

The Shakespeare Society of New York

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To promote the knowledge and study of the
Works of Wm. Shakespeare, and the
Shakespearean and Elizabethan Drama

..

IN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE—June 15th, 1885.

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IN RE SHAKESPEARE'S
"LEGAL ACQUIREMENTS"

Notes by an Unbeliever Therein

BY

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IN RE SHAKESPEARE'S LEGAL ACQUIREMENTS.

I.

SHAKESPEARE NOT NECESSARILY A LAWYER BE-
CAUSE HE USED LEGAL TERMINOLOGY.

ENGLAND is, and always has been, the true home of the lawyer; and the Englishman takes as naturally to a legal contest as the Irishman to a rough and tumble fight, or the Frenchman to a duel. In no country in the world have the bench and the bar been held in so high esteem as in England. While in all other parts of Europe the pulpit or the sword afforded the only avenues of employment for a gentleman, and the only means for social or political advancement, in England ambition has always found an ample arena in the legal forum. Prior to the reign of Queen Anne, science, literature, and art were lightly regarded, but the lawyer has always been, in English estimation, second only to the soldier. Bacon himself was esteemed by his contemporaries for his legal rather than his scientific or literary attainments. Hooker's famous statement that "law hath her seat in the bosom of God; her voice is the harmony of the world," has ever