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THE MAGIC OF HAITI

By H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

IT is a humiliating reflection that much of the psychological enlightenment which to-day we are seeking has been in the possession of primitive and, by our standards, uncivilised people for more than a thousand years.

Of late it has occurred to not a few students of the psyche that there might be something worth learning from the religious medley in the black man's mind, and various interesting studies have been made of his beliefs in West and Central Africa and in Haiti.

Haiti offers an exceptional, but also a highly complicated field, by the variety which it presents, owing to the compiling of its elements during three hundred years.



Elliott and Fry, Ltd.

H. F. PREVOST BATTERSBY

It is, after a troubled and savage history, the one country in the world wholly administered by a Negro government, and it is also singular in being a State with twin religions, Catholic and Voodoo, the one being curiously impregnated by the other; the latent mysticism of the Catholic being interwoven with the mystery of magic in the black man's soul; a blend resulting, amongst other things, in the weird decoration of Voodoo altars.

These in their variety, serving the hundred and more secret societies in Haiti, are a consequence of the mixed material of which the State has been made.

In West Africa, a hundred years before King Alfred took to cooking, there were imposing cities, now buried in the sand, which challenged Egypt's architectural glories.

For 700 years, the Songhai Empire was a noted centre of culture, students coming from the Continent's distant coasts to the University of Sankoré. So far that Empire stretched under Askia the Great, in the 15th century, that six months travel was needed to cross it from Lake Tsad to the Atlantic.

It was from Egypt, apparently, that the Songhais had come, and from Egypt came too their psychic understanding; though Askia was a Negro, and, it seems, an adherent of Islam. His people, though black, had nothing in common with the West Coast type, having a European profile, with a straight nose and long thin lips, a variant still to be found in Central Africa.

It was while the Songhai Empire was at its height that the making of Haiti began, slaves being taken there from the coast and from its hinterland, an importation which continued for three hundred years, from 1506 to 1804; and the fact that these cargoes of human flesh were filched from tribes which had

intermarried with Arabs, Berbers, Egyptians, Judéo-Syrians and others, and that there were several varieties even on the coast itself, accounts for the admixture in Haiti—Congolese, Ardras, Dahomeans, Senagalese and others—and for the difference and yet alikeness in their forms of worship.

Indeed, so varied even in speech was the imported human material, that a language, Creole, with its queer phraseology in use to-day, had to be invented to supply a medium for conversation; this quite apart from the so-called language used by high initiates when possessed.

What unsuspected depths may lurk in the Negro mind was revealed by a discussion William Seabrook had with Nago-Ba, a witch-doctor with the Forest people of the Ivory Coast.

"As we talked late that night," he tells us, "and again for a whole morning, there began to emerge a system of metaphysics as idealistic and perhaps as pure, but also just as complicated, as anything ever formulated by Plato and the Greeks, or by the Christian saints and mystic theologians. For Nago-Ba, strange as it may sound, with his wooden idols, iron *grigris* and devil-masks, believed that the material world was nothing, and that the only ultimate reality was a spiritual reality."

He tells us, moreover, that Nago-Ba was, in his cosmic conceptions, as far ahead of our scientists of twenty years ago, as their successors are to-day; and since it was from the Ivory Coast and its hinterland that Haiti derived many of its ancestors, there may be some relics of Nago-Ba's wisdom behind its animistic beliefs and ceremonies, which drape their drum-driven vertigo in the gorgeous vestments and vestigia of the Catholic Church.

Two writers, Miss Mabel Steedman and Miss Zora Hurston, have been studying Haiti. Miss Steedman is a skilled and practised observer; Miss Hurston is a poet, and Haiti has possessed her; and each offers us something about Voodoo from her own point of view; but it has to be, even in Miss Hurston's case, the view of an outsider; that is inevitable, since the man who would betray its secrets knows full well the penalty which would have to be paid.

VOODOO GODS

The Voodoo Pantheon is as simple as it is profuse. A supreme God, too far off to be moved by mortal clamour, who, we learn, "went with his Woman into a bedroom together to begin creation."

Beneath this high heaven and, apparently, a good long way from it, are the lesser gods, mysteres, or loa, in endless "families" which seem to be always growing to fit local requirements—Ogouns, Erzulies, Cimbies, Legbas and the like—the good, each with its opposite evil number, according as they belong to the good Rada or the evil Petro or Congo variety; "ge-rouge" added to the name, signifying a dark origin.

These loa are as affable and as exacting as were the divinities of Greece. For instance, should Erzulie, the Voodoo Venus, fall in love with you, she claims implacably all your devotion; and, Miss Hurston tells us, "hundreds of wives have been forced to step aside entirely by her demands." A room is set apart, a spotless bed prepared for her; with magical and lovely ceremonies she becomes your bride; and, spread upon a couch, three Ave Marias, three Credos and the Confiteor three times are said over you. Should you slight her, and prefer a mortal's love, endless misfortune and an early death would be your lot, and the fate of the maiden you have preferred to her. As her spouse, you are, as long as she wills it, vowed to chastity, and never after can you wed another.

Yes, these spirits are very real to the Haitian, and it is this capacity for materialising the immaterial which accounts for much that happens to him, and for his working of super-telepathic feats.

In his constitution it would seem that the subconscious is unduly developed, or, at least, insufficiently secured from external influence, which leaves him perilously exposed to hypnotic direction; indeed, he is a master at hypnotising himself.

This also seems to account for proclivities in the way of astral projection, and sensitivity to possession; indeed it is at possession that most of Voodoo ritual is aimed, which is adduced, by some, as the explanation of its abnormal performances.

