

# DION AND THE SIBYLS

By Miles Gerald Keon

A CLASSIC CHRISTIAN NOVEL.

"It is as clear as the light of day, dear Dion!"

All eyes turned in one direction, and Paulus, whose feelings of admiration and sympathy had thus betrayed him, blushed scarlet as he withdrew behind the stately form of Germanicus, who looked round at him smiling, half in amusement, half in kindness.

"I do think it a demonstration indeed," said Augustus, musing gravely.

"How strangely must that stupendous Being," said Strabo, the geographer, "deem of a world which has come so completely to forget and ignore him!"

"Your reasoning," resumed Augustus, "differs much, as you said it would, from Plato's. Plato is too subtle for our Roman taste."

"So is he," said Dionysius, "too subtle, and, I think, too hesitating, for the taste of most men everywhere. I admire his genius, but I disclaim many of his theories, and am not a disciple of his school."

"Of what school are you?"

"I am dissatisfied with every school," replied the future convert of St. Paul, blushing. "But I am quite certain that there is only one God, and that he is eternal and all-perfect."

"What I have said, I have said because I believe it; not in order to play at mental swords with these eloquent and gifted men, whom I honor. There is, if we would look for it, a reflection of this great Being in our minds like that of a star in water; but the water must be undisturbed, or the light wavers and is broken. We see many beings, greater and smaller. Now, who can doubt that, where there are greater and smaller, there must be a greatest? Each one of us is conscious and certain of three things: first, that he himself has not existed from all eternity; secondly, each of us feels that he did not make his own mind; and thirdly, that he could not make another mind. Now, the mind who made ours must be superior to any thing contained in what he thus made; therefore, although we can conceive a being of whose power, knowledge, and perfection we discern no possible limit, this very conception must be inferior to its object. There must exist outside of our mind some being greater still than the greatest of which we can form any intellectual idea, however, boundless. The lead fused in a mould cannot be greater in its outlines than the mould which presents the form. Again, no person will contend that the sublime and the absurd are one and the same thing—that the terms are convertible. But yet, if an absolutely perfect and sovereign being did not exist, the conception which we form of such a being, instead of constituting the highest heaven of sublimity to which our thoughts can soar, of absurdity into which they could sink."

A little pause followed.

"Do you, then," said Afer, with a subtle smile, "introduce to us the novel doctrine, that whatever is sublime must therefore be true?"

"If I said yes," replied Dionysius, "and I am not a little tempted, you would succeed in drawing me aside into a very long and darkling road. But I have advanced nothing to that effect. My inference depended not on assuming that every thing which is sublime must be true, but on the supposition that nothing which is absurd could be sublime."

"Quite so," remarked Haterius; "and was there not another inference dormant in what you said?"

"There was," said Dionysius; "but it looks like subtilizing to wake it and give it wings; and, as I am a Greek, I fear—I in short, I have tried to confine myself to the plainest and broadest reasonings."

"Fear not," said Germanicus; "learned Greece, you know, has conquered her fierce vanquishers."

Tiberius gnawed his under-lip; and the Lady Plancia, glancing at him and then at her husband Cneius Piso, who was listening attentive but ill at ease, exclaimed:

"Enervated them, you mean!"

Germanicus threw back his head, smiled, and remarked, "To-morrow the legions are going forth to try against the Germans whether the Roman heart beats as of old; what was the further inference, Athenian?"

"Since there must," said Dion,

where greater and smaller beings exist, be a greatest, we can all try to form some conception of him. Now, this conception must fall short of his real greatness. Why? Because as I have demonstrated that this being is the first force, from which all others in the universe, including our minds, must have come, no idea contained in our minds can be greater than the very power which made those minds themselves. But, apart from this demonstration, every one of us can say, a being may exist so great as to be incapable of non-existence. Such a being is conceivable; it is his non-existence which then, by the very supposition, is inconceivable. Now, if there be something the non-existence of which would be inconceivable, while of the being himself you possess a notion, thinking of him, as for example and terming him the first force, eternal, boundless—giver of all, recipient of naught—the certainty of his existence is established already "for the heart"; for that faculty which precedes demonstration in accepting truth—for remember I have shown, and I have proved, that we are so made as to be compelled to believe far more than any of us can ever demonstrate."

