

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

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# **The Cretan Insurrection of 1866-7-8**

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# 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 this 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.







## THE CRETAN INSURRECTION OF 1866.

# INTRODUCTORY.

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A student of classical ethnology, curious to restore the antique man, can do no better, so far as the Greek variety is concerned, than to go to Crete and study its people. The Cretan of to-day preserves probably the character of antiquity, and holds to his ancient ways of feeling and believing, and, within the new conditions, as far as possible of acting, more nearly than would be believed possible, and affords a better field of investigation into the nature of the classical man than any existing records.

The island is one of those paradisiacal isolations which facilitate civilization in its early stages, and preserve it from the encroachments of progress in the later. Its low latitude secures it against cold in winter, and its insular position against extreme heat, while the range of high mountains running longitudinally through it gives its climate a salubrity possessed by no section of the world's surface so near the sun. The standard summer temperature is from 82° to 86° Fahr., and once only in a residence of nearly four years I saw it as high as 92°. The minimum was 52°. Wild flowers never are wanting except in midsummer. The almond blooms in February (I have seen it in blossom on Christmas), and all the known fruits follow it in succession, each finding some locality and climate suited to it.

The fertility of the plains, and the inaccessibility of its mountain fastnesses, made prosperity easy and conquest difficult, while its remoteness from the shore of either continent made ancient invasion not easy, and preserved the type of the composite Greek race from the barbaric innovations of Greece proper, so that we have the Greek race of B.C. 700 undoubtedly more purely preserved than anywhere else.

Only in prosperity and weight in mundane matters, in comparative consideration, they have passed to the other end of the scale from that in which Homer could say of their land: "There is a country, Crete, in the midst of the black sea, beautiful and fertile, wave-washed roundabout, with a population infinite in number, and ninety cities. The races are different, and with different languages—there are Achæans, there are the huger Eteocretans,<sup>[A]</sup> the Cydonians, the crest-waving Dorians, and the divine Pelasgi. Theirs is Gnosus, a great city, and theirs is King Minos, who talked nine years with great Jove."

This enumeration has evidently no relation to chronological order, and unfortunately we have no intelligible traditions as to the order of settlement in Crete. Diodorus Siculus says that "the first inhabitants of Crete dwelt in the neighborhood of Mount Ida, and were called the Idæan Dactyls." But Scylax says that, according to early Greek tradition, Cydonia (in the western end of the island) was known as "the mother of cities." Its position and character of site indicate rather a settlement of Pelasgi coming from the west.

Spratt finds in the geological record clear evidence of the Greek Archipelago having been formerly a fresh-water lake or series of lakes, and, if this be true, Crete must have been connected with the main lands of Europe and Asia Minor, in which case the aboriginal inhabitants would be a land migration, probably from Aryan sources. That a Phrygian colony known as the Idæan Dactyls brought here knowledge of certain arts and religious mysteries, and became to the people with whom they mingled, semi-divine, appears probable. The subsequent visit of the Tyrian Hercules, who, on his way to get the cattle of Geryon, called here as the rendezvous of his forces, and, to recompense the Cretans for their friendship, purged the island of wild beasts, may indicate a Phœnician colony or passing expedition.

But admitting, as of possibility, that the Eteocretan was a land emigration, cavern-dwelling, as the abundance of the caves in the island suggests; a collation of all the traditions makes it probable that the first important immigration was Pelasgic, and from the Italian shores, noted in many Greek traditions as the Tyrrhenian Pelasgi (Etruscans?), whose colonies came down by the Morea and the isles of Cerigo and Cerigotto by easy journeys to Crete. [The records of Karnak show that, in the reign of Thotmes III., a great migration of Cretan Pelasgi came into Egypt, and became the Philistines (Pilisti or Pilisgi); proving that at this early period the hive was so full that it had begun to swarm.]

This first immigration became, if my conjecture goes to the mark, the Cydonian stock—the subsequent one which Homer speaks of as Pelasgic, being of much later date; the Dorian, which was of the highest importance in its effect, as

finally assimilating or subjecting all other races, and the Achæan, a scarcely influential influx, coming within the recognized traditions. The author of the "Isles of Greece" supposes two aboriginal races in the island, a needless multiplication of "original Adams," though an Asiatic or Phrygian race coming in at the east, and a Pelasgic at the west, seem to have been the first recognizable elements in the population.