The Baptist missionary at Cap Haitien, an Englishman, told Miss Steedman that he once saw a Mamaloi (the performing priestess) pour a barrel of rum over herself and ignite it. "She became a living, flaming torch, but when the flames died down not even a hair of her head was burned;" and on another occasion he watched a Mamaloi stirring a cauldron of boiling food with her bare arm.

At a Voodoo ceremony the main objective is the establishment by one of the celebrants of direct communication with the loa, and, so marked is the character of the possession, that there is never any doubt as to the personality of the god.

It is also believed that in these frenzied ceremonial dances, where each person is expecting a manifestation of the god or goddess, the group-mind creates a group-elemental which develops an individuality of its own, and ceases to be dependant on the emotions of the crowd that gave it birth.

The American specialist in brain disorders at the Haitian lunatic asylum described to Miss Steedman how once, when talking to a man in a living room behind a store, the man suddenly became possessed and extremely violent, tearing his clothes and breaking up the furniture. Morphia had no effect, and, knowing the man would die unless something was done, the doctor sent for the local Mamaloi, who presently arrived, carrying a brazier of white-hot charcoal.

The demented man went up to the brazier, which the Mamaloi had set without a word on the floor,

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and thrust both his hands up to the wrists in the fire. A voice not his own issued from his mouth, crying: "All right, all right, I am satisfied, I am leaving." The hands of the man were not burned, and he was sane again.

Cases of possession are such a commonplace in Haiti that they excite no alarm; and, when the spirit leaves, no mental trace remains of its insane excesses.

Many Haitians, when possessed, speak African, a language they have never heard, and a Mamaloi, when entranced, is expected to prophesy. The accuracy of many striking forecasts has been reported.

That cannibalism has been practised on the island is not disputed, it is even asserted that it has not been entirely stamped out from the orgiastic excesses of certain sects.

Blood sacrifices there are, of course; but they cannot be said to differ at all from those imposed by Moses on the Israelites. Horror is often expressed at the sacrificial ceremonies of primitive people, but, as may be read in the Book of Numbers, the very same rites were prescribed as essential to divine worship. Hence we must conclude that either Israel's law-giver was wrong, or that there is a necessity for these outpourings of blood which we do not understand. Of one thing there can be no question: religion to the Voodooistic peasant is a part of himself, and his sacrifices and his ritual is an expression of his deepest sentiments and emotion.

We should regard his psychic disturbances not as a pathetic absurdity, but as a revelation of what lies in the innermost being of us all.

ZOMBIES

The most intriguing and disputed exhibition of Voodoo magic is the Zombie.

William Seabrook, who had an exceptional insight into Voodoo worship, describes the Zombies he had seen as "corpses walking in the sunlight," and it is a matter of general belief that Zombies are the dead that have been dug up from their graves, and resuscitated, minus their souls, by magic spells.

A Papaloi in Northern Haiti told Miss Steedman: "There are two kinds of dead, dead of the Bocor and dead of God. The dead of the Bocor are capable of resuscitation, but the dead of God cannot be resuscitated."

Miss Hurston not only saw and touched a Zombie, but photographed one; and she was told that a Zombie might be made in order to furnish cheap labour, or as an act of revenge, or as a sacrifice to pay off a debt to a spirit for benefits received. She had described to her the complicated ceremony by which a Zombie is made; the Bocor sucking out the victim's soul, and by means of it later, held under the corpse's nose, summoning him from the tomb.

The Bocor is a black magician and is sometimes indistinguishable from the houngan—the reputable priest; sometimes the two co-operate.

Miss Hurston relates several stories of Zombies which may be regarded as official; one, of the beautiful young daughter of a prominent family, who, five years after she had been buried, was recognised by a party of her school-day friends. It was the most notorious case in all Haiti. Another, the woman Miss Hurston photographed, had been, nominally, twenty-nine years in her tomb.

Dr. Ruxl Leon, Director General of the Service d'Hygiène in Haiti, and the Chief of Staff at the hospital of Gonaives, were of opinion that the Zombie is awakened not from the dead, but from the semblance of death induced by some West African drug, the secret of which is zealously guarded by those who use it.

The centres of the brain controlling speech and the will seem to be destroyed; the victim being only able to move and act, but cannot formulate thought.

He can be moved by his master from a distance, as an electrically controlled boat can be moved from

(Continued at foot of next column)

A STORY WITH A MORAL

MR. CHARLES BARBER, of Troutdale, Oregon, U.S.A. (one of our many American subscribers) writes as follows in regard to the failure of Peace predictions:

"I think the following narrative rather well illustrates the law's operation in regard to prediction. About fifteen years ago a strong-minded friend who was seeking spiritual truth responded to my invitation and had his first experience of communication. The result was another confirmed Spiritualist, with the addition of a wife and two young men (sons).

"In two or three years when a new house was wanted, but the means to secure it were lacking, the spirit-world came forward and promised that if they would proceed with the plans and the foundation the wherewithal would surely arrive. The faith by that time was strong enough, and the instructions were followed to the letter, when an unlooked for contract sufficient to pay for the house dropped into their hands. And that was only one of the demonstrations of their ability to predict.

"Then, on adjoining property, the near-by village sunk a shaft to obtain their water supply, and in doing so brought up promising samples of gold ore. This suggested "pay dirt" on the friend's land. From that moment the great desire grew and settled into a positive belief that the spirit-forces could bring it to pass and on every possible occasion the Controls would be importuned to confirm the idea—and finally did so.

