ALICE KIRBY.

Slip softly, Nashwaak water, Where thrushes sing and soar. Slim alders bend to view thee, Glad brooks come hurrying to thee, But brown-eyed Alice Kirby Shall come to thee no more.

Still shine, as in a mirror, Green pictures of the shore; Where soft thy wave caresses The willow dips her tresses; But dream-eyed Alice Kirby By thee shall rove no more.

Above thy sheltering forests Their song the rain-birds pour; Among the under-tangle, The drowsy cow-bells jangle, But soft-eyed Alice Kirby Shall wander there no more.

Lurk still among the bushes The ferns she hunted for, Blue-vetch and pigeon-berry Make all the stream-side merry, But Alice-Alice Kirby Shall gather them no more.

Slip softly, Nashwaak water, Unruffled as before; Thy woods know naught of sorrow, No moan thy songsters borrow-But ah! for Alice Kirby, Who comes to thee no more!

_J. Elizabeth Gostwycke Roberts.

GROVER'S WHITE WARE.

Mrs. Thompson stood by the kitchen table paring potatoes for dinner. Something was evidently wrong with the little lady, for there was an unmistakable air of "spite" in the way she tossed the potatoes in the pan of cool spring water, waiting there to receive them. It was sultry weather; and through the open window came the sound of mowers whetting their scythes, blended with the call of the robin and the faint notes of the cuckoo in the shaded wood. But it only irritated Mrs. Thompson; indeed, everything irritated her that day. Looking out from the back door might be seen a lovely landscape, with broad reaches of meadow land, fringed with graceful belts of birch, and softly- embowered in a perfect forest of blossomrounded mountains lifting their velvety ing vines, caught the cool gleam of urn foreheads to the white, fleecy clouds, that and fountain, something like a sigh tremwent slowly sailing across the exquisite ether like huge drifts of thistle-down. But this also irritated her; everything could be beautiful save her life, and that was cold, and rude, and barren. At least Mrs. Thompson, in the plentitude of her present unsatisfactory mood, was telling herself Thompson, she asked herself, her slender

rence had been an unusually romantic girl, light in which Mrs. Thompson looked at and had gone for two years to a boarding- things today, she quite forgot the fact that school. She had always fancied she would she had fallen in love with the honest, marry some famous artist or scholar, who steady and good-looking young farmer, would take her to Rome or Venice, where choosing him in preference to Joe Burnshe might live in a perpetual dream of ham, whom she might have had. Joe had beauty. She so loved beautiful things! a patrimony of his own-200 a year at least Perhaps all women do; and that may be the reason so many are found ready to barter love for gold.

-and a good bit of land, which he rented, and was called "Squire," as was his father before him. He wanted to marry Jane barter love for gold.

notions, she married Robert Thompson, a dislikes cannot be controlled, and she cared plain, practical farmer; and instead of more for Robert Thompson's little finger touring it in Italy, she went to live at the old homestead, which had been the home 'Squire Burnham found another wife, and

in her day, his sisters had worked, he ex- The unfinished butter got beaten savagely pected his wife to work. She took to it at the thought. gleefully; she had not been brought up with high notions by any means; and at man, only thoughtless. He was a type of first the work did not seem so much. But a very large class, more especially farmers, every experienced lady knows how the who do not feel the need of life's rugged work seems to accumulate in a plain farmer's household as years after marriage go on. There were plenty of men and boys about, but only one woman servant was monotonous was his wife's life at home. kept; and Mrs. Robert Thompson grew to He had his recreations; the weekly market; find that she helped at nearly everything, save perhaps the roughest of the labor. Instead of lounging in elegant foreign did not realize the truth that the worn, studios, or gliding down famed canals and shabby home told upon her; that she streams in picturesque gondolas, she had butter and cheese to make, and poultry to yearning want of life, and so, as the years rear, and dinners to cook in the long lowbusy household. Quite a contrast, it must unlovely, prosy, dull life somewhat souring

have had nice carpets and tasteful furni- pered. ture, and books, and a picture or two, and flowers. The home was so very practical, and its surroundings were getting so shabby. At first she had not noticed this or cared for it, but every year, as the years rolled on, made matters look dingier. Old Mrs. Thompson had not cared to be smart and nice; Robert never thought about it.

