

of his acquaintance with Alice and Phoebe Cary, "They were beautiful girls," he said, "and the way they came to me has always seemed a strange tale. I was in Boston for a few days attending to some literary matters. The girls had sent for my approval at different times some of their poems. I had taken great interest in the development of their talent. Several times I had received good remuneration for them which delighted them greatly. It seems they had saved their money and come from their Ohio home unannounced to visit me. It was a great journey in those days. Ohio was the 'Great West,' and how they ever made the journey alone, I could never imagine, for they were the most unsophisticated pair of travelers you ever saw. Phoebe was all fire and passion, with her pretty feet firmly planted on terra firma, but Alice was the most ethereal spirit I had ever met." "That poem in which you said 'what forbid the singing bird to sing' referred to her, did it not?" I interrogated. He assured me it did, and then continued: "After the girls found I was away from home, Alice was inclined to think they had been too presumptuous in coming, and like a girl, she began to cry, but Phoebe was more courageous, and my sister, who was keeping house for me at that time, consoled them, and told them I would soon be home, and delighted to see them. So Alice became more hopeful, and it was a pleasure which has rarely been mine to entertain those two girls. They were the very opposite in looks and temperamen, but they complimented each other. Alice wouldn't have been Alice without Phoebe, and Phoebe wouldn't have been Phoebe without Alice. She only survived Alice a few weeks, but mourned her soul away for her. They are buried in Greenwood, side by side."

If we were to ask a dozen admirers of Whittier which of his poems they liked the best, those that could tell would name perhaps as many different poems as

their number might be. Whittier almost always seemed at his best. The following is the favorite of one noted critic.—[Ed:—

OUR RIVER.

To the Merrimack.

Once more on yonder laurelled height
The summer flowers have budded;
Once more with summer's golden light
The vales of home are flooded;
And once more, by the grace of Him
Of every good the Giver,
We sing upon its wooded rim
The praises of our river;

Its pines above, its waves below,
The west-wind down it blowing,
As fair as when the young Brissot
Beheld it seaward flowing,—
And bore its memory o'er the deep,
To soothe a martyr's sadness,
And fresco, in his troubled sleep,
His prison walls with gladness.

We know the world is rich with streams
Renowned in song and story,
Whose music murmurs through our dreams
Of human love and glory:
We know that Arno's banks are fair,
And Rhine has castled shadows,
And, poet-tuned, the Doon and Ayr
Go singing down their meadows.

But while, unpictured and unsung
By painter or by poet,
Our river waits the tuneful tongue
And cunning hand to show it,—
We only know the fond skies lean
Above it, warm with blessing,
And the sweet soul of our Undine
Awakes to our caressing.

No fickle sun-god holds the flocks
That graze its shore in keeping;
No icy kiss of Dian mocks
The youth beside it sleeping;
Our Christian river loveth most
The beautiful and human;
The heathen streams of Naiads boast,
But ours of man and woman.

The miner in his cabin hears
The ripple we are hearing;
It whispers soft to homesick ears
Around the settler's clearing:
In Sacramento's vales of corn
Or Santee's bloom of cotton,
Our river by its valley-born
Was never yet forgotten.

The drum rolls loud,—the bugle fills
The summer air with clangor;
The war storm shakes the solid hills
Beneath its tread of anger;