

DION AND THE SIBYLS.

By Miles Gerald Keon

A CLASSIC CHRISTIAN NOVEL.

CHAPTER TWO—Continued.

The river Liris, now the Garigliano, flowed all gold in the western sun; some dozen of meadows behind them, between rows of linden trees, oleandres, and pomegranates with laurel, bay, and long bamboo-like reeds of the arundo donax, varying the rich beauty of its banks: "Daphrones, platanones, et aeriae cyparissi." A thin and irregular forest of great contemplative trees; flowerless and sad beech, cornel, alder, ash, hornbeam, and yew towered over savannahs of scented herbs, the glades of many tinted grasses. Some clumps of chestnut trees, hereafter to spread into forests, but then rare, and cultivated as we cultivate oranges and citrons, stood proudly apart. A vegetation which has partly vanished, gave its own physical aspect to an Italy, the social conditions of which have vanished altogether; and were even then passing, and about to pass, through their last appearances. But much also that we in our days have seen both there and elsewhere, was there then. The flower or blossom of the pomegranate lifted its scarlet light amid vines and olives; miles of oleander trees waved their masses of flame under the tender green filigree of almond groves, and seemed to laugh in scorn at the mourning groups of yew, and the bowed head of the dark, widow like, and inconsolable cypress. All over the leaves of the woods the autumn had strewn its innumerable hues. In the west, the sky was hung with those glories which no painter ever reproduced and no poet ever sang; it was one of the sunsets which make all persons of sensibility who contemplate them dumb by making all that can be said of them worse than useless. A magnificent and enormous villa, or castellum, or country mansion—palace it seemed—showed parts of its walls, glass windows and Ionic columns, through the woods on the banks of the Liris; and upon the roof of this palace a great company of gilt, tinted and white statues much larger than life, in various groups and attitudes, as they conversed, lifted their arms, knelt, prayed, stooped, stood up, threatened and acted, were glittering above the tree-tops in the many-colored lights of the setting sun.

"Ah! let us stop; let us rest a few moments," cried the child, smiling through her tears at the smiles of nature and the enchanting beauty of the scene; "only a few moments under the great trees, mother."

It was a group of chestnuts, a few yards from the side of the road; and beneath them came to join the highway through the meadows, and vineyards, and forest-land, a broad beaten track from the direction of the splendid villa that stood on the Liris.

Paulus instantly sprang from the carruca, and, having first helped his mother to alight, took his sister in his arms and placed her sitting under the green shade. A Thracian woman, a slave, meantime descended from the box, and the driver drew the vehicle to the side of the highway.

While they thus reposed, with no sound about them, as they thought save the rustle of the leaves, and the distant ripple of the waters, and the vehement shrill call of the cicada, hidden in the grass somewhere near, their destinies were coming. The freedman suddenly held up his hand, and drew their attention by that peculiar sound through the teeth, (st), which in all nations signifies listen!

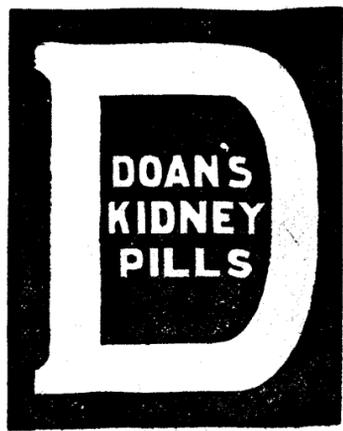
And, indeed, a distant, dull, vague noise was now heard southward, and seemed to increase and approach along the Appian road. Every eye in our little group of travellers was turned in the direction mentioned, and they could see a white cloud of dust coming northward. Soon they distinguished the tramp of many horses at the trot. Then, over the top of the

hill which had intercepted the view came the gleam of arms, filling the whole width of the way, and advancing like a torrent of light. The ground trembled; and, headed by a troop of two Numidian riders, and then a couple of troops or turmae of Batavian cavalry, a thousand horse, at least, of the Praetorian guards, arrayed, as usual, magnificently, swept along in a column two hundred deep, with a rattle and ring of metal rising treble upon the ear over the continuous bass of the beating hoofs, as the foam floats over the roll of the waves.