"This, then," said Augustus, "is the dim image of which you spoke; the reflection of the star in water?"

"Yes, emperor," replied Dionysius; "but not always dim; the deepest and the purest of all the lights which that water reflects. Often it reflects no image, however; and often it reflects but clouds and storms. To say you truly conceive a thing, is to say you are certain of it "in the way you conceive it." If you conceive any thing to be certain, you possess the certainty of it. You may be certain that a thing is "uncertain"; in other words, you have arrived at a clear notion of its uncertainty. To conceive the contingency of an object, is to possess the positive idea not simply that he is, "but that he must be". He could not be conceived at all, he could not even be an object of thought, as both necessary and non-existent. All conceivable objects, except one, are conceived as either possible or actual. But that one alone is conceived as necessary, and, therefore, "necessarily actual." Either a necessary being is not conceivable—and which of us, I should like to know, cannot sit down and indulge in the conception?—or, if he be so much as conceivable, then his reign is recognized, because far more than his existence is involved—I mean the impossibility of his non-existence."

"Are all the dreams," said Domitius Afer, "of a poet's imagination truths because they are conceptions?"

A few moments of silence followed, and Paulus Aemilius looked at his friend with an expression of terror which he had not exhibited in his own contest with the Sejan horse.

"When the poet," replied Dionysius, "imagines what might have been, he believes it might have been, and asks you to believe no more; but he would be shocked if you believed less; would be shocked if you told him he was depicting not that which had not been, for this he cheerfully professes, but that which "could not ever be supposed". What I say here," added the Athenian, "belongs to a different and somewhat higher plane of thought. The impossibility to suppose non-existent an infinitely perfect being, who, on the other hand, is himself found not impossible to suppose, ought to bring home "to the heart" the fact that he lives. To be able, in the first place, to conceive him existing, and straightway thereafter to feel an utter inability to form even the conception of his non-existence, because it is only as the necessary being and first force that we can think of him at all, are a handwriting upon the porch of every human soul. He lives, I say it rejoicing, an eternal, necessary, and personal reality; the very conception of him would be an impossibility if his existence were not a fact; yes, and far more than a fact, a primeval truth and a primordial necessity."

As the Athenian thus spoke in a clear and firm voice, which seemed to grow more musical the more it was raised and exerted, Augustus stood up and paced to and fro a few steps on the gravel walk of the impluvium,

with his hands behind him and his eyes cast down. All who had been sitting rose at the same time, except Livia, Julia, Antonia, and the two Agrippinas.

"This," whispered Tiberius in Afer's ear, "is not much like failure, or derision, or disgrace for the Greek."

"My predecessor, Julius Caesar," said Augustus at length, looking round as he stood still, "was the best astronomer and mathematician of his age—we have his calendar now to record it; the best engineer of his age—look at his bridge over the Rhine; the best orator, except one, to whom Rome perhaps ever listened; a most charming talker and companion on any subject; a very great and simple writer; as great a general probably as ever lived; a consummate politician; a keen, wary, swift, yet profound thinker at all times; a man whose intellect was one vast sphere of light; and yet I remember well in what anxiety and curiosity he lived respecting the power which governs the universe, and with what minute and even frivolous precautions he was forever trying to propitiate a good award for his various undertakings; how he muttered charms, whether he was ascending his chariot or descending, or mounting his horse or dismounting—in short, at every turn. Evidently it is not the brightest intellects, or the most perfectly educated, which are the most disposed to scout and scorn such ideas as we have just heard from Dionysius; it is precisely they who are prepared to ponder them the most."

