THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF OLIVER S. LELAND. - NO.3. BEATRICE; OR, THE FALSE AND THE TRUE: A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS

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BEATRICE;

OR,

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A PLAY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

OLIVER S. LELAND, AUTHOR OF "THE HIGHTS OF MAX"-"CAPBICE"-"THE INHERITANCE"-- BO.

BOSTON:

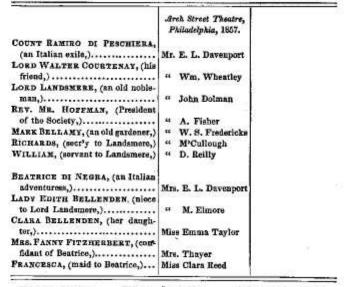
WILLIAM V. SPENCER,

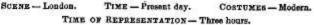
128 WASHINGTON St. (COR. OF WATER.)

1858.

Entered, seconding to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by OLIVEN S. LELAND, in the Cierk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Bramatis Persona.





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CE:

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. -- Lodgings of the COUNT DI PESCHIERA, 1 G. Doors L. H. 1 Z. - R. H. 1 E., a handsome table; C., chairs, &c.

COUNT DI PESCHIERA, L. H., and LORD WALTER COURTENAY, B. H., discovered seated at table, on which are wine and glasses.

Lord Walter. By Jove, count, I give you fair notice, if you don't move your lodgings a little more earthward, you'll not see much of me this winter. What a strange whim this is of yours ! — this affected contempt of ground floors.

Peschiera. Affected! O Walter! nothing is less natural for the human soul than a ground floor. We are quite far enough from heaven, mount as many stairs as we will, without grovelling through preference.

Lord W. But according to your symbolical view of the subject, you should lodge in an attic.

Pes. So I would; but I abhor new slippers, and have an affection for my hair brush.

Lord W. And what have slippers and hair brushes to do with attics?

Pes. Try. Make your bed in an attic, and the next morning you will have neither.

Lord W. And what will I have done with them?

Pes. Done? Per Bacco. Shied them at the cats, to be sure.

Lord W. Ah, count, I see you have not changed. I had hoped better things of you, when, two years since, I heard that you had taken up your abode in London. I could not presuppose that you would shun society, and he as great a hermit here as under the vince of Como.

Pes. My dear Walter, I have sat in your stranger's gallery, and heard your great speakers; I have been in the pit of the Opera, and

(5)

seen your fine ladies ; I have walked your streets, I have lounged in your parks, and I say that I can't fall in love with a faded dowager, because she fills up her wrinkles with rouge and powder. Lord W. Dowager ! What dowager ?

Pes. One who has many names. Some call her Fashion, others Politics ; it is all one : I mean London life. No, I can't fall in love with her, the old harridan.

Lord W. I wish you could fall in love with something.

Pes. I wish I could, with all my heart; but women, nowadays, are so knowing that one is a fool to become their dupe. If they marry you, it is on pure algebraical principles ; you are but the z or y that represents a certain amount of goods matrimonial - pedigree, title, rent roll, diamonds, opera box, et cetera. They cast you up with the help of mamma, and you wake some morning to find that plus wife, minus affection equals the devil.

Lord W. Nonsense, count; you are too cynical. I grant you that it is man's misfortune to be married often for what he has, rather than what he is; but you are tolerably penetrating, and not likely to be deceived in the woman you marry.

Pet. Cospetto, woman is a changeable thing, as our Virgil informed us when at school, and her one great change is from the fairy you woo to the brownie you wed. You marry a girl for her accomplishments, she paints charmingly, and plays like St. Cecilia. Clap a ring on her finger, and she never draws again, except, perhaps, your caricature on the back of a letter, and never opens the piano after the honeymoon. You marry her for her sweet temper, and the first time you contradict her, look out for a storm of hysteries. You marry her because she hates balls and likes quiet, and, ten to one, she becomes a patroness at Almack's or a lady in waiting. No, Walter, I'm not yet old enough to marry. Besides, who would accept me, an exiled prince, a count without a coin, a duke without a ducat? But let us talk no more of this: to gayer subjects. You, then, my Walter, have at last given over wandering, and come back to settle down in London ?

Lord W. Yes, at last. Dear old England; no clime I yet have seen can win me from thee, not even thy fair land, my Peschiera.

Pes. O Walter, Walter, I fear it's not so much your love of country as some other love that brings you back at last.

Lord W. Well, well, perhaps you're right; but of that anon. But tell me what news in London ; for while I've been wandering in your land, here have you become a denizen of mine. Tell me who is your fair country woman of whose beauty, charity, and wealth the whole city talks?

What ! Beatrice de Negra. Did you not know her when Pes. in Italy?

Lord W. No, at least I do not recollect her. Of all the fair dames I knew in Italy, there was but one Beatrice, a Beatrice Franzini - the fairest outside, but at heart a monster.

Pes. And you knew her?

Lord W. Alas, would that I had not ! But of this Madame di Negra ? You know her ?

Pss. I do, indeed, and better than most men in London. She