This went on until a definite location was indicated where digging should begin. Down went the well, deep enough to prove the location fruitless; and the next year another Control (who claimed to have been an expert on earth) led the Medium to the exact spot. This time a much deeper test drilling was made, but with no better results. In spite of all this the man is still demanding his gold mine.

"To add to the difficulties of these well-meaning spirit forces, the extremely positive nature of the man and his indiscriminate publicity of what had been done about the house, coupled with his loud assurance that the gold would also come, did not leave them free to carry out their own plans in their own way."

(Continued from previous column)

the shore; yet the control does not seem to be hypnotic. A more complete robot cannot be imagined.

A man, punished by a well-known General, was heard to mutter: "I give you nine days." Nine days later the General was dead, and a friend, who had heard the threat, was summoned to bury him.

In spite of his suspicions there was nothing else to be done. Next day the grave was found to have been opened, and the body was gone. A few days later, by a strange chance, he was found being driven to the mountains, his hands tied behind him. He was rescued, but, as in all such cases, recovery was impossible.

It would almost seem as if the magician's claim was justified, and that the Zombie is a man without a mind, or, possibly, with a mind no longer functioning in contact with his body, but used by the Bocor to control it. That is a very interesting speculation.

There is a species of wasp, which can sting into paralysis the caterpillar in which it lays an egg, to keep it alive for the grub's consumption. The Bocor seems to be that sort of wasp.

"Z'affe mouton pas z'affe cabrite," runs a Creole proverb. "The affairs of the sheep are not for the nanny-goat;" meaning: "The affairs of the blacks are not for the whites."

Remembering it might aid our understanding.

Unknown to the World—Haiti, by Mabel Steedman, F.R.G.S. London. Hurst and Blackett. 1939. 12/6.

Voodoo Gods, by Zora Hurston. London. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. 1939.

AFTER-THOUGHTS ON PREDICTION AND FREE-WILL

By J. CECIL MABY, B.Sc.

SOME weeks ago (LIGHT, September 28th) I put forward three alternative explanations of the recent prediction failures, two of which have been quoted with approval by Mr. Abdy Collins and Lady Fry respectively; while all three have, I think, figured, in one form or another, in the comments of other contributors. And I still feel that one or other of those explanations is probably the right one, despite one correspondent's criticisms.

On the one hand, intense wishful thinking was unavoidable, the human mind being what it is; and such a tendency almost certainly lay at the root of the peace prophecies of those less talented automatists and would-be Mediums who cannot fairly lay claim to a true spiritistic guidance from without their own personalities, and who also lacked genuine prevision of the future—supposing that ever to be possible outside of telepathic information or unconscious deduction from known circumstances.

In the second place, there is the possibility that either the *soi-disant* spirit-communicators and "guides," or else our own minds, had correctly assessed the general will-to-peace of the world at large, and then taken a gamble on the probability of Hitler and his advisers and associates being still sufficiently perspicacious and rational not to have risked the ultimate calamity of war in the face of that almost universal will and concomitant political and moral pressure. Yet in that speculation both they and we were mistaken: a greater gambler than all the rest of us, Hitler himself, had the casting vote, and his insane ambition and emotional folly finally drove him to the unbelievable: self-assertion—his personal fate—was too powerful for him to resist. And thus war, which might have been avoided up to the very last hour, had reason and justice prevailed, came to Europe.

The faculty of prevision and prophecy, considered as a general prerogative of Mediums, Astrologers, automatists and other "psychic" subjects is, therefore, once more shown to be remarkably fallible, when it is, so to say, called up to order; though it may, under conditions of less mental duress, frequently prove itself spontaneously.

The moral of which sad failure is, as I see it personally, that one should never go purposely *seeking* such supernormal information in a predetermined and urgent frame of mind; for then one is liable merely to see the reflection of his own thoughts, whether conscious or unconscious, mirrored in the mind and communications of the Seer. Whereas, if one simply waits upon "the still small voice" in a perfectly passive and indeterminate frame of mind, without fear or favour, then, and then only, perhaps, the truth will occasionally and spontaneously be divulged to him or her of a pure heart and a single purpose in some dream, vision or automatic message.

That is where so many séance-room devotees of the addicted and insatiable sort, as well as the materialistic and hypercritical type of psychic researcher, meet their Waterloo. And that is why I, for one, have in the past frequently insisted upon the special value of spontaneous, unsought phenomena. They are, as a rule, veridical; and the mere fact that they cannot be readily produced to order, but, for the average individual, may be almost sole experiences of the kind in a whole life-time, seems to show that there is some very special and, one may not unwarrantably assume, *spiritual* grace appertaining to them. That is why, except under rather unusual, sympathetic and graceful circumstances (as in, say, a trusting and affectionate home-circle) the so-called extra-sensory faculties cannot well be made the subject of laboratory experiment. And I think that there is reason to suppose that the relatively simple type of emotional transmissions—the "psycho-radiant reflexes" of Cazzamalli—which simulate simple forms of telepathy, probably form a separate problem of short-wave wireless telegraphy, causing reflex reactions in a dowsing-type subject at short range: so that true telepathy, clairvoyance and spiritistic phenomena are not here involved. Such physical phenomena may, therefore, more suitably be made the subject of laboratory experiment.

In LIGHT for October 12th a correspondent, O. L. Holland, very justly points to certain philosophical implications of my previous article (*Loc. cit.*). But it appears to have been overlooked that the various factors there discussed were stated as alternatives, the acceptance of one of which might automatically dispense with the rest. Nor was any profound philosophical analysis either intended or implied; while I did not finally commit myself to any of the tentative explanations. I must, therefore, plead "not guilty" to my critic's charges of inconsistency and self-contradiction.

