

SONNET IN REPLY TO AN INDIAN WIFE.

DARK daughter of the forest, though thy fears
 Rise for the Brave thou biddest to the war,
 In dread belief he will return no more
 To share with thee the love of future years;
 Let this be comfort for thy blinding tears—
 Joy cannot be enduring; some stern woe
 Must stem the tide of happiness below.
 Let white men scoff and scorn, with taunts and jeers,
 For them, as for your noble Brave, is stored
 Some racial conflict in a coming age
 Such as the past doth show on every page,
 The vengeful justice hist'ry shall record;
 And for thy suffering—one changeless law
 Of sorrow reigns for white woman or squaw.

B.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

A WITHERED leaf, a silken thread,
 Some grasses, frail and sere,
 Are lying desolate and dead
 On Love's fantastic bier.
 But yet a ceaseless song they sing
 Of cruel, hopeless pain;
 For, in the sweetest thoughts they bring,
 I hear the sad refrain—
 "It might have been!"

A glove that dropped from fingers fair,
 A ring with rubies set,
 A little tress of golden hair
 With tears of sorrow wet.
 Her heart was light; so mine alone
 Hath learned to love and grieve;
 And so, through life's dull monotone,
 The golden tress doth weave—
 "It might have been!"

The boat lies idly at my feet,
 The sky is blue above,
 The sunlit waves make music sweet,
 And all is fair but Love;
 For in the cup that memory takes
 I taste again the lees,
 And one long-silent chord awakes
 And whispers to the breeze—
 "It might have been!"

The fondest love the heart has missed
 May come again some day,
 Though eyes that wept and lips we've kissed
 Have coldly turned away;
 But in the love that lives apart
 Through waste of weary years,
 A voice will haunt the aching heart,
 And murmur in its tears—
 "It might have been!"

LARA.

THE WAR FETISH.

ONE look at Makoko satisfied me that he was not going to be a stern opponent. Such a little man, five feet nothing high, with such a guileless, innocent look on his thin, meagre face, could surely allow his good-will to be purchased if there was any merit in cloth and amiability. He came forward bravely, announced himself as Makoko, lord of that region between Kintampo and Stanley Pool, and held out his hand with a kindly smile. An old man, probably sixty, with a tall, narrow forehead, temples deeply sunk, a pair of small eyes gleaming brightly out of deep cavities, cheek bones very prominent, face thin, a curled beard on his chin, which proved, when at a later period he unrolled it, to be six feet in length. His mat, covered with a leopard skin, had been prepared to receive him. He pointed his finger at the leopard skin before seating himself, and said, "There is the proof of my titles."

There were about one hundred people present at this meeting, and all were now seated expecting words from me. I began, "People call me Bula Matari (Rock-breaker). In old times I was known to Kintampo as Stanley. I am the first Mundele seen by the natives of this country. I am the man who went down the great river with many canoes and many men years ago. I lost many men in that river, but I promised my friends at Kintampo that I would come back some day. I reached the white man's land, but, remembering my promises, I have come back. I have been to Mfwa already. Here is the staff as a sign that I speak the truth. I am going to Ngazama, to live with him, and to build a town alongside of his village; and when that is done, I will put the boats you see on the waggons here into the waters, and I will go up the great river, and see if I can build more. That is my story. Let Makoko speak to his friends and say if it is good."

After a short pause, during which there was a good deal of whispering,

Makoko in a very quiet manner and loud voice, which gradually became stronger as he proceeded with his speech, said: "We have heard, day after day for many moons, of Bula Matari. When we heard that he was breaking rocks, and cutting wide roads through the forests, we became a little anxious. What manner of man is this, we asked, who treats the country in this way? Does he mean to destroy it? Then we suddenly heard of Bula Matari at Kintampo, and the word was whispered around that you had made a league with Ngazama to take the country from us. Then we all got angry; for who is Ngazama that he should do this thing? Is he not a runaway from the Bateke country, who asked us for a place that he might build a house that he might trade. Has he not grown rich and great through our kindness to him. Little enough, O people, have any of us received from him. Yet he pretends to own all the land for himself now. Well, your people had to leave Kintampo. We did that. For how could you do what you proposed without hearing from us. Then we said, If the white man despises us, the real owners of the land, then he is a bad man, and there will be war. But now you are passing through our country to Kintampo. We have heard of you daily. We are pleased with what we have heard. We now know that you break rocks and cut trees to pass your boats over the country. That is right. It is all good. But, my friend, remember that we own the country. Neither Ngazama, nor any of the Bateke who buy ivory at Kintampo, Kinshassa and Kindols, have any country on this side of the river." Then followed a murmuring approval of this speech from the assembly.

