

THE CLASSIC MEDITERRANEAN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649550432

The Classic Mediterranean by John Bancroft Devins

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JOHN BANCROFT DEVINS

**THE CLASSIC
MEDITERRANEAN**

THE CLASSIC MEDITERRANEAN

JOHN BANCROFT DEVINS

Author of

"An Observer in the Philippines"

For wheresoe'er I turn my ravished eyes
Gay gilded scenes and shining prospects rise,
Poetic fields encompass me around,
And still I seem to tread on classic ground.

ADDISON

One seeing is better than a thousand people
telling you of it. *Chinese Proverb*

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150 NASSAU STREET : : : NEW YORK

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TO

MY WIFE

THE NOBLEST OF WOMEN

THE BEST OF COMRADES

THE TRUEST OF FRIENDS

THIS STORY OF OUR CRUISE TOGETHER IN MEDITERRANEAN
WATERS IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



FOREWORD

ONE winter morning, after the roar of New York had sunk to silence and the city's gigantic uplift of structures had dwindled to a ragged line in the hush behind us, and our ship had begun to dip her bows with an easy swing as if glad to find herself once more in Ocean's freedom, I strolled below in search of any mail that might have come aboard. In a long narrow passage I saw a man, robust and bearded, coming along with a chatting group about him and bearing an armful of letters and papers. As the party passed me he turned and said with quiet courtesy, "Good morning, sir." There were several hundred persons aboard bound for a cruise through the Mediterranean together, but scarcely a face was known to me. I found myself wondering who this gentleman might be.

I slept most of the time during the next day or two; but at length I got my sea-legs and went down to an evening entertainment. In the center of the crowded dining-saloon, conducting the program, was the man who greeted me in the passage with his arms full of mail. I chanced to drop into a seat beside a little lady who proved to be a genial conversationalist. She

identified him for me. I now present him to the readers of this book as "the man who greeted me in the passage with his arms full of mail." For so I first knew the author, and I know of no fitter characterization.

I came to know Dr. Devins in many other relations while the good ship *Arabic* bore us to many lands; since returning to America I have learned more of his vigorous, beneficent life. All is summed up in that first glimpse of him. He is ever brotherly and busy. I might tell how many thousands of children go each summer from the tenements of New York into the health and gladness which childhood finds in the country because this Editor of *The New York Observer* has a big brother's interest in their little lives, and busies himself managing the affairs of The Tribune Fresh Air Fund. But this would only be one of the many practical activities which engage the hand that wrote these pages. He is no recluse, no easy-going bookmaker, no unconcerned traveler roaming the world for pleasure only. He has traveled the world over, knows public men and rulers, has studied the life of peoples speaking many tongues, always as a lover of his kind.

One may venture to say that it is this attitude of mind which is likely to receive through the medium of intelligent observation the truest impressions of the classic Mediterranean. The detached mind which views the marvels of bygone life on those shores with no deep sense of human brotherhood and no enthu-

siasm for meeting human need may have a technical skill in judging these things which is of high worth. But after all, everything there seen has its deepest significance when viewed as expressing life and longing, the needs and resources of men akin to ourselves by ties that unite us across oceans and centuries. The teeming life found there now is profoundly human, and its sordid, pathetic calmness of decay only interprets and deepens the wonder of that vast array of ancient achievement to which the remains there found bear witness.

Renan, man of letters and critic that he was, perceived this when he journeyed through Mediterranean countries. "Would you believe it?" he writes, "I am completely changed. I am no longer French; I am no longer critic; I am unworthy of the rôle; I have no longer any opinions; I know not what to say about all this." Then his genius flames out in a splendid passage, showing that all there seen is a part of the life of the people, an expression of deepest human interests—"interests which are as real as any other of the needs of nature."

And Thackeray closes an account of a scene observed by him amid Mediterranean people with these words: "The Maker has linked together the whole race of man with the chain of love. I like to think that there is no man but has had kindly feelings for some other, and he for his neighbor, until we bind together the whole family of Adam."