And what though he had? It is only nadard with roll and his two friends coming through the land his two friends comi

out, was this. A sewing club had recently in the cool room of the kitchen. Frank been established in the neighborhood. and Charlie, her two boys, came rushing There was much distress among the poor in from school, each trying to claim her laborers' wives and families, and some attention. She was tired, heated and very ladies with time on their hands set up a cross. sewing club, to make a few clothes for the nearly naked children. The tarmers' wives had joined it—Mrs. Thompson among the table when he entered. "I told you others. They met at stated intervals, taking the different houses in rotation; dining at home at 12, assembling at 1 hadn't anything to do all the forenoon but o'clock, and working steadily for several to get dinner, I'd have it ready in time, I

It was surprising how much work got done; how many little petticoats and frocks but ere it could be spoken Charlie clamorwere made in the long afternoons. In less ously interposed, push than a month it would be Mrs. Thompson's book before her eyes. turn to receive the company—for the first time—and she naturally began to consider ways and means. For they met for an entertainment as well as for sewing—tea in get it by heart, too, and always remember the afternoon, a grand meal later, when it. Do read it, mother."

the stitching was over. the keeper of the village crockery shop, appropriateness to the present moment had a lovely set for sale—white, with a that fell like a cool, sweet wind on her delicate sprig of convolvuli and fuchsias, heated pulses. looking every bit as good as real china. Mrs. Thompson had set her heart on the set, and that morning had broached the

subject to her husband. "What's the matter with the old ones?"

he asked. "Look at them," she answered. "They are frightfully old and shabby." "I dare say the food will taste as well off

them as off Grover's set of white ware."

as good as none left." "Mother had some best china. Where

horami mona.

"That's nearly all gone. We couldn't put the two on the table together." "Why not?" "Oh, Robert! Look at this. It is the

shabbiest old lot ever secn." "Twas good enough for mother."

Mrs. Robert Thompson disdained to make comment. "You'd not have thought of this but for the sewing circle having to come here. If

they can't come and eat from such dishes as we've got, they are welcome to stay There were tears in Mrs. Thompson's

eyes, but she crowded them bravely back. He took his hat to go out mowing. "We really want the things, Robert. Those at Grover's are very cheap. I can get all I want for a trifle. Do give me the

money." "Grover'll have to keep 'em for us; I've got no money to waste on fine china," returned the farmer. "By the way," looking back from the door, "Jones and Lee are coming to give me a helping hand. I looked at one another. She sat down at length, but could not eat. Mr. Thompson if I can; it's a famous crop; so I shall bring them in to dinner. Oh, and the Hubbards want six pounds of butter to-

night; don't forget to have it ready."
With these words Mr. Robert Thompson had marched off, leaving his wife to her long, weary day's work, darkened and made distasteful by her disappointment. She

Existence seemed very bare and homely to Jane Thompson that summer day. With her love of ease and beauty and symmetry, how rude and coarse and hard looked all her surroundings. It was only one long monotonous round of homely toil, unre-She did not often think of it, but she remembered that day with the faintest little best was but a delicate woman. air of regret, that she might have been differently situated, and as she looked up to the pretty French cottage on the hill, bled on her lips.

"Squire Burnham's wife does not have it cast. to beg for a paltry bit of money to set out her table decently," she thought, rebelli-

What business had she to marry Robert wrist beating away at the butter for the To begin at the beginning. Jane Law- Hubbards. For in the green and gloomy But, contrary to all her preconceived Lawrence, and she would not; likes and of the Thompsons for generations. Dreams and reality are so very different, you see.

Robert Thompson was a working farmer as well as a practical man, and all his people worked. His mother had worked in her day, his circum had worked be mulberry ware, and the home generally.

pathway being smoothed with flowers.

