

# DION AND THE SIBYLS.

By Miles Gerald Keon

A CLASSIC CHRISTIAN NOVEL.

## CHAPTER X—Continued.

He had long since returned to his native Formiae, where he had built a superb palace of marble, good enough for an emperor. In that palace the emperor was now to be his guest. He and Agrippa Vipsanius, the founder of the Pantheon, had long before been among those by whom, in compliance with the often-announced wish of Augustus, not peculiarly addressed to them, but generally to all his wealthy countrymen, Augustus had expended incalculable sums in adorning Rome with public edifices, for which costly materials, and the science and taste of the best architects, had alike been employed. As Augustus himself said, (for himself,) "They had found it of bricks, and were leaving it of marble."

"I have read verses by Catullus upon this knight Mamurra," said Aglais.

"So you have, my lady," replied Crispina. "He has just knickered up a circus in the fields adjoining Formiae, and is preparing to exhibit magnificent shows to his neighbors and to all comers, in honor of the emperor's visit to the town of the Mamurras and the Mamurran place. Tiberius Caesar, who is also to be the knight's guest, promises to use this same circus, and to give entertainments of his own there, and Germanicus Caesar, before marching north to fight the Germans, and drive them out of north-eastern Italy, is to review at Formiae the troops destined for that expedition, as well as the great bulk of the praetorian guards under Sejanus. The guards are uncertain what portion of them the Caesar may take with him northward."

"Mother, we shall see the shows, we shall see the shows!" cried Agatha.

"Oh! and I am so slow. There is another ingredient yet in my wallet of tidings," exclaimed Crispina; "and only think of my almost forgetting to remember it."

"Remember not to forget it," said the Greek girl, holding up her finger with an admonishing and censorious look at the landlady. "What is this particular which you have, after all, not forgotten to remember?"

"My charming little lady, it is a particular which concerns the land of your mother, and the people of Greece; for seldom, say they, has that land or people sent to Rome anybody like him."

"You accused yourself of being slow; but now you gallop. Like whom?"

"Like this noble young Athenian."

"Galloping still faster," rejoined Agatha.

"What noble young Athenian?"

"This Athenian, gifted as his countryman Alcibiades, eloquent as our own Tully, acute and profound as Aristotle, honorable as Fabricius, truthful as Regulus, and O ladies! with all these other excellencies, beautiful as a poem, a picture, a statue, or a dream!"

"There's a description," quoth Agatha, laughing.

"More eloquent than precise, I think," said Paulus.

"Yet sufficiently precise," added Aglais, "to leave us in no doubt at all who is meant by it. It must be young Dionysius, it must be Dion."

"That is the very name!" exclaimed the hostess.

"My mother knows him," said Paulus. "My sister and I have often heard of him; so have thousands; but we have not seen him. It is he who carried away all the honors of the great Lyceum at Athens on the left bank of the Ilissus."

"The right bank, brother," said Agatha; "don't you remember, the day we embarked at the Piraeus somebody showed it to us, just opposite Diana Agrotera, which is on the left bank?"

"It is all the same," said Paulus.

"Mother, just tell Paulus if left and right are all the same," said

Agatha. "That is like Paulus. They are not the same; they never were the same."

"All the ladies at the Mamurran palace," resumed the hostess, "make toilets against him."

"Toils, you mean," said Paulus.

"Yes, toils," continued the hostess. "They are intended as toilets for him; they are great toils and labors for the poor girls; the ornatrix and they are toilers for the fair dames themselves."

"And how do these toilets prosper against Dionysius the Athenian?"

"They tell me he is not aware of the admiration he excites—is totally indifferent to it."

"Base, miserable youth!" cried Paulus, laughing. "These Roman dames and damsels ought to punish him."

"You mean by letting him alone?" asked the landlady.

"No; that would kill him," returned Paulus with a sneer, "being what he is."

"Then how punish him?" asked she.

"By pursuing him with their blandishments," answered Paulus; "that is if they can muster sufficient ferocity. But I fear the women are too kind here in Italy. I am told that even in the midst of the most furious passions, and while the deadliest agonies are felt by others around them, their natural sweetness is so invincible that they smile and send soft glances to and fro; they look more bewitching at misery (such is their goodness) than when they see no suffering at all. Yes, indeed! and as the gladiators fight, they have a lovely smile for each gash; and when the gladiator dies, their eyes glisten enchantingly. We have not these entertainments in Greece, and the Greek Dion must soon feel the superiority of the Roman to the Greek woman. Pity is a beautiful quality in woman; and the Greek ladies do not seek the same frequent opportunities of exercising it as the Italian ladies possess, and, cheu! enjoy."