NO RIGID PREDESTINATION

Personally, I do not by any means accept the idea of rigid predestination, but incline to a belief in the sort of plastic and voluntarily modifiable future indicated by Saltmarsh and others. In other words, I believe that although the sole activity of non-vital, mechanical and purely physical laws throughout the world would indubitably lead to a "predestined" and irrevocable future, in accordance with the strict letter of the law of causality; yet, things being as they are, and there being also (as Vitalists, some psychologists, theologians and Spiritualists believe) a non-mechanical, or psychical realm in nature, the automatic and blindly instinctive course of events is continually altered by individual acts of free-will. That is to say, one may, if he is sufficiently self-conscious, intelligent and purposive decide at any moment upon some course of action that is entirely against the natural grain of his being and environment. Such a decision then constitutes an act of free-will. It may also modify the "natural" or mechanical course of events very considerably—even on a vast historical scale, should one happen to be a prominent statesman or person of marked genius.

Hitler's recent war decision is a case in point; though an error in my original article was, perhaps, to have supposed that Hitler exhibited free-will when he attacked Poland. It is more probable that he was simply giving way to the second, less rational and more emotional personality of his well-known schizophrenic make-up. In fact, this politician presents to the world a very clear example of split personality: one half rational, thoughtful, brilliant and progressive; the other instinctive, emotional, reflexive and irrational. And it is the latter component that, perhaps, makes of Hitler a "tool of Destiny," with what may conceivably be the fateful role of acting as a social and moral purgative to a decadent civilisation; what is fundamentally good and worth-while being, by reason of the very extremity to which he has forced his contemporaries, once again clearly demonstrated for all the world to see, so that mankind may openly choose between good and evil . . . Out of evil comes good. And in such a sense, Hitler's war may be a natural necessity to save our souls.

For the rest, to discuss whether Fate, Destiny, Providence, etc., are synonymous with the modern conception of God would lead us into deep philosophical waters. I would, however, like to say here that I only regard as fatalistic and predestinate such phenomena and vital actions as are controlled solely by physico-mechanical laws; whereas the term Destiny takes into consideration the more plastic and hopeful psychical component of being, with its power to reason and face about by voluntary adaptation or re-orientation. Thus Hitler's *Destiny* was, perhaps, to have become a great leader and reorganiser of the German peoples, but his *Fate* (the ruling of personality B) was to let an un-

scrupulous lust for power drive him and his to barbaric excesses and the ultimate nemesis of European war. Thus Fate, in his case, was too strong for his "lucky stars."

What men called Providence (God's Providence) is, I think, something too vague and questionable to be defined. On the one hand it is considered "providential" when heavy rains flood an enemy's fortifications but not our own, but merely an unfortunate vagary of the weather when thunderstorms, say, beat down our crops at home; while for the enemy precisely the reverse interpretation obtains.

Similarly, we pray for rain in times of drought, and if by a coincidence it happens to come in apparent answer to such prayers, religious-minded people consider it to be "providential." But an answer to their prayers for divine aid in relation to such elemental control is very seldom forthcoming; and then it is, not infrequently, in contradiction to the wishes of other equally good and needy folk, who may want the reverse conditions. One cannot, therefore, attribute such coincidences to the interference of a merciful or just God, who, in order to answer many of our prayers would have, first, to relieve one person or community at the expense of another, and, second, to contravene His own laws of universal causality and justice. God is more just then that.

Another type of supposed "providential" interference is when our prayers and good wishes seem to help some individual or community to recover from a bodily or mental malady. Distant treatment in Spiritualist practice is of this kind, and one would not wish to deny the reality of such help. It may, however, be quite properly referred to telepathic action of a psycho-physical kind, and there seems to be no need to call in divine intervention—except in so far as love, sympathy and good-will are in themselves divine attributes of the higher types of human personality.

For within and behind all such effects God may be conceived as the great hypothetical, yet very real, driving force, latent in all creation, but becoming patently manifest in beauty, love, intellect, culture and all progressive tendencies; since God, as the divine spark in Nature, is essentially purposive and creative as well as inexorably just and merciless where wrong-livers and wrong-doers are concerned, in the sense of oriental Karma and the second commandment of ancient Israel.

"THANK YOU, Mr. PREVOST BATTERSBY"

ALTHOUGH for many years I have been an admirer of Mr. H. F. Prevost Battersby's erudite reviews and articles, I consider that he has never written anything so important as one paragraph in his reply to my old friend Mr. Arthur Findlay, *viz*:

> "I hold that Spiritualism must depend for its vitality and its permanence on its acceptance of the greatest moral and spiritual teacher the world has ever known as its guide, and that any Spiritualist who tries to reduce that august personality to the stature of an indifferent Medium commits an offence against his faith."

I would like to see that paragraph permanently upon the front page of LIGHT and all other Spiritualist literature.

As an old Spiritualist I know that the submersion of the Christ teaching under the flood of phenomena-seeking is the one great fault which prevents Spiritualism from being fully accepted by the world.

Thank you, Mr. Prevost Battersby. You have indicated the only way for Spiritualism to shake off its materialistic shackles and rise to become a true Church of God, following the simple teachings of Jesus Christ and practising the spiritual gifts of the first disciples.

ROBT. E. GOLDSBROUGH,
President of Victoria Christian Spiritualist Church, London.

THE PASSING OF DAVID GOW

THERE have been many expressions of regret at the passing of David Gow, and tributes to his work for Spiritualism, in addition to those published in LIGHT last week.

