

flush of anger, only amaze and surprise. To some her conduct is nothing except bewilderment. They are strangers to the subject on which she feels. They cannot understand what it means. They are paralyzed, and gaze speechless and breathless.

Some watch her with an understanding of her position upon their faces. They have some sympathy with this new religion, but they know not what it means. They look at her with hope that she will be reasonable and do the deed, and not throw her life away. What do such things matter? They are not angry, but in the name of humanity they will be angry if she persists in sacrificing life to sentiment.

Others, who understand, gaze still and mute. Their hopes are that grace will be given to her equal to her need. They are brothers and sisters in the faith. Passion for the Nazarene has cast out of these all fear save of the infamy of denying Him. Their prayers rise in agony to heaven to keep her faithful. If she fail, it will break their hearts.

To these the incense to Diana means the abandonment of Christ. It is intended to mean it. It is a tribute to the authority which put Him to death. "God help her," they silently cry, "to confront Ephesus, and side with Christ!" A great dread has seized them. An agony of years is crowded into a moment. One can almost hear their "Stand faithful, my child!"

It is no easy thing even for age to step deliberately into the grave. Yet it is to the edge of an open grave that ripened girlhood has come, and to her it is left to choose whether she will take one more step and quench life in it.

"Do it. It means nothing. It can do no harm," one hears her lover in despair suggest, his eyes fixed pleadingly upon the pretty, peaceful, blessed face, like a mother coaxing a child to take the draught that will save its life. His strong man's nature is in an agony. So is her woman's nature. She feels it all. But only to make the peace upon that face deeper, the blessedness of it more beautiful.

Act a part, and live! That was all! He could not conceive how loathsome an acted lie must be to her, what repentant tears such an infamy must wring from her, more bitter than death. The suggestion, could it have entered the soul of one of the Nazarene's followers, must have been a terrible bitterness, a ghastly horror, an inconceivable dismay. Death had no terror to be compared with criminality like that.

Tricks, expedients, subterfuges, these had not yet a place in the notions of the Church. Casuistry was born of creed, not of Christ. She was of the simple disciple of His, unlearned in the logic of disloyalty to their chosen leader and friend.

The girl stands unmoved by anything but her fresh-born passion for Christ; not a sigh escapes her lips; not a doubt passes across her face,

though it is pale with the farewell she has taken of home and friends. "You will not?" inquires the bewildered officer. A deadly pallor passes over his face. A smile of heaven passes over hers.

"No," she softly says, and moves on.

There was nothing heroic in the gesture, nothing impetuous in the voice. There was a perfectly natural calm in both. In the vague, dread hush of the vast place, her decision is heard, among her comrades and friends; nature asserts her ascendancy; they weep and thank God. They gaze upon her departing form with yearning, grateful, unendurable pain and bliss. Amongst her acquaintances, yet strangers to her absorbing love of Christ, impatience breaks its bounds. Her conduct is ghastly madness and crime.

So said her judges; and so echoed the sentiment of the Ephesian world.

Was the action such as Christ wished? That was her one thought; only that! She, like many another, stood ready for the hungry lions in the amphitheatre.

The girl stood in His presence within a few minutes after the deed was done. This age is an age in which many doubt its wisdom. What think ye of Christ? Did He meet her and grasp her hand as her freed soul rose from her perishing body? For we of this age and those of all ages must one day know what He would have us to do.—*Sunday Magazine*.

THE BEST THAT I CAN.

66 **I** CANNOT do much," said a little star,
"In making the dark world bright:
My silvery beams cannot struggle far
Through the folding gloom of night;
But still I'm a part of God's great plan,
And I'll cheerfully do the best that I can.

"Oh, what is the use," said a fleecy cloud,
"Of these tiny drops I hold?
They will hardly freshen yon lily proud,
When caught in her cup of gold;
But still I'm a part of God's great plan,
And I'll cheerfully do the best that I can."

A child went merrily forth to play,
But a thought, like a silver thread,
Kept on winding in and out all day
Through the happy golden head.
"Mother said I'm a part of God's great plan,
So must try to do the best that I can."

So she helped a poor neighbour's child along,
Though tired her own small feet;
And she sang from her heart a little song,
Her father thought so sweet!
And he said "I too am part of God's plan,
And though weary, must do the best that I can."

WITHIN the memory of thousands yet living, two Scotchmen (one a gardener, the other a spinner)—Moffat and Livingstone—opened Africa to the Gospel. To-day Africa has about 500 missionary stations, and at least 250,000 converts (some say over 400,000) of the Uganda tribe.