"Julius Caesar," said Tiberius, "thought, I suspect, pretty much as a great many others do, that this is a very dark, difficult subject; and that we cannot expect to come to any certain conclusions."

"Not to 'many' conclusions," said Dionysius; "that much I fully grant, but two or three broad and general truths are attainable by means of reasonings as close, secure, and irresistible as any in geometry. One such proof—and pray do not forget that I said it was only one out of many—making clear the fact that a single eternal God reigns over all things. I have laid before Augustus and this company already. My "last" remarks, however, were not disputations, but were only intended to show how those conceptions—to tear which from the mind would be to tear the heat—tend exactly to that conclusion which I had "first" established by a rigorous demonstration."

"Would not some call your inference from those conceptions themselves a demonstration also?" asked Germanicus.

"I think," replied the Athenian, "that all would so call it if we had but time to examine it thoroughly. There are three other complete lines of argument, however, each of them as interesting as a poem; but so abstract that I will not travel along them. I will merely show the gates which open into these three ascents of the glorious mountain. It could, then, be demonstrated, first, that all things are objects of mind or of knowledge, "somewhere"; secondly, that all things undergo some action, or are objects of power, "somewhere"; thirdly, that all things are loved and cared for "somewhere"; and this as forming one whole work or production that is, in their relations with each other. Now, the knowledge, the power, and the love (or care) in question can belong only to that first force of whom I speak; and I distinctly affirm, Augustus, that I believe I should be quite able, not to prove by probable reasons merely, but to demonstrate positively and absolutely, the existence of one omnipotent God, by three distinct arguments, starting from the three points I have here mentioned. Yet I pass by those golden gates with a wistful glance at them, and no more."

"It is the 'horn' gates, you know," said Labio, smiling, "which open to the true dreams."

"Ah! poor Virgil!" said Augustus, first with a smile, and then with a long, heart-felt sigh. "I wish he could have heard you, my Athenian."

"The natures of things," said the Athenian, "and the number of individuals are known and counted 'somewhere'; the attraction of physical things is weighed in a balance somewhere, and all things are maintained in their order by 'limits', and protected in their relations by a measured mark, 'somewhere'. But as I have forbidden myself this vast and difficult field, I will turn elsewhere."

(To be Continued.)

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.**  
Austin St., near C.P.R. Station.  
Pastor, Rev. A. A. CHERRIER.  
SUNDAYS—Low Mass, with short instruction, 8.30 a.m.  
High Mass, with sermon, 10.30 a.m.  
Vespers, with an occasional sermon, 7.15 p.m.  
Catechism in the Church, 3 p.m.  
N.B.—Sermon in French on first Sunday in the month, 9 a.m. Meeting of the children of Mary 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month, 4 p.m.  
WEEK DAYS—Masses at 7 and 7.30 a.m. On first Friday in the month. Mass at 8 a.m. Benediction at 7.30 p.m.  
N.B.—Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 3 to 10 p.m., and every day in the morning before Mass.

**C. M. B. A.**  
Grand Deputy for Manitoba.  
Rev. A. A. Cherrier, Winnipeg, Man.  
Agent of the C.M.B.A. for the Province of Manitoba with power of attorney, Dr. J. K. Barrett, Winnipeg, Man.  
The Northwest Review is the official organ for Manitoba and the Northwest, of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association.  
BRANCH 52, WINNIPEG.  
Meets in No. 1 Trades Hall, Fould's Block, corner Main and Market Sts., every 1st and 3rd Wednesday in each month, at 8 o'clock, p.m.

