

**BEYOND RECALL. A
NOVEL. IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649073320

Beyond Recall. A Novel. In Two Volumes. Vol. I by Adeline Sergeant

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ADELINE SERGEANT

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BEYOND RECALL.

BEYOND RECALL.

A Nobel.

BY

ADELINE SERGEANT.

“Noch Keinen sah ich fröhlich enden,
Auf den mit immer vollen Händen
Die Götter ihre Gaben streu'n.”
Der Ring des Polykrates (SCHILLER).

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

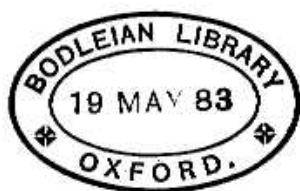


LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.

1882.

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251. k. 463.



BEYOND RECALL.



CHAPTER I.

“Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind; I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.”

ALFRED TENNYSON.

It was November. Not the cold and colourless November of our northern climes, but a November brilliant with sunshine and gay with flowers; as hot as an English summer, and twice as parched and dusty and glaring. In short, the November of Southern Europe, of the Mediterranean and the Levant.

“Blue spectacles with wire gauze sides are not in themselves pleasing objects,” reflected

a certain English traveller, as he stood and looked at the dazzlingly white high-road that crosses the island of Malta from Valetta to St. Paul's Bay, "but one begins to appreciate their uses in an oven of a place like this." Nevertheless he did not look like a man who would willingly wear blue spectacles.

"No shade anywhere," he murmured, with a meditative air. "If I didn't want to give those fellows the slip, I would go back to the town. What business had they to ask after Clare? The sooner I am out of Europe the better. Will it be much hotter than this at Cairo, I wonder!"

He looked up at the cloudless sky and down at the dusty road, at the low stone walls on either hand, over which the lizards darted, or peered sidelong at him out of their changeless bright eyes, and at the white houses clustering shadeless and silent in the plain. But for the chance of encountering some unwelcome acquaintances amongst the

English officers quartered in the island, he would have marched back to the town and lunched at the hotel. It was his present object in life, however, to escape from all people who knew much about his past history and relationships; and he had resolved to avoid the streets of Valetta until one o'clock, when there would be a fair chance of finding his friends safely housed and seated at luncheon. At that hour he meant to get some food, and then to see his luggage conveyed on board a vessel in the harbour. He had spent the last three months in Italy and Sicily, and had crossed to Malta simply in order to call for some letters at the post-office, and to take the first steamer bound for Alexandria. He intended to see the Pyramids and to go up the Nile in a dahab-beeah. He was tired of English life, and wanted to amuse himself. There seemed little likelihood of his amusing himself at Valetta, and yet he had five or six hours

before him which must be filled up in one way or another, as the *Syria* did not sail until late in the afternoon.

The deep notes of a bell struck upon his ear. The sound proceeded from the belfry of a plain, ecclesiastical-looking building upon an eminence at his right hand. Images of silent aisles deep in cool shadow, of smooth stone pavements on which the sunlight rested only in coloured patches thrown from the painted windows, suddenly presented themselves to his mind, and were grateful to him in comparison with the white glare of a Maltese noon. He turned and bent his steps leisurely towards the church. Whether worth seeing or not, it would at least afford him rest and shade for some few minutes.

At the top of the hill he found a plateau, on which stood a row of buildings. The doors were closed. Before one of them a rickety-looking carriage, with the usual awning of striped cotton, stood empty, while