

# **SPANISH BALLADS**

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Spanish ballads by G. Le Strange

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**G. LE STRANGE**

**SPANISH  
BALLADS**



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CHOSEN BY

G. LE STRANGE

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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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## PREFACE

PROFESSOR FITZMAURICE-KELLY in his *Chapters on Spanish Literature* has devoted the fourth of these lectures to the *Romancero*. Taking Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads* as a basis for his discourse, he gives references to the originals of the fifty-three ballads which Lockhart translated, commenting on these and some thirty others which Lockhart did not deal with. It had occurred to me that a useful compilation might be made by gathering together in Spanish all the ballads of Lockhart's series, and accordingly I wrote to Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly to enquire whether, following on his Lecture aforesaid, he had not an intention of doing this. In reply he told me that his time was already taken up with other projects, adding that the matter might profitably be undertaken; and he has generously helped me with many references. When, however, I had more carefully read through the Spanish originals to which reference notes are given in the Lecture, I came to the conclusion that many of Lockhart's ballads, whatever might be their grace in English garb, were not worth re-printing in the Spanish, and therefore I decided to alter my plan, and with Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly as a guide, to give the best of the ballads in the two chief collections published since Lockhart's time. Lockhart's translations are a good help to beginners who, when learning Spanish, take up the ballads for the first time: though I must confess in regard to their literary merit, compared with the Spanish, I fail to agree with Lord Macaulay, who wrote in his Diary, February 19th,

1850: "I looked at some Spanish ballads and was struck by the superiority of Lockhart's version to the originals." Still to my mind, though these versions cannot take rank with FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyam* (and in each case the translation is a paraphrase), yet none the less they serve their purpose. Better than Lockhart's are the spirited renderings of the Cid ballads, with others, by the late J. Y. Gibson, to which, and to the translations of Sir John Bowring, Ticknor, and others, reference will be found in the Notes.

The critical examination of the *romances*, begun by Milá y Fontanals, was carried through by Menéndez y Pelayo, and to his *Tratado de los Romances Viejos* (with the notes to the second and third volumes of the amplified edition of the *Primavera y Flor de Romances*) I am indebted on every page: and as these admirable volumes unfortunately are not indexed a reference, in my Notes to the ballads, is given for the information of students. As far as my reading of *Don Quixote* has carried me, I have called attention to the passages where the good Knight of La Mancha and his proverb-loving Squire have quoted the ballads, for both he and Sancho, it is evident, had most of them by heart. As the book is intended for English readers I have, in the interests of clearness, departed from the Spanish usage in the matter of quotation marks, and have added inverted commas at the beginning and end of speeches. To a Spaniard all may be quite clear as indicated by the 'bar,' but this being also used to mark the hemistich, without inverted commas it is easy to mistake the speakers. Also I have put in the accents, omitted of course in the texts from which the ballads are copied, this in accordance with the rules laid down in the last edition (1917) of the Grammar issued by



the Academy. I have divided the ballads chosen into four somewhat unequal groups. The first group is of Miscellaneous Ballads, among which will be found some of the finest to be met with in any language. All needful comment on these has been relegated to the Notes. The two next groups are of the Historical Ballads—Christian and Moorish. To make the subject-matter of the ballad clear, a short historical argument is in most cases prefixed: and in the Notes references are given to authorities. The last group is of Moorish Ballads, not strictly historical, and here again all that is needed of comment is confined to the Notes.

My very grateful thanks are due to Miss R. K. Weckes, without whose aid, in the defective state of my eyesight, I could not possibly have carried through the work. Her help in choosing the ballads, and care in correcting the proofs, lay me under great obligations, and her friendly interest in the little book has been stimulating. Lastly, though his name scarcely appears in the following pages, I would have it clearly understood how much the work owes to Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly, whose letters to me have been an abundant source of information; all that I know indeed of Spanish is due to the interest awakened by the reading of *Chapters on Spanish Literature*, and to his *History of Spanish Literature*, of which the recent Spanish edition is a greatly enlarged translation.

G. LE S.

25 June, 1920

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