**OFFICERS OF BRANCH 52 C. M. B. A., FOR 1905.**  
Spiritual Adviser—Rev. Father Cahill, O. M. I.  
President—Richard Murphy.  
1st Vice-Pres.—J. J. Hartnedy.  
2nd Vice-Pres.—C. Bampfield.  
Rec.-Sec.—R. F. Hinds, 128 Granville St.  
Asst. Rec.-Sec.—A. P. Donnelly.  
Fin.-Sec.—W. J. Kiely, 590 Pritchard Ave.  
Treas.—M. J. Dalton.  
Marchall—J. Gladnich.  
Guard—Russell Murphy.  
Trustees—L. O. Genest, J. Gladnich, W. Jordan, D. Smith, W. G. Eddy.  
Meetings are held 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings at 8 o'clock P.M., Trades Hall cor. Market and Main Sts. located at Winnipeg.

**OFFICERS OF BRANCH 163, C. M. B. A. FOR 1904.**  
President—A. Picard.  
1st Vice President, Bro. C. Baimpfield.  
2nd Vice President, Bro. J. H. O'Connor.  
Rec.-Sec.—J. Marinski, 180 Austin street.  
Assist. Rec.-Sec.—J. Schmidt.  
Fin.-Sec.—Rev. A. A. Cherrier.  
Treasurer—J. Shaw.  
Marchall—C. Meder.  
Guard—L. Hout.  
Trustees—M. Buck, H. Wass.  
Rep. to Grand Council—Rev. A. A. Cherrier.  
Alternate—James E. Manning.

**ST. MARY'S COURT NO. 276.**  
**Catholic Order of Foresters**  
Meets 1st and 3rd Thursday in Trades Hall, Fould's Block, at 8.30 p.m.  
Chief Ranger—J. J. McDonald.  
Vice-Chief Ranger—R. Murphy.  
Rec.-Sec.—W. J. Kiely, 424 Notre Dame ave. P. O. Box 469.  
Treasurer—Jno. A. Coyle.  
Rep. to State Court—J. J. McDonald.  
Alternate—F. W. Russell.  
Senior Conductor—F. W. Russell.  
Junior Conductor—R. Chevrier.  
Inside Sentinel—W. Mahoney.

(In Faith and Friendship)  
**Catholic Club**  
OF WINNIPEG.  
COR. MAIN AND MARKET STREETS  
Established 1900  
**FOULDS BLOCK**  
The club is located in the most central part of the city, the rooms are large, commodious and well equipped.  
Catholic gentlemen visiting the city are cordially invited to visit the club.  
Open every day from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.  
F. W. RUSSELL. H. H. COTTINGHAM  
President Hon.-Secretary

