

**HISPANIC NOTES &
MONOGRAPHS, I. FRAY
LUIS DE LEÓN: A
BIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT**

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Hispanic notes & monographs, I. Fray Luis de Le?n: a biographical fragment by James Fitzmaurice-Kelly

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JAMES FITZMAURICE-KELLY

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HISPANIC

NOTES & MONOGRAPHS

ESSAYS, STUDIES, AND BRIEF
BIOGRAPHIES ISSUED BY THE
HISPANIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA



EL MAESTRO FRAI LVIS DE LEON

FRAY LUIS
DE LEON

A Biographical Fragment

BY

JAMES FITZMAURICE-KELLY, F.B.A.

*With a Portrait from
an engraving after Pacheco*



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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P R E F A C E

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P R E F A C E

THIS biographical sketch is, in fact, a fragment of a book which will now never come into existence. This particular chapter has been snatched from the burning by an accident. The name of Luis de Leon deservedly ranks as high as that of any poet in the history of Spanish literature; but his reputation as a poet is mostly local, while he is known all the world over as the subject of a dubious anecdote. The attempt is now made to render him more familiar than he has hitherto been to English-speaking people, and to do this, to exhibit the man as he was, it proved necessary to analyse the two volumes of his first trial, the evidence of which is brought together

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in vols. x and xi of the *Coleccion de Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España*. Edited by Miguel Salvá and Pedro Sainz de Baranda, these volumes appeared in 1847; their value is incontestable, but, though they give the evidence as it occurs in the register of the Inquisition, this evidence is not arranged in consistent chronological order, nor is it supplied with an index. The work, printed seventy-three years ago, is not within easy reach of every reader; and of those who have access to it not all are patient enough to read steadily through so large a mass of somewhat incoherent matter. Should any such readers be tempted to examine the record closely, it is hoped that this sketch will do something to make their task easier. An attempt is made here to picture the man as he was, full of fortitude, yet not exempt from human weakness. I trust that I have avoided the temptation to go to the opposite extreme, and lay the blame—as

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has been done—for the irregularities of the trial at Luis de Leon's own door.

In dealing with his Spanish poems, I have tried not to put his claims to consideration too high. Laboulaye, in *La Liberté religieuse*, calls Luis de Leon 'le premier lyrique de l'Europe moderne'. This phrase dates from 1859, and was addressed to a generation which delighted in arranging authors in something like the order of a class list. Though I have the highest opinion of Luis de Leon's genius, I have not felt tempted to follow Laboulaye's example; I have by preference discussed, so far as space allows, such points as the probable chronology of Luis de Leon's poems. Once more I repeat that this is a chapter of a book that will now never be written.

It may be as well to add at this point a few explanatory words concerning the plan of accentuation adopted here. There seems to be no valid reason for applying, in a book primarily intended for English

A N D M O N O G R A P H S

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