a nail close at hand. I seized it and carried it with me into the legulary closing the door behind laundry, closing the door behind

us.
J'anna sat on a chair near the window reading her prayer-book. She had discarded her candle and crucifix; but her head and person vere still disfigured by their outlandish coverings.

I am sure she never knows to this day how I whipped her out of her corner — how I torc off the brown habit from her shoulders, leaving her defenceless to her ene mies. The girls helped me bravely
one holding the basin while I
vashed the victim's face — the washed the

washed the victim's lace — the other the comb and brush, when I was ready to begin at her hair.

Was there ever a more beautiful skin — clear, red and white? And such hairl — the real, vivid auburn — full of little kinks and

curls (each holding a sunbeam in ambush), and that only needed brushing and twisting to make a perfect glory of a coronet on the top of her shapely head. She had top of her shapely head. She had dumpled when she laughed (as she did once or twice, as if amused at my unusual proceedings), and her teeth were like pearl, so white and even.

But not a word out of her mouth.

I must have hypnotized her; for she sat as mute and meek as any lamb, and let me do as I pleased

with her.
When I buttoned her at last into Cousin McIntyre's pink wrapper, and pinned around her waist one of Electa's ribbon belts — fastened a brooch at her throat, and drew on her bare feet a pair of Susan's stockings and old slippers — she was the prettiest weman I ever

set my eye on.
The "Deformed Trans-

formed," indeed.
"Now, Miss O'Leary," said I, as I diew breath, well pleased, after the last finishing touches, "it is well for you to know that Mr. Roger Kennedy of Rosemount is service the last in a few moments. coming here is a few moments to offer you a nice easy place in his home; and I want you to treat him like a gentleman, and not disappoint his executations."

Before she had time to reply to this thrilling adjuration, there came a rap at the door, and Dorcas ushered in the hero of the hour.

usnered in the nero of the hour.
To see Roger's honest face when he first held the radiant charms of Joanna O'Leary was as good as a play. It was a kitchen edition of Pygmalion and Galatea.
He stood quite specifies.

He stood quite speechless, con-templating the vision of beauty before him. Then his eyes roved charply about the room as if in of some other and homelier wo king woman than this dazzling creature, whose fair checks blushed and whose blue eyes were lowered under the fire of his admiring gaze.

Ahl the mystic was but a wo

man — and woman, alasi is weak.
In his bewilderment, Kennedy turned to me, and recognizing me, stammered:

stammered:

Is the girl in the house you were telling me about; Miss?"

"This is the girl," returned I, laying my hand on J'anna's plump-shoulder.

"Wellh — I'll be — jiggered!" ex-

claimed the farmer, scratching his head in a burst of mild profanity, whereat Miss O'Leary crossed herself devoutly.

"Beg pardon, ma'am — Miss;" blurted Roger, almost humbly. "You see, I'm only a plain, rough fellow, and I'm teetotally rattled with all this here surprisin business. Everything's at sixes and sevens at home, and my farm's gosevens at home, and my farm's going to the dogs, and my children
running wild, all because my old
woman up and died a year ago,
and there's no missus to look after
'the place, and keep things tidy."

He took out his handkerchief as
he spoke, and wiped the sweat excitedly from his large, flushed face.
Miss O'Leary's countenance was
a study.

a study.

She smiled sweetly as she rose to her feet, fully displaying her stately proportions (for Susan's pink gown immeasurably enhanced the redundant charms historical charms and control of the state of the st redundant charms hitherto ob-scured by the Mystic's unshapely frock), and with a shy sort of dig-nity which became her well she estioned with downcast eyes:

questioned with downcast eyes:
"And what is it you want with
me, the day, Roger Kennedy of
Rosemount!"

son. He was the sort of man—genial, sympathetic, receptive—to whom everyone instinctively unbowned his or her anxities.

My second halt was at the "notion-store" kept by the village milliner. Here I made several lightweight purchases which I carried away with me on my handle-bards. For what purpose you will learn later.

Dorcas and Electa met me at the farmhouse door, as fresh as daisless after their afternoon nap.

Twas proceeding to lay before him the letter I had just received, and to sound him on the prospect of ahipping off Miss. O'Leary as soon as possible to "fresh fields and pastures new," when a curly-headed lad tarust in at the norm.

"In the name of the saints, a wife let it bel"

"You don't mean it!" shouted Roger, in an eestasy. "Hurrah!" and he tossed his hat into the air and he tossed his hat into the air and caught it again. "We'll go straight to the priest, and be married this minute! Come, get on your bonnet, my beauty — the wagon's at the door!"