| TIME TABLES      |  |             |
|------------------|--|-------------|
| Canadian Pacific |  |             |
| Lv.              | EAST   | Ar.         |
| Imp. Lim.        | Selkirk, Rat Portage, Fort William, Port Arthur, Toronto, Detroit, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Montreal, Quebec, New York, Boston, Portland, St. John, Halifax.....daily   | Imp. Lim.   |
| 6 45             | Molson, Buchan, Milner, Lac du Bonnet.....Wed.   | 21 10       |
| 7 00             | Selkirk, Molson, Rat Portage and intermediate points.....daily except Sunday   | 19 30       |
| 8 00             | Keewatin, Rat Portage, during July and August.....Sat. only.....Mon. only  | 18 30       |
| 13 30            | Keewatin, Rat Portage, Fort William, Port Arthur, Toronto, Detroit, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Montreal, Quebec, New York, Boston, Portland, St. John, Halifax, and all points east.....daily   | 12 0        |
| Tr'ns Pass.      | Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, Neepawa, Minnedosa, Yorkton, and intermediate points.....daily except Sun.  | Tr'ns Pass. |
| 7 45             | Morris, Winkler, Morden, Manitou, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, Killarney, Boissevain, Deloraine, and intermediate points.....daily ex Sun  | 18 40       |
| 8 50             | Portage la Prairie, MacGregor, Carberry, Brandon, Oak Lake, Verden, Elkhorn, Moosomin, Regina, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Banff, Revelstoke, and all points on Pacific Coast; Lethbridge, McLeod, Fernie, and all points in East and West | 17 00       |
| Tr'ns Pass.      | Kootenay.....daily   | Tr'ns Pass. |
| 9 20             | Headingley, Carman, Holland, Cypress River, Glenboro, Souris and intermediate points.....daily except Sun.   | 19 00       |
| 9 40             | Portage la Prairie, Carberry, Brandon, and intermediate points.....daily ex Sun  | 15 20       |
| 16 40            | Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Broadview, Regina, Moose Jaw, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Banff, Revelstoke, and all points on Pacific Coast and in East and West  | 12 20       |
| 22 00            | Kootenay.....daily   | 56          |
| NORTH            |  |             |
| 16 00            | Stony Mountain, Stonewall, Balmoral, Teulon.....daily except Sunday  | 10 20       |
|                  | Middlechurch, Parkdale, Victoria Park, Lower Fort Garry, West Selkirk, Clendyboye, Netley, and Winnipeg Beach.....Tues., Thurs., Sat.  | 9 45        |
| 16 15            | Winnipeg Beach.....Mon., Wed., Fri.  | 8 45        |
| 17 15            | Winnipeg Beach.....Tues., Thurs., Sat.   |             |
| SOUTH            |  |             |
| 14 00            | Morris, Gretna, Grafton, Grand Forks, Crookston, Fargo, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Chicago, and all points south.....daily   | 13 40       |
| 15 45            | St. Norbert, Carey, Arnaud, Dominion City, Emerson.....daily except Sunday   | 10 45       |

| Canadian Northern |  |       |
|-------------------|--|-------|
| Lv.               | EAST   | Ar.   |
| 10 20             | "Winnipeg to Fort Frances." St. Anne, Giroux, Warroad, Beaudette, Rainy River, Pinewood, Emo, Fort Frances.....daily except Sun.   | 16 25 |
| 8 05              | "Fort Frances to Port Arthur." Mine Centre, Atikokan, Stanley Jct., Fort William, Port Arthur.....Mon., Wed., Fri. Tues., Thurs., Sat.   | 21 05 |
| 17 20             | Twin City Express between Winnipeg, Minneapolis and St. Paul, 14hrs. 20min., via Can. Nor. and Great Nor. Rys. Morris, Emerson, St. Vincent, Crookston, Fergus Falls, Sauk Centre, St. Cloud, Elk River, Minneapolis, St. Paul.....daily | 10 10 |
| 13 45             | Express via Can. Nor. and Nor. Pac. Rys. Morris, St. Jean, Letteller, Emerson, Pembina, Grafton, Grand Forks, Crookston, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, The Superiors.....daily  | 13 30 |
| WEST              |  |       |
| 10 45             | Headingley, Eli, Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, Dauphin, and all intermediate points.....Tues., Thurs., Sat.   | 16 15 |
| 10 45             | Headingley, Eli, Portage la Prairie, Neepawa, Dauphin, and all intermediate points.....Mon., Wed., Fri.  | 16 15 |
| 10 45             | Tues., Thurs., Sat.....Gilbert Plains, Grand View, Kamsack, and intermediate points.....Tues., Thurs., Sat.  | 16 15 |
| 10 45             | Mon., Wed., Fri.....Sifton, Minitonas, Swan River, and all intermediate points.....Wed., Thurs., Sat.  | 16 15 |
| 10 45             | Mon., Wed., Fri.....Bowman, Birch River, Erwood and intermediate points  | 16 15 |
| 10 45             | Mon., Wed., Fri.....Fork River, Winnipegosis   | 16 15 |
| 10 45             | Fri., Sat.....Oak Bluff, Carman, Leary's and intermediate points.....Mon., Wed. Fri.   | 17 50 |
| 7 00              | St. Norbert, Morris, Roland, Wawanesa, Brandon, Hartney, and intermediate points.....daily except Sun.   | 16 30 |