When the applause had subsided, my response was as follows: "You have spoken well, Makoko. Though I passed through the country years ago, I knew nothing of native lands, customs, or rights. You all seemed very much alike. Until lately I could not tell the difference at sight between one of the Bateke and a Mbundu. I thought you all black men, and it takes a long time for a white man to tell the difference between one black face and another, just as it will take you a long time to tell the difference between Bula Matari and one of his sons. Therefore, for speaking to Ngazama about the country before I knew Makoko, you will forgive me. I now speak to Makoko and ask him what he has to say to my request for land near Kintampo, or somewhere near the river, where my boats can come and go safely."

"Only this," replied Makoko kindly, "that I am glad to see Bula Matari and his sons. Rest in peace. Land shall be given to you where it will suit you to build. I want to see plenty of white men here. I have many things given me long ago from the white men's land, and I have often wished to see those who could make such wonderful things. I am told your people make all the cloth, the beads, the guns, the powder, plates, and glasses. Ah! you must be great and good people. Be easy in your mind, you shall build in Kintampo, and I should like to see the man who says no to Makoko's yes."

The mild old man, so little and weak in frame, was actually valorous; comfort he certainly imparted to me, but how much reliance in himself could not yet be defined. However we treasured his words.

Suddenly Ngalyema asked, after the other chiefs had ceased their whispers: "What nice thing has my brother brought me from the white man's land since I saw him?" Evidently Ngalyema supposed that I had been to the coast since my departure from Mfuda; but I simply said: "Come to my tent, and see for yourself. Ngalyema and his son Enjeli, with Ganchu and others, rose to their feet, and followed me to the tent. Here the party inspected a quantity of red baize, bright handkerchiefs, a pile of figured blankets, and lovingly passed their hands over japanned tin boxes and iron trunks," and, after his curiosity was thoroughly satisfied, and Ngalyema had chosen a quantity of goods valued at £138 for his own perquisites, he expressed himself as follows.

"I will take these goods, but on the condition only that you stay where you are. You must make up your mind that you cannot come to Kintampo. The chiefs will not have it. If you do not promise, this must end in war, and I can no longer be your friend. Now what do you say? "It is useless, Ngalyema, to talk more about this," I replied. "Make up your mind that I go to or near Kintampo. All the Wambundu are willing. You admit that you have no right to the country; that you and the Bateke are strangers; that the Wambundu own the land. How can you stop the Wambundu from doing what they like with their own country." "But the village at Kintampo is mine," he said; "I and my people built it." "That is all well, I do not want your village; I only want to get near the river and build a village of my own, whither many white men will come to trade, white men will do you no harm; you do not care to whom you will sell your ivory." "Enough, enough," he cried, "I say for the last time you shall not come to Kintampo: we do not want any white men among us. Let us go, Enjeli." And as he said the last words he pushed aside the tent door, and strode outside, with the emotions of suppressed passion visible on his face. While standing near the tent door, for a moment irresolute, he caught sight of the large Chinese gong suspended to a cross-bar supported by two forked poles. "What is this?" he asked, pointing to the gong. "It is fetish," I answered sententiously. His young son Enjeli, who was much more acute than his father, whispered to him his belief that it was a kind of a bell, upon which Ngalyema cried out, "Bula Matari, strike this; let me hear it." "Oh! Ngalyema, I dare not; it is the war fetish." "No, no," said he, impatiently. "Beat it, Bula Matari, that I may hear the sound." "I dare not, Ngalyema, it is the signal for war; it is the fetish that calls up armed men; it would be too bad." "No! no! no! I tell you to strike, strike it, Bula Matari," and he stamped on the ground with childish impatience. "Well, then," taking the beater in my hand—"remember, I told you it was a bad fetish—a fetish for war," and as I lifted the beater high with uplifted hand, I asked again, "Shall I strike now." "Strike, strike it, I tell you." With all my force I struck the gong,