

**THE BALLADES OF
THÉODORE
DE BANVILLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649491674

The Ballades of Théodore de Banville by Théodore de Banville & Archibald T. Strong

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Cover @ 2017

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Mélicerte, poète à la bouche de miel.

SWINBURNE, *Au Tombeau de Banville.*

The Ballades
of
Théodore de Banville

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

ARCHIBALD T. STRONG
OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE

AUTHOR OF

'SONNETS AND SONGS,' 'NATURE IN MEREDITH AND WORDSWORTH,'
'PERADVENTURE, A BOOK OF ESSAYS'

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1913

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TO THE
ADMIRALTY

TRANSLATOR'S DEDICATION

TO

MY BROTHER

AYLMER CECIL STRONG

THESE VERSIONS

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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IN putting forth these versions of Banville's Ballades, I have wished to bring English readers more closely into touch with one of the sweetest, if not one of the greatest, of French poets. Two or three of the Ballades will already be familiar in England through the charming renderings of the late Mr. Andrew Lang, one of whose refrains, which I was not able myself to better or to equal, I have gratefully adapted to my own use. Beyond this I am not consciously indebted to him, or to any other translator. I am in debt, however, to Messrs. Walter Murdoch and Ernest Scott, of Melbourne, and to Mr. J. Griffyth Fairfax, for one or two valuable suggestions, and I herewith tender them my hearty thanks.

So far as I am aware, no complete translation has so far been published in England of the Ballades of Théodore de Banville. In issuing this one I would like to emphasize what Banville himself says in his Preface as to the difficulty of writing a good Ballade. The difficulty becomes acute when the Ballade has to be translated, as the great difficulty of finding rhymes is aggravated by the necessity of keeping in touch with the original. I do not claim indulgence on this account for any shortcomings of expression or for any failure to render fully the spirit of the French : but I do claim a larger freedom of treatment than is generally accorded to translations in less difficult forms, and I claim, too, the privilege of sacrificing the letter occasionally for the sake of retaining the spirit in its fulness. Nobody, I fancy, would have been more willing to accord or to employ this privilege than Banville himself : and nobody can be more conscious of the shortcomings of these versions than his translator.

A. T. S.

MELBOURNE, June 1913.