

**THE WANDERER,
AND OTHER POEMS**

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The Wanderer, and Other Poems by David F. Little

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DAVID F. LITTLE

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AND OTHER POEMS,



DAVID F. LITTLE.

LOS ANGELES:
MIRROR PRINTING AND BINDING HOUSE.
1880.

69965



THE WANDERER,

— OR —

STANZAS WRITTEN IN CALIFORNIA.

—
1876.
—

THOUGHTS OF HOME.

THE shades of eve are deepening round my bower,
And falling night brings thoughts that make me
yearn

For the dear sounds of home! This is the hour
When strangers' hall is joyless: heart doth turn
To heart of its own band. Who now would learn,
Even from a lover's accents, sweet and low,
Thoughts not of days gone by? If now I burn,
'Tis with the love of home; and well I know,
Where'er my foot may stray, that flame will brightly glow.

O, blessed home! where Christian love and light,
O'er all the joys and griefs of our abode,
Shone like the lamps of heaven by day and night,
Diffusing peace and lessening every load:
The father walking in the narrow road, .
And solemn in devotion, strict in rule,
Still gladly cheered where youthful faces glowed
With merry play, o'er shop or garden tool,
O'er labors of the farm, or tasks of village school.

How well do I remember every spot
The hours of youth have made so deeply dear!
O! I would count it now a happy lot
To look upon those scenes, that rise so clear

To memory's eager eye; scenes once too drear,
 I thought, to feast the young aspiring mind :
 But what have I found since ? what find I here,
 'Mid friends and nature grand, will memory bind
 Like those bright, youthful days, left then un mourned
 behind ?

How oft have I reclined beneath the trees,
 Beside that gently murmuring river's brink !
 How often have I sat to catch the breeze
 Of eve upon the bank ! and I would link
 Thought into thought, and linger still to think :
 The circling sky became a narrow dome,
 Too small to muse within ; for I did drink
 Of nature's spirit cup—but now I roam ;
 And no thought seems so sweet, no place is like my home.

My home ! and have I still in that dear land
 A home ? And is there still a chair for me,
 Which they will count but vacant till the hand
 Of fate shall lead me back ? O, could they see
 Mine eye turned thither, sad and longingly,
 And read the thoughts of them I feel to-night,
 The stranger's thoughts of home, how quick would be
 The tear-drop shed, the prayer put up—the rite
 Of sister's love, the pledge of home's most sacred light.

Perhaps they're kneeling now, and turn to pray ?
 For those who bow the knee no longer there ;
 And when they think of one, so far away
 From them and all the rest held dear, the prayer
 Will be more deep and earnest, that the care
 Of heaven's kind hand may with him still abide,
 To lead aright, to shield from wily snare,
 To be the sure, the constant, cheering guide
 Of him who long did join, but now is sundered wide.

AT MONTEREY.

September wind is breaking o'er the hills,
 And scattering clouds are flying from the sea ;
 The sound of waters wild my bosom thrills ;
 And from the deep there comes a voice, to me
 More genial than the noise of revelry,
 That now arises from the crowded hall :
 And the fair moon and starry brilliancy,
 Thin veiled, or glowing bright, impress the call
 To be with nature forth upon the ocean's wall.

I gallop seaward. Spirit of the night,
 With thee I love to wander ; and the sweep
 Of darkening clouds athwart the streaming light
 Of heaven, the swaying trees, the bounding leap
 Of the proud horse against the gale, these keep
 In influence with thee, while my heart is mute,
 As carried onward— Lo ! the mighty deep !
 Waves roll and dash, the wild jets heavenward shoot—
 O, who could tell the glory, who the power compute ?

Thoughts of majestic grandeur fill the mind—
 The lightning flash, the thunder rolling dread ;
 The mountain forest heaving in the wind—
 The conquering host, with proud triumphal tread,
 The chargers' champ, the thousand banners spread,
 The martial music, and the welcome home—
 The hush of death, the deep dirge for the dead !—
 He, who has chanced 'mid grandest scenes to roam,
 May know the gazer's thought beside such ocean's foam.

The mighty tide, which rolls the thundering bore
 Of Cobequid—pride of that slope so fair
 From sheltering mountain southward to the shore—
 Rocked me in youthful days ; and through the wear

Of manhood's stronger years, still everywhere
 I stray, my thoughts seem like the waves to be,
 As I had drunk the waters' spirit there,
 Like him who sung the ocean's majesty,
 The bard of nature's realm, or earth, or heaven, or sea.

His song I echo now to voiceless thrills,
 As traveler on every ocean's brink ;
 In storm or calm, its finished fitness fills
 With wonder at the mind, whose power could link
 Such thoughts in words as hushed the world to think !
 Even they return to gaze upon the deep,
 Who from the wreck-strewn shore were won't to shrink,
 When they have learned the lay, sung to the sweep
 Of his majestic soul o'er seas in rage or sleep.

The child of nature loves the lofty strain
 Of praises, chanted to her flashings bright
 On mountain peak, or stayless march on main ;
 Her beauties traceable by day's calm light,
 Or grandeurs known but in the 'glorious night :'
 And now, a wanderer on mount and shore,
 My heart doth draw from nature chief delight,
 And I rejoice with bards sublime the more,
 That I have learned to muse, to know, and to adore.

O ! give me still the shore, the mount, the wood ;
 Still keep me from the cities' work of men ;
 For who, that oft on summit rock has stood,
 After a night o'er works of mortals pen,
 Or after crowded life has turned again
 To stand by ocean, has not felt the spell
 Of something mightier than what charmed him, when
 He gave his heart to science, art, or shell ?
 Who turns from scenes like this, but with a forced fare-
 well ?

AT YOSEMITE.

Turn, turn away, mine eye ; I cannot think ;
Thought is all stunned at that grand, awful sight !
To stand upon the rapid river's brink
Gives me a feeling of intense delight ;
To see the maddened ocean in its might,
Huge billow rolled 'gainst mightier boundary,
Inspires me with a reverence as rite ;
But I am more than silent here with thee,
Thou holdest the breath of thought, thou dread Yosemite!

Far up beside thee, thou tremendous Fall,
There is a tree, which twice a hundred feet
Has risen from a creviced ledge of wall :
It looks no larger there, than from the street
The plant in window high ! But who can mete
Thy greatness to the soul ? Here I did stand
At early morn, and think with words to greet
Thee ; but my heart was overcome ; my hand
Was not outstretched ; I stood, in speech, in thought
unmanned.

Thou river rolling from Sierra's snows,
The measure of a mountain downward leaps
Thy flood to vale below ! The thick mists close
Around thy base, most awful fall ; whence sweeps
Away the white foam of thy rage, in heaps.
But far above thy clouds thou dost appear,
The wonder of all continents ! He keeps
No watch like this by thee, who comes not here :
Not Fundy's mightiest waves have such sublime career.

O, thou magnificently mighty ! would
That heaven-born spirit, strong as thine, might break