The myth of Jupiter and Europa is regarded as concealing the history of the introduction of the worship of the moon by a Phœnician colony, who, combining with the population of the eastern end of the island, whose peculiar deity was Jupiter, produced the race over which Minos came to rule, from this fabled to be the son of Jupiter and Europa. The journey of Europa along the river Lethe indicates the course of this colony to the capital of Minos, Gortyna, which more anciently had borne the name of Larissa, a Pelasgic name, from which we might conjecture that it was founded by the colony of Teutamos, who, with a band of Dorians, Achæans, and Pelasgi, the builders of all the early Greek cities, is said by the early historians to have arrived in Crete three centuries before the Trojan war, and to have settled in the eastern part of the island, and given the early city its Pelasgic name.

The present inhabitants betray differences of character so great as almost to indicate difference of race. The Sphakiotes are larger of build, more restless and adventurous, thievish and inconstant, turbulent and treacherous, than the people of any other section. The Seliniotes, in the western extremity, are the bravest of the

Cretans, but less turbulent or quarrelsome, not given to stealing, and of good faith. In the eastern end, especially the region of Gortyna and Gnosus, the blessings of the rule of Minos seem to rest in pacific natures. The great Dorian invasion, about 1,000 B.C., gave the island a dominant caste, uniformity of language and customs, but without complete fusion of races.

The language of Crete to-day is a Dorian dialect, and preserves many characteristics noted by the ancient authors. The use of *Kappa* as *c* is used in Italian, either hard or soft (in terminal syllables generally the latter), the use of *r* for *l*, especially with the Sphakiotes, and the presence of many words in modern Cretan which have disappeared from modern continental Greek, with a comparative rareness of Turkish words, and entire absence of Albanian and Slavonic, show how much less the Cretans have been affected by outside influences than other parts of the Greek community. I give a few of the words which retain their ancient form more closely than on the continent:

CRETAN.	ROMAIC.	ENGLISH.
ἄγομαι,	πηγαίνω,	I go.
ἄκατεχος,	ἀνίδιος,	Inexperienced.
ἀναλαμπή,	φλόγα,	Flame.
ἀναλώματα,	—	Emeutes.
ἄνω, ἔσω, (used to oxen),		Haw, jee.
ἀποβόλη, (used in tracking		Spoor.

animals),

ἀποταχυάς, πρίν, Before.

ἀργατινή, ἔσπέρα, Evening.

κάμπτω, ἀναχωρῶ, I leave (the Cretan in the sense of the American "skedaddle").

δροσια, (lit. dew), τίποτε, Nothing.

δῶρον, (a gift), μπαχσίσι, (Turkish).

ἐργῶ (ῥιγῶ), κρυόνω, I am cold.

καίλταλῶ, φθείρω, I destroy.

κτῆμα, κτῆνος, A beast of burden.

μαλάρα, ——— Bare (of mountains generally), this being the appellation of the central mountains of the Sphakian range, *Madara vouna*.

μαλάκα,	—	A peculiar kind of cream cheese—not the <i>misithra</i> of Greece.
μάιαλ,	λογομαχία,	A wrangling.
νύχι,	τουφεκόπετρα,	Gun-flint.
παρασύρω,	σερνω,	I sweep.
παρίξω,	ἐξέρχωμαι,	I come out.
πόρος,	δίοδος,	Passage.
πράμα (πράγμα),	τίποτε,	Nothing.
ταῦτερου,	ούριον,	To-morrow.
χαλέπα,	πετρόλοφος,	A rocky site (generally applied to villages).

There are few Turkish words in use, and those mainly of objects brought by the Turks: βουδαλά, a lubber; τσιμπούχι, a pipe; τουφέκι, a gun, etc. A few Italian: καπιτανός, captain; βετέμα (*vendemmia*), olive crop; βίστατο (*guastato*); ματινάδα, a song, and some names of implements, with idioms which cling, as the use of πύ, the comparative, instead of τέρος.

There is a trace of genuine Cretan literature, though its chief work, the "Erotókritos," is by an Italian colonist,

Vincenzo Cornaro. They have, however, many songs and many bards, though to any but Cretan ears the music is far from agreeable. I knew one of the popular singers, Karalambo, poet and singer at once, as most of them are (and many are *improvisatori* of considerable facility). He was so much in repute that no wedding or festivity was considered complete anywhere in the range of a day's ride from Canéa unless Karalambo was there; and at other times he used to sing in the cafés on the Marina, screaming, to the strain of a naturally fine tenor, songs which, though to me not even music, used to melt his audiences into tears. He was a patriot as well as poet, and when the insurrection of '66 actually broke out, his songs were so seditious, and excited the Khaniote Christians so much, that he was driven into the mountains, and, joining a band of his neighbors, was one day wounded by the accidental discharge of a pistol one of his comrades was cleaning. The wound was fatal from want of surgical attendance.