The young girl was at once startled from the sense of sickness and grief, and gazed with big eyes at the pageant. Six hundred yards further on a trumpet note, clear and strong, gave some sudden signal, and the whole body instantly halted. From a detached group in the rear an officer now rode toward the front; a loud word or two of command was heard, a slight movement followed, and then as if the column were some monstrous yellow scaled serpent with an elastic neck and a black head, the swarthy troops which had led the advance wheeled slowly backward, two instead of five abreast, while the main column simultaneously stretched itself forward on a narrower face, and with a deeper file, occupying thus less than half the width of the road, which they had before nearly filled, and extending much further onward. Meantime the squadrons which had led it continued to defile to the rear; and when their last rank had passed the last of those fronting in the opposite direction, they suddenly faced to their own right, and, standing like statues lined the way on the side opposite to that where our travellers were reposing, but some forty or fifty yards higher up the road, or more north.

In front of the line of horsemen, who, after wheeling back, had been thus faced to their own right, or the proper left of the line of march was now collected a small group of mounted officers. One of them wore a steel corselet, a casque of the same metal, with a few short black feathers in its crest, and the chlamys, or a better sort of sagum the scarlet mantle of a military tribune, over a black tunic, upon which two broad red stripes or ribbons were diagonally sewn. This costume denoted him one of the Laticlavii, or broad-ribbed tribunes; in other words, although to judge by the massive gold ring which glittered on the forefinger of his bridle hand, he might have been originally and personally only a knight—he had received either from the emperor, or from one of the two Caesars then governing with and under Augustus, the senatorial rank.

The chlamys was fastened across the top of his chest with a silver clasp, and the tunic a little lower down with another, being open below as far as the waist, and disclosing a tight-fitting chain-mail corselet, or shirt of steel rings. The chlamys was otherwise thrown loose over his shoulders, but the tunic was belted round the corselet at his waist by a buff girdle, wherein hung the intricately figured brass scabbard of a straight, flat, not very long, cut-and-thrust sword, which he now held drawn in his right hand. In his belt were stuck a pair of manicae or chirothecae, as gloves were called, which seemed to be made of the same material as the girdle; buffalo skin greaves on his legs and half-boots (the calcei, not the soleae or sandals) completed his dress. He was a handsome man about five-and-thirty years old, brown hair, an open but thoughtful face, and an observant eye. He it was who had ridden to the front and given those orders, the execution of which we have noticed. He had now returned and kept his horse a neck or so behind that of an officer far more splendidly attired, who seemed to pay no at-



Are a sure and permanent cure for all Kidney and Bladder Troubles.

BACKACHE

Is the first sign of Kidney Trouble. Don't neglect it! Check it in time! Serious trouble will follow if you don't. Cure your Backache by taking DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS.

attention whatever to the little operation that had occurred, but, shading his eyes with one hand from the rays of the setting sun, gazed over the fields towards the villa or mansion on the Liris.

He was clad in the paludamentum, the long scarlet cloak of a legatus or general, the borders being deeply fringed with twice-dyed Tyrian purple, (Tyria bis tinctoria, or dibapha, as it is called by Pliny); the long folds of which flowed over his charger's haunches. This magnificent mantle was buckled round the wearer's neck with a jewel. His corselet, unlike that of the colonel or tribune already mentioned, was of plate-steel, (instead of rings), and shone like a looking-glass, except where it was inlaid with broad lines of gold. He wore a chain of twisted gold round his neck, and his belt, as well as the hilt of his sword, which remained, undrawn by his side in a silver scabbard, glittered with sardonix and jasper stones. He had no tunic. His gloves, happening, like those of his subordinate, to be thrust into the belt round his waist; left visible a pair of hands so white and delicate as to be almost effeminate. His helmet was thin steel, and the crest was surmounted by a profuse plume of scarlet cock's feathers. But perhaps the most curious particular of his costume was a pair of shoes or half-boots of red leather, the points of the toes turned upwards. These boots were encrusted with gems, which formed the patrician crescent or letter C, on the top of each foot, and then wandered into a fanciful tracery of sparkles upon the leg. The stapedae, or stirrups, in which his feet rested, were either of gold or gilt.

