

**POEMS OF THE
LATE
FRANCIS S. KEY**

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Poems of the Late Francis S. Key by Francis S. Key

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FRANCIS S. KEY

**POEMS OF THE
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P O E M S .

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OF THE LATE

FRANCIS S. KEY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF

"THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER."

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER
BY CHIEF JUSTICE TANEY.



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PREFACE.

THE poetry which is now given to the public, in the following volume, has long been treasured, amid the circle of private friends, who knew and loved, the late Francis S. Key, Esq. A more gifted intellect, the writer of these lines, has never met with, and hence, has entertained the opinion, that it was due to the "literature of song," and would prove a most acceptable contribution to the limited classic poetry of our country, that the effusions of a mind so pure and beautiful, should go forth, and gratify the general reader.

After several years of respectful solicitation, to those possessing the manuscript, permission to publish it has been obtained, together with a narrative, from the accurate pen of Chief Justice Taney, brother-in-law of Mr. Key, of the circumstances originating and attending, the composition of the national ballad, entitled, "The Star Spangled Banner." As probably few of

those who read and admire, that thrilling effusion, are acquainted with its history, and as it is desirable to fix the same, in a more enduring form than the memory of private friendship, it is believed that it will be eminently satisfactory, that an opportunity has now been presented for giving it to the press. The generous soul of American patriotism will not the less earnestly value the "Banner," when fully apprized of the occasion of composing "the ballad."

The piece entitled "the Nobleman's Son, etc.," was written on the back of a letter, as Mr. Key was returning to Baltimore from professional engagements, in the Supreme Court, at Washington. The undersigned, desires to express no preference among so much excellence, as appears in Mr. Key's poetry; but ventures to ask the reader's eye, for the stanza in this piece descriptive of the scene when the Saviour's power, and the mother's falling tear, and the abated "fever's rage," are grouped in a manner so inimitably beautiful. There are two lines here which may be surpassed by others in our rich and flowing language, but if so, they have not yet met the writer's notice.

Throughout the whole of these brief, but touching