Absorbed in his stock, his crops, his money-getting, he did not realize how had gone on, she grew dissatisfied at heart, ceiled kitchen, and the thousand and one hardly understanding what she wished for cares upon her shoulders that make up a or what she did not wish; the intensely her spirits. Now and again, when she With things a little different, she'd not | gave back a short or bitter retort, Robert have minded the work so much; could she wondered; she used to be so sweet-tem-

All through the long forenoon Mrs. Thompson nursed her wrath. Robert was selfish and unreasonable, and she did not care who knew it. She would not have the tural for men to assume that what had done for a mother would do for a wife.

The matter today, which put her so much ing hot, and she hastened to lay the cloth

> "Why isn't dinner ready?" demanded we had no time to waste today," he added angrily, in his anger and hunger. "If I

ously interposed, pushing his new copy-

"Look, mother! I am going into sentences now, like Frank. It's my first copy.

What was Mrs. Thompson to do? Their the cracked mulberry plates, paused a mostock of plates and dishes consisted of a ment to let her eyes fall on the new copy. few odds and ends of cracked delf that had | "A soft answer turneth away wrath," was once been a kind of mulberry color. She was what she read. It was not that the had long wanted some new white ware; proverb was new; she had read it scores she wanted it more than ever now. Grover, of times; but there was something in its

"I will have it ready in a moment,

Robert," she said quietly.

Mr. Robert Thompson looked up. Mr. Robert Thompson looked up. compared with me; but that is all over now. I did not think, Jennie; I did not, a reply. If the truth must be told, he had indeed." thought a good bit that morning about the white ware. Not in the way of granting it, but that she would probably be sulky

over it when they got in to dinner.
"It doesn't feel here as it does in that round."

"But there's not half enough. We have blazing meadow," he remarked to his friends, as they went into the cool north room to dinner. "Folks that can keep indoors this weather have an easy time of it; they don't know what heat is."

Mrs. Thompson wondered whether this was a slap at her. Her face looked scarlet enough for any amount of heat. As to sitting down with them, she had enough to do to wait on her party. It was washing day, and Mollie must not be called.

"This butter must have been kept in the kitchen; it's like oil," said Mr. Thompson. "I took it out of the cellar since you came in; I will go down and get you some more, if you think I had better," was the

reply, given pleasantly.
"Never mind. Well, I declare! Do you call this meat boiled?" went on Mr. Thompson, as he began to carve. "It's harder than a rock. It meat has to be cooked pretty fresh this weather, it needn't be like this."

"I've tried to have it nice, Robert," she said, trying to choke down a rising sob as

well as an angry word. Mr. Thompson, aroused by a quiver in finished his meal in silence.

He was watching his wife's face; there was something in it that he did not understand-a kind of patient, hopeless look, as if she no longer cared to struggle onward. The old mulberry ware did look dingy on the snowy white table-cloth; almost too bad for these chums of his to sit down to. was both grieved and angry. It was a little thing, perhaps, but it is the little things of life that delight or annoy.

He wondered he had never thought of that before. Robert Thompson grew thoughtful.

He passed into the kitchen when they were going out again-how hot and stifling it felt with that big fire, as bad as the south meadow. His wife had been in it cooking; that must have made her face scarlet Indoors was not so comfortable a place after lieved by any of the little sweetnesses and all, if you had hot work to do, was the idea graces that might make even toil pleasant. that flitted through his mind. And perhaps the work was overmuch for his wife, who at

A fresh, cool breeze had sprung up from the south, as he went out, walking slowly, but the sun was burning hot still. Robert Thompson waited to wipe his brows; and in that moment the voices of his comrades came toward him from the other side of the hedge, where they stood in the little shade

"I never pitied a woman so much in my life," quoth one of them. "She works like a slave, and does not get even a 'thank ye' for it from Thompson. He's a good fellow, but uncommon down upon the work. Strong as a horse himself, he thinks, I suppose, women must be the same.'