Writing from Radlett, Herts., H. B. Taylor and D. Taylor say: "May two old readers of LIGHT send thoughts of good will to join the many others that will follow David Gow into his new life." That, we think, may be taken as expressing the feelings of many who read and admired LIGHT during the seventeen years of David Gow's editorship.

The following tributes are of special interest:

From James Leigh, Editor of "Prediction" and formerly assistant Editor of the "Two Worlds"

I WAS distressed to learn of the passing of David Gow. Everyone who knew him intimately must share with me a warm appreciation of his splendid character and his undoubted talent. It was Mr. Gow who, when I first came to London, took me in hand, introduced me to everyone of note, and characteristically did everything in his power to assist a rival journalist.

Mr. Gow's knowledge of Spiritualism and all its ramifications was greater than that of any man I know. He had a remarkable memory and seemed to carry in his head a mental file of all the past volumes of LIGHT and its contemporaries.

In late years his health was overshadowed by a severe illness which prevented him from playing any prominent part in the movement. Even so, his influence survives, and perhaps the highest tribute which could be paid to him is that he amply maintained the fine traditions laid down by preceding Editors of LIGHT—an office which (to the movement's good fortune) has always been held by a writer of outstanding brilliance.

JAMES LEIGH.

* * * *

From W. H. Evans

I FIRST met David Gow in 1914 not long after he became Editor of LIGHT, and from then until his illness, I enjoyed his friendship.

Before coming to reside in London, it was one of my keenest pleasures to call on him at the office of LIGHT. His personality stimulated and inspired; and, after a talk with him, I left with a mind teeming with new ideas and with a freshened outlook. His ready sympathy and spiritual insight helped him to see the best in people, while his wide knowledge and sound judgment on matters psychic made him a reliable guide amidst the shoals and quicksands of psychic investigation.

He had a faculty of prevision; and I remember, when calling upon him in the early part of 1931, how he suddenly stopped in the midst of writing a letter and turned to me saying: "You will soon be coming to Town. It won't be long." At that time there was nothing, so far as I could see, to indicate such a change, but before the year was out I was offered the editorship of *Beyond*, and the prediction was fulfilled. Others could tell of similar incidents and he used humorously to say to me that it was having Mr. Leigh Hunt so long in the office of LIGHT with him that accounted for it. "Leigh Hunt's mediumship is catching," he would say with his roguish smile.

Now he has left his worn-out bodily garment and entered that plane of life with which he was so familiar, we can think of him as the David we knew before his illness, and we can imagine the joy he will feel in the restoration of his fine powers and great abilities. There, he will find outlet for his creative energies, and will, no doubt, be another link in the chain of those whose interest in the work of LIGHT we know is unabated.

He was blessed in his last years with the love, devotion, and untiring attention of his wife, to whom our sympathies go out in this separation.

W. H. EVANS.

Light

All communications for the EDITOR *should be addressed*: "*The Editor of Light*, 16 *Queensberry Place, South Kensington, London, S.W.7.*" *'Phone Kensington* 3292-3.

EDITOR - - GEORGE H. LETHEM

AS WE SEE IT

ARMISTICE DAY—AND AFTER

ARMISTICE DAY was always sorrowful, because of the recollection of the long-drawn out tragedy of the World-War; this year, it was doubly sorrowful, because of the final realisation that the sacrifices of the Great War had been made in vain: it was a War to end War, and War has come again.

We, on This Side, are sorrowful and disappointed; on the Other Side, too, we may be sure, there is sorrow and disappointment amongst those who made the great sacrifice and who, "with larger, other eyes than ours," watch the unrolling of another time of tragedy.

Yet Armistice Day has its message of Hope. War is with us again; but we may hope it will neither be so long nor so tragic as the last war, and that it will be followed by a Peace which will be both just and lasting. From many quarters come assurances that this hope will be realised, and, we may, at least, try to believe them. How Peace will come, it is as yet impossible to see. Complete victory in a military sense will be hard to achieve; and the country has the assurance of King George (in response to the Peace appeal of the Queen of Holland and the King of the Belgians), and also of the Prime Minister (Mr. Chamberlain) that this country and her allies do not wish "to continue the war a day longer than is necessary, if a satisfactory settlement can be obtained in any other way."

Meanwhile—whatever our views are regarding the coming of the War or the tragedies inseparable from its continuance—we can all recognise the truth of the assurance given by the Queen in her Armistice Day broadcast to the women of the Empire that in carrying on our ordinary home duties and meeting all our worries cheerfully we "are giving real service to the country."

Without doubt, the Queen was right when she said that "women of all lands yearn for the day when it will be possible to set about building a new and better world, where peace and good-will shall abide," and that "only when we have won through to an enduring Peace shall we be free to work unhindered for the greater happiness and well-being of all mankind."

And not women only—but men of good-will in all lands. For, as President Roosevelt said in his Armistice Day broadcast:

"The whole world needs a new and better Peace: a Peace which shall cause men at length to lay down the weapons of hatred which have been used to divide them and forgo the purposeless ambitions which have created fear—ambitions which in the long run serve no useful end. We seek a language," President Roosevelt continued, "in which neighbour can talk to neighbour, men can talk to men, and by which the common, homely, human instincts which are found everywhere may reach expression through the elimination of fear."

So let us pray for and do all in our power to secure a just and lasting Peace, confident that in doing so we are acting in accordance with the will of God and that, consequently, we can be assured of the help and inspiration of the great company on the Other Side who sympathise with us in our troubles and who, in their own sphere, are doing all they can to lift the cloud of evil by which our world is oppressed.