"Is Paulus bitter?" asked Aglais.

"Is Paulus witty?"

"Talking of wit, my lady," pursued the hostess, "none but our dear old Plautus could have matched this young Athenian, as Antistius Labio, the great author of five hundred volumes, has found to his cost."

"Labio! Why, that must be the son of one of those who murdered Caesar," exclaimed Paulus. "My father met his father foot to foot at the battle of Philippi; but he escaped, and slew himself when Brutus did so."

"That was indeed this man's father," said Crispina. "The son is a very clever man, and a most successful practitioner in the law courts. Wishing to mortify Dionysius, he said in his presence, at a review of the troops at Formiae, yesterday, that he was grateful to the gods he had not been born at Athens, and was no Greek—not he!"

"The Athenians also entertain," replied Dionysius, "the idea which you have just expressed."

"What idea?" asked Antistius Labio.

"That their gods watch over them," replied Dionysius. "Ah my lady! you should have heard the laughter at Labio; the very conceit turned away to conceal their grins. Some one high at court then took the Athenian's arm on one side, and Titus Livius's on the other, and walked off with them. Labio did not say a word."

"Pray can you tell us, good Crispina, whether Germanicus Caesar is to be a guest of the knight Mamurra?" asked Paulus.

The landlady said she believed he would be for a day or two, and that she thought it was even he who had taken Dion's and Livy's arm, and walked with them apart.

"It is some time," said Aglais.

"Since Catullus indited those epigrammatic verses against the hos-

pitabile and opulent knight. This Mamurra must be very old."

"Yet, my lady," replied Crispina, "he has a ruddy face, a clear complexion, and downright black eyebrows."

"There is a wash called lixivium," said Aglais with a meaning smile. "Ah! but," cried Crispina, laughing with no less knowing a look, "that makes the hair yellow; and the brows of the knight are as black as the jet ornaments in your daughter's hair."

"You can tell us, no doubt," said Paulus, "who those ladies must be that came with Tiberius Caesar yesterday from that splendid mansion on the Liris. They were in beautiful litters; one of sculptured bronze, the other of ivory, embossed with gold reliefs."

"I know who they are, of course," said the landlady; "they are half-sisters, the daughters of the late renowned warrior and statesman, Agrippa Vipsanius, but by different mothers. One of them was the wife of Tiberius Caesar."

"Was!" exclaimed Paulus; "why, she's not a ghost?"

"She is, nevertheless; her husband has another wife," said the landlady; adding, in a low voice, "a precious one, too; the emperor has required him to marry the august Julia."

"The august!" murmured Aglais contemptuously, "with a shrug of the shoulders; 'getting old, too.'"

"I am sure," resumed the landlady, "no one can describe the relationships of that family. Agrippa Vipsanius, you must know, married three times. His second wife was Marcella, daughter of Augustus's sister, Octavia; and this Marcella became the mother of the elder of the two ladies whom you saw. Well, while this Marcella was still living, but after she had had a daughter called Vipsania, Augustus made Agrippa put her away to marry, mind you, this very same august Julia, Augustus's own daughter, and therefore Marcella's first cousin. This Julia, who had just become a widow, having lost her first husband Marcellus, is the mother of the other lady whom you saw, who is called Julia Agrippina, and who thus came into the world the second cousin of her own half-sister. Well, Agrippa, the father of both girls, leaving the august Julia a widow for the second time, Tiberius Caesar marries Agrippa's eldest daughter Vipsania, and has a son by her, called Drusus; and now, while Vipsania is still living, Augustus makes Tiberius put her away to marry the aforesaid august Julia, the mother of the younger daughter, Julia Agrippina, who is Tiberius's first and likewise second cousin."

"I can hardly follow you in the labyrinth," said Aglais.

"No one can, my lady, except those who make a study of it," said the landlady, laughing; "but it's all true. Julia, Augustus's daughter, is the wife of the father of both these girls, first cousin to the eldest of them, mother and cousin-in-law of the younger, and has now also been made wife to the husband of the elder, her own first cousin, and become the sister-in-law of her own daughter and cousin-in-law to the younger."

"Medius fidius!" cried Paulus, staring stupidly, "what a tremendous twisted knot! Julia's daughter, half-sister, and second cousin is put away, that the half-sister's husband may marry the half-sister's stepmother and second cousin, or something like that."

"Or something like that," continued Crispina; "but there is no end to it. Tiberius Caesar is now father-in-law and brother-in-law to one woman, and the husband and step-father-in-law to another, while the mother of the younger half-sister becomes the sister-in-law of her own daughter."

(To be Continued.)

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## "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.

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