The countenance of the evidently important personage whose dress has been stated was remarkable. He had regular features, a handsome straight nose, eyes half closed with what seemed at first a languid look, but yet a look, which, if observed more closely, was almost strutting from the extreme attention it evinced, and from the contrast between such an expression and the indolent indifference or superciliousness upon the surface, if I might say so, of the physiognomy. There was something sinister and cruel about the mouth. He wore no whiskers or beard, but a black, carefully-trimmed moustache.

After a steady gaze across the fields in the direction we have already more than once mentioned, he half turned his head toward the tribune, and at the same time pointing to our travellers, said something. The tribune, in his turn addressed the first centurian, (dux legions) an officer whose sword like that of the legatus, was undrawn, but who carried in his right hand a thin wand made of vine-wood. In an instant this officer turned his horse's head and trotted smartly toward our travellers, upon reaching whom he addressed Paulus thus:

"Tell me, I pray you, have you been long here?"
 "Not a quarter of an hour," answered Paulus, wondering why such a question was asked.
 "And have any persons passed into the road by this pathway?" the centurian then inquired.

(To be continued.)

TO EVERY SUBSCRIBER

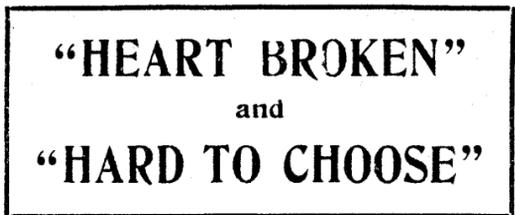
New and Old

Who will send us One New Subscriber and 25 cents we will send them the

Family Herald and Weekly Star FOR ONE YEAR

Together with the following beautiful premiums.

Two Beautiful Colored Pictures . . .



Each 22 x 28 inches, in 11 delicate tints,

AND

A Large Colored Map of the Dominion of Canada (22 x 28 inches), with Special Maps for Each Province and for the United States.

The two pictures to be given are typical bits of child life. The prevailing note in each is—as it should be—bubbling enjoyment of the moment, with just a touch of one of the evanescent shadows of childhood to throw the gay colors into relief. They will please and charm upon any wall where they may hang, bringing to one an inner smile of the soul even on the darkest day. For what can shed more happiness abroad than the happiness of children?

One of the pictures is called

"Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

"Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

Quick Reference Map of The Dominion of Canada

SPECIALLY PREPARED

The map of the Dominion of Canada will fill a long felt want. It has been prepared specially for the Family Herald and Weekly Star, and is right up-to-date. It is printed on a sheet 22 x 28 inches, each province in a different color; it shows the adjacent portions of the United States, the exact location of the towns, villages, etc., all railroad routes, including the new G. T. Pacific. It gives the population according to the very latest census, of all small and large places in Canada. With the Dominion maps will be enlarged provincial maps, that appeal to subscribers in each province, as follows:

For Subscribers in Man., N.W.T. & B.C.

With the Dominion Map will be found an enlarged map of Canada's Great West beyond the Lakes, right up-to-date complete information regarding location and situation of all towns and villages in the Western Provinces.

The Family Herald and Weekly Star is too well known to need description. It is the greatest Family and Agricultural paper in Canada. Its regular subscription price is 1.00 per year, and you can't get it anywhere else for less except from us, and we will give it to you for

Only 25 Cents

Any one of the premiums are worth more than that alone

Address your orders to—

The Business Manager

P.O. BOX 617

Northwest Review