

**IN THE VALLEY OF
THE MERRIMACK**

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In the Valley of the Merrimack by Julia Noyes Stickney

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BY
JULIA NOYES STICKNEY

Author of
"Poems on Lake Winnepesaukee"



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60

BEAUTY.

Prelude.

The spirit sees the flowers of beauty,
In this cold earth-land blossoming
To light the shadowy path of duty,
Till the celestial warblers sing
Of the eternal spring.

Beauty, the web for poet's weaving,
Heroic forms that joy can borrow,—
Visions of light, earth's woes retrieving,
Nature's sweetest rest from sorrow
Picturing a tranquil morrow.

Blue skies and sights of sunset splendor,
Rainbows, the children of the light,
When lightning clouds their darts surrender
Above the violet mountains' height,
Long ere the stars shine bright.

Flowers in the early spring-time growing,
The rose of June, the lily's throne,
The crystals from the winter-snowing,
The mosses in the forest growing—
These are not thine, alone!

The smiles of love, the tones of blessing,
Compassion's tears that angels weep,
And gentle childhood's fond caressing,—
These make the tangled pathway free,
And light the stormy sea.

Thus by the earth, the air, the ocean,
By morning's ray or star-lit night,
For woman's heart and man's devotion,
Beauty, Heaven's gift to mortal sight,
This dim, dream-world will light.

MUSINGS BY THE MERRIMACK RIVER.

WRITTEN IN EARLY YOUTH.

My own fair Merrimack, once more,
I stand upon thy lovely shore,
Where oft in childhood I have played,
And where my youthful feet have strayed;
Here as I trod this winding track,
Yon hills my gladness echoed back,
O then, this simple lay shall be,
My own sweet Merrimack, to thee.

Oft when the morning star grew pale,
When darkness fled from hill and vale,
And with soft tints of rosy dye,
Aurora tinged her eastern sky,
Then all her gorgeous shades unrolled
And bathed the hills with floods of gold,

With lingering gaze I loved the best
To watch the sunrise from thy breast,
And mark the morning's fairest beam
Upon my own, my native stream.

When summer winds breathed soft and low,
How silent was thy silver flow,
When every bark whose snowy sail,
Had paused to woo the lingering gale,
And every form that nature wore,
Upon thy green and hill-bound shore,
And every hue that beauty gave
Was painted on thy crystal wave.

As onward rolled the car of day,
How oft my eyes to thee would stray,
To see each shade that crossed the sky
Reflected on thy bosom lie:
When skies were clear as hyaline
Thy waters caught the airs divine;
When clear, cool breezes swept thy shore,
The deepest blue thy bosom wore
All spangled o'er with sparkling light
And rippling waves of silver-white.

Here have I marked when day was done
The glory of the sinking sun,
As the celestial light it gave
Was mirrored in thy golden wave,
And now, fair Merrimack, once more
I watch the sunset from thy shore.

O who can paint the gorgeous dyes
That gild the crimson-tinted skies,
Or who can trace the faintest beam
That sparkles in thy purple stream!
I gaze, enchanted, till the glows
Change into tints of softest rose
Which, gently dying, fade away
Into a hue of blue and gray:
So sinks the day to peaceful rest;
So pales the glory on thy breast;
So draw the shades of evening nigh,
Till twilight shuts her tranquil eye,
And while great nature slumbers still,
The rising moon illumines the hill.

Now faithful memory comes, arrayed
In varying tints of light and shade,
But soon she asks in spirit-tone,
Where are the friends so late thine own—
Here on this spot ye often met
And wandered ere the dews were wet,—
No more resounds your careless play,
The missed, the loved ones, where are they?

I know that some far distant roam,
Lone exiles from our own dear home;
I know that some are mourning now,
With quivering heart and burning brow:
Some, early-called, the fair, the brave
Lie near us in the silent grave;

Together shall we roam no more
Upon this dear, delightful shore,
Here at still twilight did we meet
To roam these paths with tireless feet,
Till silence brought from realms afar
The angels of the Evening Star.

Sweet river, as I leave thee now,
The breezes bathe my burning brow,
And spirit-voices, softly clear,
Fall gently on my listening ear;
The whispering pines, thy murmuring sigh,
Are telling that I, too, must die,
But when the angels call for me,
My longing eyes would turn to thee,
To see the earth's expiring beam
Upon my own, my native stream,
Dear river of my youthful dream.

WHERE TALL TREES WAVE.

My heart is beating wild and high,
While winter lights the crystal sky;
Stern ice-king, fly to foreign lands
With all thy glittering warrior bands,
Nor let the sounding tempest rave
Where tall trees wave.

October's painted leaflets fell
And bared the boughs by dale and dell,