

"You are
So far
I lie
And cry."

The strongest aspects of these poems are their directness of wording and vision, which make for easy reading; Dr. Stopes is never obscure, and whether it be a tribute to Homer or to a flower, she tackles her subject with fearlessness and generous sympathy. But in contrast one must again mention the admixture of quality, for there is an odd combination of highmindedness coupled with an almost youthful naivety of emotional expression discernible in these poems at times. One is reminded somewhat of the patriotic fervour prevalent at the beginning of this age.

Nowadays, the 'singing' poet needs to be very much on his guard lest he strike a note which is ineffectual rather than false when attempting to reflect current thought and feeling. The younger poets with their sober metre appear to manage this with more firmness of touch than can a transitional writer diffused between two vastly differing periods of time.

The shorter poems "To the Beloved", "If", "Judas" and "Ode to the South Wind"—this latter being an especially well-balanced work—all avoid pitfalls, and serve as admirable examples of the author's possibilities.

In summing up, I would describe this book of Dr. Stopes as 'interesting'; and with her many advantages of masterly style and appropriate imagery, she will no doubt eventually make the necessary adaptations to place herself within a more definable radius as a poet.

MARGARET HOWARD.

A SOUTH AFRICAN DIVINE RULER

The Realm of a Rain Queen

A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society. By Dr. E. Jensen Krige and J. D. Krige. (Published for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures.) Pp. xvi+336+16 plates. (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1943.) 21s. net.

GENERAL SMUTS, in his foreword, commends this book as one of the most honest and penetrating researches into native life that he has come across. The tribute is well deserved. Dr. and Mrs. Krige selected a fascinating subject for study: the Lovedu, living among the mist-covered mountains of northern Transvaal. Insignificant as regards numbers and the extent of their territory, 33,000 tribesmen occupying a reserve of 150 square miles, their reputation was, and still is, great among the Bantu of South Africa; their queen was held to be the most powerful of all rain-makers, and even chiefs so distant and renowned as Chaka and Moshesh sought her aid in extremity. Many foreign ambassadors and potentates gathered at her court, bringing cattle or daughters or sisters to win the favour of "Transformer of the Clouds". To Europeans she was a mystery; was reputed to be very light-coloured (Was she really a white woman?) and to be immortal. Rider Haggard familiarized her as "She-who-must-be-obeyed". There is substance in the fantasies that gathered about her. She figures as one of the Divine Rulers of whom Sir James Frazer has written.

In 140 years there have been three Lovedu queens,

the present Mujaji III having reigned more than forty years. The first king was a scion of the famed Monomotapa, mighty monarch of the Vakaranga, whose sons divided the realm among themselves after his death. By incestuous union with her brother, the daughter of one of these chiefs bore a son and fled the country, carrying off the rain charms and sacred beads, and in course of time gathered about her a new community in the south, the Lovedu, of various origin. The queen is neither a military nor a political leader. She is not primarily a ruler but a rain-maker; what authority she exercises derives from her divine appointment and her exclusive power of controlling the rain, ensuring its fall for her friends and denying it to her enemies. The tribe relies for security not on regimentation, armies and organization, but on this power of the queen.

The rain-cult is a whole complex of institutions with ramifications through many aspects of tribal life. It is perhaps scarcely accurate to describe the queen as a rain-maker; she is so intimately connected with the forces of Nature that her life seems to be continuous with them; anything that affects her affects Nature. She is the guarantor of the cyclic regularity of the seasons; when she dies the seasons are out of joint. She has a monopoly of magic; anyone who should presume to enter into competition with her by practising garden magic would incur the penalties of witchcraft. There are certain limitations to her power: no one would expect her to produce rain in the winter; she relies upon diviners to diagnose the causes of drought; people can thwart her by certain infringements of taboo; and ultimately, it is recognized, her power depends upon the divine ancestors. Dr. and Mrs. Krige insist that belief in her virtue is universal and unshaken among the Lovedu—the Christians rationalize their belief by saying that she produces rain by the help of God.

How exactly the rain-queen exercises her power is a secret known only to herself, but it is known that certain 'medicines' are employed. These are kept in earthenware pots; Dr. and Mrs. Krige never saw these, but learnt that among the contents are one or more human skulls and the skins stripped from the bodies of deceased chiefs and councillors. A black sheep, said to be a substitute for a human child, is sacrificed from time to time to reinforce the medicines. The queen has no husband but many wives, some of whom, after a certain period, are allocated to nobles, and by this means a network is formed radiating from the queen all through the community.

One effect of having a queen of such divine authority is the elevation of the status of women in this patrilineal society. Lovedu tradition is that the king or queen never dies a natural death: he or she commits suicide, not when their natural vigour fails, but at the end of the fourth initiation during the reign, and these initiation ceremonies are held at intervals of from twelve to fifteen years.

Dr. and Mrs. Krige provide a very full exposition of the social organization and activities of these people. Having been challenged for a long period by Western civilization and having been percolated for much longer by various Bantu cultures, the Lovedu are a fruitful field for the study of culture contact and culture change; and the authors' findings on this subject are an important part of a very valuable contribution to social anthropology.

EDWIN W. SMITH.