"Yes, Bob's a sterling good fellow, but Jane Lawrence made a mistake when she said yes to his asking," said the other. "Jones, she wasn't cut out for a farmer's wife, especially one who keeps his folks to it like Thompson does. She's over sensitive-delicate; any lady but she would have turned long ago and bid him give her proper help. He won't make his money out of her many years, if he don't take better care of her; she'll run down fast. Awfully changed she is; she looks as faded as the old house rooms-and they haven't seen a coat of paint since Grandfather Thompson's

"Ah, she'd better have took Joe Burnham. The Lawrences used to have things nice in their home, and she'd have got 'em so still if she'd married Joe. His wife's just gone out in her pony shay. I say, Jones, I wonder whether Thompson's wite's

Was she? The unconscious comments of these, his warm friends, came crushing down on Robert Thompson's heart and brain like a bolt of fire. That she rejected Burnham for him he knew, when she came home to the old homestead and took care of his invalid mother. Tenderly had she done it, too. Could she be wearing out her life in hard work for him; she, the mother of his boys; she whom he loved well, for all his churlishness? Robert Thompson stole away; he could bear his thoughts no longer, and he felt that he could almost kill himself for his blind heed-

The afternoon wore on toward evening. Mrs. Thompson had finished her indoor work—the washing up of the dinner dishes and the putting of the rooms straight—and was going in with an armful of fine things she had taken from the clothes line, when the sound of wheels made her look round. "I've brought that white ware, Mrs. Thompson," said the brisk voice of Grover,

springing from his cart and lifting down carefully a large hamper.
"But I didn't order it, Mr. Grover," she rejoined, in rather a frightened voice.

"The master did, though. Mr. Thompson came down this afternoon, and said the things was to come up to you at once. There's the dinner set you admired and a tea set as well Where shall I put 'em?"

"Bring them in, please," she answered, rather faintly. He did as he was bid and then drove off. Mrs. Thompson sat down by the ham-

per of crockery and cried as if her heart would break. They were magical tears, too, for they washed all the weariness and despair from her face and the shade from her eyes and heart. She forgot that she was tired or that the day was hot; she only thought how kind Robert was, and what a wicked woman she had been for saying to herself in her temper that she'd rather have had 'Squire Burnham. Then she unpacked the treasures, pulling them out from amid the hay, and singing softly all the while. Oh, it was beautiful, that ware! with its clear opaque white, and here and there a delicate tracing of fuchsia

Mr. Thompson came in and found her in the midst. "What is it, Jennie?" he asked -the old fond name he used to call her. "Oh, Robert!" taking a step toward

He opened his arms and drew her close to his heart, kissing her as fondly and tenderly as he ever had in the days of his courtship. "I have been a brute, little wife," he whispered, huskily. "Can you ever forgive me?"

"Forgive you? Oh, Robert! I never was so happy in my life! I have been to blame. I have not been so patient and kind as I might."

"Yes, you have. You've been an angel

"But-Robert-" "You shall have more help in the house -another servant. We'll get her in, Jennie, long before the sewing club night comes

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"Oh, Robert, how kind you are! I feel as light as a bird.

"And you are, almost," he answered, smiling a little sadly as he looked into her eager face. "We'll all turn over a new leaf, Jane. Heaven knows I did not mean to be cruel."

"Robert, you were never that." "Well-we'll let it be; bygones shall be bygones, it you will. Oh, and I forgot to say that I saw Leeds this afternoon. It's a very dull time just now, the poor fellow says, without a job on hand; so I thought I'd give him one. They'll be here to begin to-morrow morning."

"You-are-not going to have the house done up?" she exclaimed in wild surprise. "Every square inch of it. And, once the painting and that's finished, we'll see what else we can do to make it look a little bit brighter."

She hardly believed it; she burst into tears. "And I have been so wicked!" she cried. "Only to-day I had quite wicked thoughts, Robert. I was envying Mrs. Burnham; I was feeling angry with everybody. It was the discouragement, Robert.' "Yes, it was the discouragement," he said, quite humbly. "We will do better

for the future, Jane; I'll try another plan.' She cried silently for a minute longer soft, happy tears; feeling that light had superseded darkness."

"And it has all risen from my trying to carry out for a bit that blessed proverb, 'A soft answer turneth away wrath!' she murmured. "Robert, did you ever before see such lovely white ware?"—The Argosy.

----AN-

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