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SHAKESPEARE,  
FROM AN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW;

INCLUDING

AN INQUIRY AS TO HIS RELIGIOUS FAITH,  
AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF LAW:

WITH

THE BACONIAN THEORY CONSIDERED.

BY

GEORGE WILKES.



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## PREFACE.

THE following Essays were originally addressed to a public consisting for the most part of American readers: and it was the intention of the author to publish them first, in a collected form, in the United States. It, however, having become apparent, in the course of his researches, that it would be advisable to consult the British libraries, he concluded to issue the work in London. This was the more desirable, because a judgment rendered from the fountain head of English criticism, on what may be deemed a conspicuously English subject, would be more authoritative and satisfactory than if given from any other source. The author, therefore, takes this opportunity to say that the most rigorous criticism will not be unwelcome; not, indeed, from any vain confidence in his own views, but because they are put forward in good faith, and in order to elicit truth concerning a genius who is the richest inheritance of the intellectual world. Should, indeed, his views be controverted, the author must even in that event be a gainer in common with the other admirers of Shakespeare; for it can never be a true source of mortification to relinquish opinions in favour of those which are shown to be better.

Presenting these pages, therefore, rather as a series of inquiries than as dogmatic doctrine, the author strives to support them by only such an amount of controversy as is legitimately due from one who invites the public to a new discussion.

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