J'anna, blushing and uneasy, turned upon me an appealing

glance.

unce. "Mercy on usl" whispered Elec-i. "What will she do for a bouta.

net?"
"It will never do to be married in a slat-sun-bonnet!" giggled little Dorcas.

But I, indefatigable tire-woman as I was to the bride-elect, was as I was to the brine-ciect, was equal to the emergency I stepped to the ironing-table in a corner, and unwrapping the packages I had bought that afternoor, at the village of the contract of lage milliner's, I produced a soft white summer shawl, a pair of white cotton gloves — and last, a showy white lace bonnet, gorgeous with artificial roses and green satin ribbons!

With these striking additions to her toilet, Miss O'Leary straight-way became a dream of loveliness to her infatuated finance and to all her constituents.

I was just putting the last pin in her bonnet and tying a becoming knot under her dimpled chin, when I heard a groan at my elbow, and realized that Cousin Susan had un-

expectedly appeared.
"Oh, Marial" she sighed, "what does it all mean?"

"Mainma dear," whispered Dor-cas, with her arms around her neck, "don't say a word to stop it! It's just turning out lovely! J'anna was Cindrella and Cousin Maria the fairy godmother, and now the prince has come, and he has asked us all to the wedding; and you must come along, too, and see the fun!"

The upshot of it all was that we speedil- climbed into the farmwagon en masse, carrying disappointed Susan along poor, with us; and we went to the church, Roger Kennedy driving, and his bride-elect sitting beside him, like Peggy in the low-backed car.

I would not have missed for a good deal the look upon Father Harrison's face when J'anna appeared before him in all the splen-dor of her nuptial array. I actually had to introduce her to him before the ceremony; and it needed all his priestly self-control to keep all his priestly self-control to keep him/from laughing outright when he saw Roger detach from his watch-ouard his dead wife's wedding-ring, and beheld Miss O'Leary trying the fit of tt, with a complacent smile, upon ker own substantial finger.

It was at that moment that I

overheard the bridegroom whisper to the bride the prosaic question:

"Can you make bread, darlin'?" "Is it me make bread. Reger Kennedy?" was her retort, with a smile of patronizing pity for his smile of patronizing pity for his ignorance of her accomplishments; "is it me make bread, asthore? and me with the dough on my fingers for the last five weeks!"

And then there ensued a private catechism on her part as to how often ver intended frequented the Sacraments, and when he had last gone to confession. When she learnd that he went to the priest every rooth, and had been "forrad" only the day before, Miss O'Leary's last fear was put to rout, and Father Harrison had light work of squar-

ing the final accounts.
So "all went merry as a marriage bell," and Susan gave away the bride, and I was maid of honor (in every sense of the word), and lor-cas and Electa, flower-girls. In-deed, the little vixens plundered Father Harrison's garden of all its flowers for a nosegay for the bride, and even coaxed the grim old housekeeper into giving a little treat of tea and cake to the high

contracting parties. When the knot was tied, a last blessing given, poor Susan found a chance to say to Father Harrison sotto voce, before we all rode away. together in the twi-

light:
"Oh, Father, do you really think
she will be happy?"

"Not a doubt of it!" returned the priest, heartily. "She will be as happy as a clam at high water. She is a well-meaning creature in the main; all she wanted was plenty to do and a strong, sensible man like Kennedy to keep her do-ing it, to make her a steady and

useful member of society."
And Father Harrison was right The hasty marriage turned out a very satisfactory one to all concerned; and no one repented at lei-

No one except Cousin McIntyre. For, although my protege of the Catholic Guild strived from the East hree days after the wedding, and proved (as it had foreseen) a perfect treasure to her overburdened mistress; and although, through the years to come, Mistress Roger Kennedy rode past the door every week to market in her husband's wagon, a blooming, buxom matron (at first surrounded by a group of her atep-children, and later on by half a dozen of her own), Cousin Susan never ceased to lament the passing of her Mystic — never ceased to deplore J'anna's fall from her high estate to the commonplace verities and avocations of every-day life.

AND AND STREET WAS A ST

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THE WILD FLOWER.

"The mountain's bride," I gently asked,
"Astray in nature's wild?"
"You are mistalen, miss,"

'What do they call you?" I replied.
"Kind miss, I hardly know,
I never had a name, it seems,

"I am a gypsy's child."

I simply 'come and go.' " I called on Beauty then to learn
Why overlook'd this flow'r.
"To give a fitting name to her
Is not in Beauty's pow'e."
—Mary Allegra Gallagher in Dominicans.

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