



# **In Love with a Handsome Sailor: The Emergence of Gay Identity and the Novels of Pierre Loti (University of Toronto Romance Series)**

*Richard M. Berrong*

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Writing at first anonymously and later under the pen name Pierre Loti, French author Julien Viaud (1850-1923) produced a series of fictions that sympathetically portrayed male same-sex desire and its accompanying societal conflicts. Due to the constraints of the time, Viaud had to develop various strategies for discussing his subject covertly; his success in doing so is demonstrated by the great critical and commercial success he enjoyed during his lifetime, which included his election to the French Academy at age forty-one.

Richard Berrong presents a gay reading of the novels and novellas of Julien Viaud, chronologically tracing his development of a distinct homosexual identity and the strategies that he employed to discuss it in a way that would not be obvious to the general public. In so doing, Berrong asserts that Viaud's development of a homosexual identity undermined and realigned dominant constructions of masculinity, presented the need for gay community, and elaborated the role of literature for gay men. The first book-length gay reading of Viaud's corpus, this work will make an important contribution not only to the study of Viaud, but also to the study of gay and lesbian history, culture, and literature.

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