SEEKING A NEW NAME FOR SPIRITUALISM

AS a clergyman of the Church of England, may I plead for a very careful consideration of Dr. Frederic Wood's article, "Seeking a New Name" (LIGHT, November 9th). In clerical circles, and indeed amongst most people, speaking generally, the word "Spiritualism" is connected with table-turning, darkened rooms, mental aberration, etc., and there is therefore a prejudice against even introducing the subject for discussion or study.

The majority of clergy, at all events, are repelled by the name "Spiritualism," and so long as it is the only name by which the subject can be introduced among them, it makes the study of Survival and modern psychic research almost impossible.

Dr. Wood has suggested an alternative word "Psychosophy" and it deserves, I think, most careful consideration. A paper on "Psychosophy" or "The New Psychosophy," would, I believe, in scientific or clerical circles, receive a very different hearing than the same paper under the title, "Spiritualism."

A PADRE.

"COSMIC PHILOSOPHY"

HOW many of us must be expressing our gratitude to Dr. Wood, for framing, as he does in his masterly review of the subject, our need for a fitting "label" that will cover our belief?

Indeed, developed Sensitive that he is, he has probably responded to the urge that thousands of us have been putting on the ether, made an effort to find a solution for us, and to answer our call for a definition that will settle this vexed question and problem of nomenclature.

My gratitude to Dr. Wood makes me the more reluctant to criticise. But I do not like his term "New Psychosophy." "New" it is not. On the contrary. Are we not claiming, all the time, that we are accepting and practising merely what is as old as life itself?

And "Psychosophy"? Where will the adoption of such a word lead us, but into a fresh maze? Is not psycho-*anything* enough to "empty the lecture-room at once" (as Dr. Wood says).

In the issue of LIGHT for November 2nd (p. 664), I was delighted to meet the term "Cosmic Philosophy" and proclaim to my family I had, at last, found a fitting definition for all that Spiritualism stands for, and claims to be, summed up in these two words. These words are, moreover, familiar and not coined; and the expression is particularly apt, in that it can be accepted generally, and embraced by every religion, the wide world over, as in agreement with their own particular form of belief.

What is any Religion but a form of "Cosmic Philosophy"? We are indebted to Mr. Hereward Carrington for this expression, and I, for one, should like to vote in favour of its general adoption for our purpose.

FLORENCE HODGKIN.

"IT MAY BE CALLED CHRISTIANITY"

MANY Spiritualists would prefer another name, and most of them, I feel sure, will agree with the views expressed by Dr. Wood in his article in LIGHT of 9th November. But, when all is said and done, if goods are wrongly labelled, the fault might be with the goods, not with the label; or, to put it another way, if we fail to come up to the quality indicated by our label, and experience any remorse or indignity in consequence, then we must be content to "let the punishment fit the crime."

In short, if we want respect, we must earn it. If we want belief in survival and communication to spread and produce the will to build a happier world; if we want our seven principles to apply—*first to ourselves*, and then to others—we must not attempt to change

(Continued at foot of next column)

LOOKING ROUND THE WORLD

FATHER THURSTON'S LAST WORDS

FATHER HERBERT THURSTON, S.J. (whose death at the age of 83 we recorded last week) retained his interest in Spiritualism and Psychical Research up to the last, and what may probably have been his final literary effort was a review of Mr. Harry Price's book, *Fifty Years of Psychical Research*, which appears in the November issue of *The Month*—a Jesuit publication to which he had contributed for many years and in which most of his articles on psychic topics appeared.

Father Thurston—like some other reviewers—mentions what he calls Mr. Price's "showman-like policy," but adds that "he is probably as competent to speak as anyone we could name, as he has the advantage of wide personal contact with the (psychic) phenomena and their producers, as well as the book-knowledge which comes from a extensive study of the literature." From Father Thurston, we think Mr. Price will be justified in regarding this as very high praise.

A GENEROUS VIEW

It is noteworthy that, in regard to the phenomena of certain Mediums who have been denounced as "frauds," Father Thurston took a more generous view than Mr. Price. He admits that it was proved that Palladino sometimes resorted to trickery (as she admitted) and that "the more weak-minded and unscrupulous amongst them" (physical Mediums) "equip themselves with all the paraphernalia of trickery to meet the possible emergency" of failure, but he adds: "This, I submit, constitutes no proof that they produced no genuine phenomena," and he gives his reason for believing that they did.

Father Thurston also disagrees with the commendation Mr. Price gives to Mr. Podmore's anti-Spiritualistic book, *Modern Spiritualism* (1902). "I am far from considering Podmore's book a masterly performance," says Father Thurston. "It is extremely slovenly—one is loath to say unscrupulous—in its treatment of all evidence which does not happen to fall in with Podmore's own prepossessions."

"A TIRED OLD MAN"

This review is one more proof that Father Thurston not only regarded the reality of psychic phenomena—physical and mental—as clearly proved, but that he leaned as far as a Jesuit Priest could be expected to lean towards the Spiritualist explanation and did not hesitate to say so.

Father Thurston was—as he himself said in a recent letter to the Editor of LIGHT—"a tired old man," but we cannot imagine that he will want to "rest in peace" very long on the Other Side, although he is well entitled to do so. Rather, we think, he will soon be busy, amongst other things, finding out just how far he was right and how far he was wrong in the views he had formed about Survival and spirit-communication. And, when once he has satisfied himself, we think it very probable that he will find some means of letting his friends know.