The Cretan music is always of a plaintive character, and monotonous; in singing, they have a habit of incessant quavering, and this, with the drawling tone, makes it far from agreeable to an ear accustomed to cultivated music, but it has a decided character of its own.

There were in Kalepa before the insurrection two *improvisatori* of considerable repute, who were accustomed to carry on musical disputes, one singing a couplet, and the other replying in a similar one. Sometimes it was a match of compliments, and sometimes the reverse, but following with tolerable exactitude the metre, a four-lined stanza, the second and fourth lines rhyming. All the ballads I have seen



are in this form, the music also differing but little to my ear, though possibly to a Cretan there may be wide differences.

The Cretans possess, in common with all the Greeks, the avidity for instruction and quickness of intellect which make of this race the dominant element in the Levant. They are tenaciously devoted to their religion and to their traditions, which have kept them up and preserved the national character against such a continuation of hostile influences as probably no other people ever lived through. The history of Crete is a series of obstinate rebellions and barbarous repressions, since the first conquest by the Saracens in A.D. 820, a conquest which was followed by an almost complete apostasy from Christianity—sword-conversion, and by persistent attempts on the part of the Byzantine emperors to reconquer it, until 961, when Nikephoras Phocas succeeded in driving the Saracens out. They seem to have made no considerable addition to the Cretan stock, since the population rapidly returned to Christianity, to which, judging from the known and more recent past, they had always probably remained devoted at heart. At the division of the Byzantine empire, Crete passed to Boniface, Duke of Montserrat, and from him was purchased by the Venetian Republic, 1204, from which time till its conquest by the Turks, completed in 1669, the Cretans were under a yoke that would probably have depopulated any other section of the Old World. The cruelties and misgovernment of the governors sent from Venice would be incredible if not recorded by Venetian historians and official records. The Venetians seem to have regarded the Cretans much in the same light as the English colonists of America did the

Indians, and, when their wretched state came to the knowledge of the Senate, they sent commissioners to examine into it, from whose reports I translate some extracts (quoted in Italian by Pashley), who took them from the original documents in the public library of Venice. Basadonna, the first of these officers whose reports remain, says (1566): "The tax-gatherers and others dependent on them use against these unhappy people, in one way and another, strange and horrible tyrannies. It would be a matter worthy of your clemency immediately to abolish so odious and barbarous exactions, since to maintain them is to abandon these wretched men to most cruel serpents, who lacerate and devour them entirely, or oblige the few of them who remain to escape into Turkey, following the footsteps of innumerable others who, from time to time, have gone away from this cause." Then from Garzoni (1586): "In all the villages in which I have been, I have seen the houses of the inhabitants, in the greater part of which there is not to be seen any article for the uses of dress or table; and for food, they are without bread or corn; they have no wine; their women are despoiled, their children naked, the men slightly covered, and the house emptied of everything, without any sign of human habitation. And this wretched people (*'quella meschinità de' huomini'*) is compelled by established custom to give to the cavaliers two 'angarie' [twelve days' work] each per annum, and is obliged also by ancient regulation to work as much more as the cavalier may need for the pay of eight soldini a day, which amounts to a 'gazetta' [two Venetian soldi, or about one penny] and a fifteenth, introduced by them two hundred

years ago, and not since increased. They are obliged to keep chickens and hens according to the number of doors [I do not feel sure of having properly translated this expression, obscure in the original], their masters having applied the term of doors to houses, which are built by the peasants themselves, and have no kind of use of doors, because the Cavaliers, industrious for their own advantage, make doors as frequently as possible to increase the number of royalties. The beasts of labor, called *donnegals*, are obliged to plough a certain quantity of land, for which, planted or not, the peasant must pay the third. The *donnegals* are also obliged to work two *angarie* per annum. Mules and other beasts of transport must make two voyages to the city for the master. Animals of pasture the tenth, and a thousand other inventions to absorb all the productions of the land. If the peasant has a vineyard planted (the ground always belonging to the Cavaliers) and trained by him, although on land before wild, he must pay to the master, before marking the division for the royalty (which by ancient regulation gives one-third to the Cavalier and two to the peasant), five measures, called *mistaches*, for each vineyard, under pretext that he has eaten part before the vintage, for the use of the *pattichier* [in Crete, even now, an open shallow kind of vat built in the fields, of flat stones, and cemented, in which the grapes are trampled], and under other most dishonest inventions. And to increase still more the royalty, they divide the vineyard into so many parts that few return more than fifteen *mistaches*, in such a way that with fraud founded on force they take two-thirds for themselves and give one to the peasant.

