

SHAKSPEARE:  
HIS MIND AND ART.

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HENRY S. KING AND Co., LONDON.

SHAKSPERE:

A CRITICAL STUDY OF

HIS MIND AND ART.

BY

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## P R E F A C E.



THE attempt made in this volume to connect the study of Shakspeare's works with an inquiry after the personality of the writer, and to observe, as far as is possible, in its several stages the growth of his intellect and character from youth to full maturity, distinguishes the work from the greater number of preceding criticisms of Shakspeare. A sense of hazard and difficulty necessarily accompanies the attempt to pass through the creations of a great dramatic poet to the mind of the creator. Still no one, I suppose, would maintain that a product of mind, so large and manifold as the writings of Shakspeare, can fail in some measure to reveal its origin and cause.

The reader must not fall into the error of supposing that I endeavour to identify Shakspeare with any one of his dramatic personages. The complex nature of the poet contained a love-idealist like Romeo—(students of the Sonnets will not find it difficult to admit the possibility of this); it contained a speculative intellect like that of Hamlet. But the complete Shakspeare was unlike Romeo, and unlike Hamlet. Still it is evident, not from one play, but from many, that the struggle between "blood" and "judgment" was a great affair of