(Continued from previous column)

boats in the middle of the stream, but go on until Spiritualism can support its name. Then one day, perhaps, it will have to be changed: it may be called CHRISTIANITY. J. H. WEBSTER (MAJOR).

"SOUL SCIENCE"

I SUGGEST that instead of using the somewhat abstruse title of the "New Psychosophy" for the higher teachings of Spiritualism, we should substitute the simpler meaning of those words, *i.e.*, "Soul Science" or "The Science of the Soul." Would not this meet the need for a "new name" for a highly valuable contribution to the world's knowledge on this all-important subject of the Soul and its activities, both here and hereafter? "A PARSON'S WIFE."

THE SHATTERED SILENCE

THE Sacred Silence was shattered, but poppies red,
Flowered as the emblems of those who do not sleep;
We fight for we may not break faith with legions—dead,
That their sons might inherit freedom, so we keep
In this tortured travail their trust, the road they trod
We must follow with steadfast feet, their souls reborn
Struggle with us again and light our prayers towards God,
That the era of Peace among nations shall dawn.

MARJORIE COLLINGDON.

MR. HARRY PRICE'S PREDICTIONS

Mr. Harry Price is amongst the Prophets. In *Prediction* for December, he gives his views on the future of Spiritualism and Psychical Research, "based on a careful summing-up of the present conditions and probable state of affairs."

"I believe that Spiritualism and allied occult activities will continue in a minor key and in a much slower *tempo*," he writes. "I believe that our subject will be taken more seriously and that the fake Medium will not have such a good time as he did in the last war.

"I believe that we shall read more. The dark nights, lack of amusements, conservation of petrol, difficulty in travelling, and restricted wireless programmes, will compel us to spend more time at home and thus give us more opportunities for studying the printed word.

"I believe there will be a boom in good books dealing with psychics. People will want to get away from the war news and will turn to psychical literature as a distraction, and for information."

MRS. ETTA WRIEDT

To the younger generation of Spiritualists in this country, the name of Mrs. Etta Wriedt of Detroit, U.S.A., is not so well known as to the older generation; but even the younger generation have read of the wonders of her voice mediumship (or if not, they have missed something of real importance) in such books as Admiral Usborne Moore's *Glimpses of the Next State* and *The Voices*.

Mr. Donald G. McDonald, of Detroit, writes that Mrs. Wriedt (now well up in years) has been seriously ill—first with appendicitis, for which an operation was necessary, and then with pneumonia, which followed. Mr. McDonald reports that at the time of writing (October 20th) she was recovering rapidly and expected to be out of hospital soon.

Mr. McDonald adds that when he told her he intended to acquaint her British friends (via LIGHT) with news of her recovery, "her face beamed" for "the love she bears for Britain and its people is touching, and she never tires of telling of the many kindnesses shown her. It is also interesting to note," Mr. McDonald adds, "that she never occupies the role of the principal character in these accounts—rather, she sings the praise of the delightful men and women whom she met and who welcomed her with such friendly warmth."

There must be many amongst the present readers of LIGHT who had sittings with Mrs. Wriedt during her visits to this country, and they will be especially interested to have the news which Mr. McDonald so kindly sends.

WHAT OUR READERS ARE SAYING

TRY THE SPIRITS

SIR,—Whilst I have neither the desire nor the intention to enter the controversy respecting the "No-War" prophecies (except a passing reference to the fact that in our own Home Circle this popular view was refuted), I certainly feel that Spiritualism was in an unfortunate plight previous to the War, for it had resolved itself into various schools of thought, the paramount interest being the claim that certain well-beloved Guides were infallible in their views and were interpreting the will of God. Those who did not accept this view were regarded as unworthy of the name of Spiritualists.

It was more than unfortunate, as it should surely have been recognised that no Spirit, however reliable in general guidance, was in a position to speak as with the special authority of the Almighty; and to add to this, those who did so were the first to deny the right of Jesus to speak in His Father's name.

During the Crisis of 1938, those who took the more cautious view respecting the position of the Guides in their interpretation of the Divine Law were publicly upbraided for not coming into line, and thus the gap widened. Spiritualism can never find strength in mere popularity hunting. It is infinitely grander and nobler than that.

I do not claim to know, but think it may be possible that Peace can only come through the present War, which is deigned to end the rule of Force. Similarly, it may be that Spiritualism had to be purged of the somewhat bombastic attitude of those who professed to speak in its name, and to bring its members to consider the admonition in the 3rd Chapter of the Second Epistle of St. John: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God."

Holloway. WM. W. DRINKWATER.

"RESURRECTION" AND "LAST DAY"

Sir,—There is no doubt that much of the confusion and contradiction with regard to religious teaching is due to misinterpretation of words and meanings of Scripture. Jesus Christ in His sermon to the Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum (vi. St. John) repeated four times "I will raise him up at the last day." This sense of the word "day" may doubtless be understood as "age"—or last stage of the Soul's pilgrimage. Or "day" may be an interpolation. The same applies to "the resurrection of *the* body"—not, of course, the temporal body which has been parted with for ever (no one who thought sensibly could believe that) but *our* body, the body relating to, and in accordance with, and identified with *our* soul. St. Paul, in Romans viii., 23, alludes to "the redemption of our body." A "restoration" or "reinstatement."

So little allowance is made for the age-old Scriptural writings and Gospels, subjected to many translations.

St. John's Wood. (Mrs.) M. C. MERRETT.