"There are chosen for judges of their country, as I have said, Castellans—writers who serve as secretaries (*cancellieri*); and 'Captains to look after the robbers,' who all set rapaciously to rob these poor people, taking what little any of them may have hidden from the Cavaliers under pretext of disobedience, in which the peasant abounds, by reason of his desperation, so that he is in every way wretched. The Castellans cannot by law judge the value of more than two sequins, although by some regulation they are allowed authority to the sum of two hundred *perperi*, about fourteen sequins; and because they have eight per cent. for the charges they make, all causes amount to two hundred *perperi*, however small it may be, in order to get their sixteen of charges, with thousand other inventions of extortion to eat up the substance of the poor. The Captains, whose name indicates their functions, have their use from robberies, and always find means to draw their advantage from the same, plundering the good and releasing the guilty, to the universal ruin.... The men chosen for the galleys are in continual terror of going, and those who have the means, with whatever difficulty, from some vineyard, or land, or animals, throw all away unhesitatingly for a trifling price to pay for their dispensation, which costs fifteen or twenty sequins—expense which they cannot support. The poorest, hopeless of their release, fly to the mountains, and thence, reassured by the Cavaliers, return to their villages, so much the more enslaved as they are fearful of justice, and by their example make the other villagers more obedient, attributing to the Cavaliers the power of saving them from the galleys.... To which, add the extortions to

which they are subjected by a thousand accidental circumstances, execution of civil debts, visits of rectors and other officers, to whom they are obliged to give sustenance at miserable prices.... So that the peasantry, oppressed in this manner, and harassed in so many ways, annoyed by the reasonings of the Papists, and made enemies of the Venetian name, ... are so reduced by the influences I have enumerated, that I believe I can say with truth that, with the exception of the privileged classes, they desire a change of government, and though they know they cannot fall into other hands than those of the Turks, yet, believing they cannot make worse their condition, incline even to their tyrannical rule."

I extract from the opinion of Fra Paolo Sarpi (1615), a more Jesuitical, and, it would seem, more palatable advice to the Senate, since it was, in the end, and to the end followed: "For your Greek subjects of the island of Candia, and the other islands of the Levant, ... the surest way is to keep good garrisons to awe them, and not use them to arms or musters, in hope of being assisted by them in extremity; for they will always show ill inclination proportionably to the strength they shall be musters of.... Wine and bastinadoes ought to be their share, and keep good nature for a better occasion.... If the gentlemen of these colonies do tyrannize over the villages of their dominion, the best way is not to seem so see it, that there may be no kindness between them and their subjects; but, if they offend in anything else, it will be well to chastise them severely, etc.... And in a word, remember that all the good that can come from them is already obtained, which was to fix the Venetian dominion,

and for the future there is nothing but mischief to be expected from them."

What a pity that Sarpi had not lived before Dante, that he might have been niched in the "Inferno":

"Questo é de' rei del fuoco furo."

I have only space to epitomize a passage of the history of Crete, under the Venetians, to show how utterly infamous, unjust, and *devilish* was their *régime*. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the provinces of Selino, Sfakia, and Rhizo seceded, and established an independent government, which was for some time unmolested by the Venetian authorities. The governor of the seceded republic finally presuming to ask in marriage for his son the daughter of a Venetian noble, the latter, to revenge the insult, plotted with the governor of Canéa, and, pretending to consent, lured the family of the soi-disant Greek governor, with a company of nearly 500 of his compatriots, to the marriage feast. The guests having been intoxicated and gone to sleep, and the signal given to the authorities at Canéa, the governor came with 1,700 foot and 150 horse, took the whole prisoners, and in various ways and different places massacred them, except a few who were sent to the galleys.

This was followed up, for the better terrifying of the seditious, by a raid on the village of Foligniaco, near Murnies, and on the edge of the plain of Canéa, in which they took the whole population prisoners asleep, burned the village, hanged twelve of the primates, ripped open three or four pregnant women, wives of the principal people, put to death and exiled the whole population remaining, except