

**A LIFE-POEM: AND
OTHER POEMS**

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A Life-Poem: And Other Poems by Frederick J. Keyes

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FREDERICK J. KEYES

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A LIFE-POEM,

AND OTHER POEMS,

BY

FREDERICK J. KEYS.

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1855.

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PREFACE.

THE preface of a book is the easiest thing to write, and perhaps, of all literary essays it is the least read. I will leave that however, for the reader to answer, whether the mind approves itself or not in the mission it makes. The life of an author is no easy one though, however easily his prefaces may be written, and they who tread the literary path must nerve all their powers, physical as well as mental, to endure with fortitude the fickleness of the world; and not only this, but the rivalry of others who are striving for the same object. To bear with patience the sneers of those who are more successful, and the envy of those who are inferior. As soon as a book is published the author is known. He is no longer a private individual; he has entered the great arena of minds, where his own must retain its peculiar originality. It is in vain to conceal his name from the world, for of all secrets, the secret of an author is the least safe.

In the long poem I have endeavored to delineate the feelings and the ambition of a young author, yet I would not have the reader think that what I say is intended to be personal, nor would I have anything be taken as personal either to myself or others, in the volume which I have written. I would merely say, that the original one was much larger, and that I have condensed it as much as possible, hoping that I have made up for the quantity by the quality, which would I know, be more satisfactory to the reader and leave less ground for the critic to travel over. I care not what this one or that one will say in regard to my work; it will speak for itself and for the author, and thus I need say no more about it, commending it to the tender mercies of the public, only to add, that whatever may be its success, and if circumstances permit, I shall, at no distant day, publish a volume perhaps, of a somewhat different character, dedicating this my humble effort, to my friends, to whom I remain ever theirs.

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INTRODUCTION.

Dear reader! welcome to the thoughts that fit
Across my mind while here at night I sit,
Within my room, a place so rare and queer,
You ne'er would think to find a poet here,
Propped up with arms and elbows, cushioned soft,
Leaving a space for thoughts to soar aloft,
While yonder spider starts upon the wall
Forth from his web, as if to catch them all:
Then what a feast, think ye, to your surprise
He'd have upon them; if they were but flies!

Forgive me reader! Think not I'm unlearned,
Or ere read through, my book had best be burned;
Thoughts have their metaphors, and this has one,
The critic knows too well to think, to shun—
Nor dream ye critic! that I'm over-vain,
I'll bend my bow, and shoot at you again;
And of the feathers from your pinions tore,
I'll plume again, and shoot an arrow more!