

**THE CRETAN  
INSURRECTION  
OF 1866-7-8**

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The Cretan insurrection of 1866-7-8 by William J. Stillman

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**WILLIAM J. STILLMAN**

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THE  
CRETAN INSURRECTION  
OF  
1866-7-8.

BY  
WILLIAM J. STILLMAN,  
Late U. S. Consul in Crete.



NEW YORK  
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1874

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TO REMAIN IN CRETE DURING THE  
INSURRECTION.

## PREFACE.

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IN committing to print the subjoined record of the Cretan revolt of 1866-7-8, I am fulfilling a duty in regard to a series of events *quæque ipse vidi et quorum pars magna fui*, and which, if not in themselves of importance, are so as a revelation of the manner in which political influences work in the East, and perhaps still more as a curious exemplification of the weight which personal accidents, private intrigue and pique, and the capacity or incapacity of obscure officials, may have in determining the affairs of great empires.

In taking the position I did with reference to the insurrection, I was actuated only by a love of justice, and in no wise by sentimental or religious prejudices; but I hope it may be permitted me to say that, if I learned how fatal are the defects of the Greek race, its bitterness in personal rivalry, want of patriotic subordination, and the extravagance of its political hostilities, I saw also that it possesses admirable qualities, which the interests of civilization demand the development of; high capacity for political organization, for patriotic effort and self-sacrifice; and endurance and equanimity under misfortunes, which few races could endure and retain any character or coherence. Their amiable and refined personal qualities, and their private and domestic morality, have justified in me a feeling towards them for which I was utterly unprepared on going to the Levant, and give me a hope that the manifest lesson



of the Cretan revolt may not be lost in their future, either to them or to the friends of the better civilization. I feel that the Hellenes are less responsible for the vices of their body politic than their guardian Powers, who interfere to misguide, control to pervert, and protect to enfeeble, every good impulse and quality of the race, while they foster the spirit of intrigue, themselves enter into the domestic politics of Greece in order to be able to control her foreign, and each in turn, lest Greece should some day be an aid to some other of the contestants about the bed of the sick man, does all it can to prevent her from being able to help herself. No just and right-thinking man can make responsible for its sins or misfortunes, a people which is denied the right to shape its own institutions without a studied reference to the prejudices of its protectors; to manage its own affairs without the meddling of foreign ministers, who dictate who shall be its administrators; to protect even its own constitution against the violence and usurpation of an irresponsible and incapable head, without the secret but efficacious intervention of some foreign Power. A witness of every step of the late diplomatic intervention in Greek foreign affairs, I saw that in all the *corps diplomatique* at Athens Greece had not one friend—every one helped to push her into the abyss; not one word of real sympathy or friendly counsel did she find from any foreign representative. The United States, which had, perhaps, more than any other nation a powerful moral influence, and could have helped her by wise words and calm and disinterested moral intervention, had chosen to send as the dispenser of that influence the most incapable, ignorant, and obsequious diplomat I have ever known in the service of our Government—a man who was an actual cipher in any political sense, and who,

on arriving in Greece (our first representative there), hastened to mingle himself with the party intrigues of the country, ranging himself on the side of the king, against the people, in such a way that his advent was, to use the words of one of the leading statesmen of Greece spoken to me at the time, "like a wet blanket" to the hopes of liberalism in Greece.

The Hellenes must learn that they have no friends, save in the unprejudiced and charitable individuals who know them well enough to be able to overlook their foibles and petty vices, in view of the solid and genuine claims which they have to our liking and the support of Christendom. As one of those, I await the day when Greece shall have been mistress of herself long enough to prove whether or not she can govern herself wisely, before I lend my voice to her blame for her failures or her offences.

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The Publishers feel bound to inform the reader that during the delay which has attended the publication of this work, several of the personages mentioned in it, and some whose character or conduct is severely criticised, have died. This explanation will relieve the author of the appearance either of bad taste or of vindictiveness; while to the fact that he was unable to give his personal supervision to the work in passing through the press are due the errata which may be discovered, and an occasional want of uniformity in the spelling of proper names.

NEW YORK, February 1, 1874.