Mrs. STOBART'S CALL

Sir,—I note that Mrs. Stobart is still deploring the immovability of Spiritualism. *Why* it does not move is because it is based on the rock of demonstrated survival, from which position it has never budged. As to the number of its adherents, however, it has grown with amazing rapidity from the day of its inception until now its followers can be numbered by the thousand instead of the few hundreds as was the case less than a century ago. In fact, it puts even Christianity into the shade in this respect. To my mind the alarm and bitter opposition of the Churches to its propaganda is sufficient proof of the strides it is making and the genuineness of its claims.

As to the Leaders: many of those who stand high up in the movement would far better merit the name of Psychic-Researcher than Spiritualist, the latter being a word to which they appear to have the greatest objection and from which they always hasten to dis-associate themselves. In my opinion those who believe in present-day communication with the next world are in reality Spiritualists, no matter what they may term themselves.

I fail to see how either Christianity or Modern Spiritualism can ever fade out, as Mrs. Stobart fears. Both may need a little "adjusting," but they are founded on the fact of survival. The knowledge of this great truth may seem to dwindle and at times almost to pass away, but it never dies; in the heart of man it still lingers, and in God's good time will rise again stronger and with new meaning to help and comfort the despairing and the sick of heart.

AUBREY TURLE.

Rev. A. H. E. LEE'S "CHALLENGE"

Sir,—As I anticipated, the Rev. Mr. Lee, when asked for proof of Christ's resurrection such as would satisfy judge and jury or a number of scientists examining the case, can give *no proof at all.* After the manner of his kind, when asked for bread he offers a stone: he cannot prove Christ's resurrection and blindly opposes the modern evidence which alone makes Christ's resurrection credible.

Also, he gives no answer to H.J.T's query as to what "conquering death" means, if it does not mean survival and continued life. This is the way in which clerical anti-Spiritualists—blind leaders of the blind—usually behave when challenged. Blatant in their demand for evidence of modern spiritualistic phenomena, when themselves challenged for evidence of the resurrection of Christ and the spirit-phenomena of the New Testament, they can give none, but crumple up like a spider thrown on a red-hot shovel. What is the use of referring readers to 1st Cor., xv., when there is no copy of it in existence which dates earlier than the Codex Vaticanus (A.D.325)?

Mr. Lee talks airily about a "Challenge to Spiritualists." A challenge to Spiritualists, forsooth! The boot is on the other leg. It is Spiritualists who are challenging clergy like himself all over the country.

It is, indeed, laughable to see Mr. Lee quoting *Paul in Athens* when by so doing he is quoting one of the mediumistic revelations which he terms "a dubious weapon."

SCRUTATOR.

ANIMAL SURVIVAL

Sir,—Being a very firm believer in human survival, I am naturally interested in that of animals. Some Mediums say that they are with us in the next stage of life *only* if our love draws them to us. If that is so, are they not merely thought-forms created by our memory?

I have heard that some dogs can feel the presence of people passed on more clearly than we can. Does not that in itself prove that they have another life?

Although it is difficult to believe that horses and dogs, and the higher types of animals end their existence at death, one can hardly see the continued need for such creatures as snakes and crocodiles, etc.! Then comes the point: If animals do go on living, how can they progress? If this is impossible, why do they continue at all?

Perhaps the most sensible idea is that they really do live with us, as on earth. But then one thinks of all the creatures of the jungle. Will they be able to create similar surroundings from their own thoughts and memories, or is it one of our jobs when we pass over to do it for them? This last sounds rather fantastic; but the whole problem is very puzzling, especially when one hears that flowers and plants have spirits.

(Miss) AVEY POUNDER.

(A number of letters have been unavoidably held over)

PRAYERS FOR PEACE

AS a Spiritualist and as one of the three million that prayed earnestly for Peace, may I venture to put forward some suggestions for thought that may help those who are dispirited and disappointed at not getting Peace?

When they prayed, did they ever think (for prayer must be constructive thinking) that Hitler was to become overnight a humane and large-hearted ruler? Did they take into account the fact of Free-will? Did they mean "Peace at any price," Peace without war, or Peace after war? Did they forget that some Peace would only continue to be unofficial war between man and man—oppression and cruelty would have still continued in that sort of peace?

Is it not possible that God so wills it that Peace, real Peace, can only come after sacrifice and war? Had we got Peace, would we have been satisfied to leave millions of human beings at the mercy of their oppressors? I think not.

It seems to me that the need for our prayers for Peace is greater than ever, so that when the time comes we shall be given the opportunity, under God, to make the world a happier place; and, to this end, let us make up our minds how we, each one of us, are going to help God to make a real Peace.

Meanwhile, should we not thank God always for the wonderful blessings to us as a nation that have been granted to us—Italy friendly and neutral; Turkey very friendly; the loyalty of the Dominions and Colonies; Spain disgusted at the Germano-Russian Pact turns to the democracies; better relations with Japan; the lifting of the arms embargo in America; our mastery of the seas; our freedom from air raids; the unity and strength of the French nation; our own unity of purpose—and many other things, if we will allow ourselves to count the blessings which are gradually and, in God's own time, answering our prayers for Peace.

ALICE FRANCES.

HELPING THE SPIRITUAL PEACE POWERS

IF, as seems to be the case, Herr Hitler waits on inspiration before making a move, the present time (when he is obviously in the throes of indecision) is one of immense possibilities for good or evil. The forces of Right are fighting to overcome the forces of Evil which have him in their power. They need help desperately, help that can be given by concentrated thoughts and prayers directed to the throwing out of evil influences and the implanting of the Spirit of Truth and Right. With this help, the right thoughts might be placed in Herr Hitler's mind and there guarded so that they can germinate and fructify.

Think what this would mean to the world! This war is one of Spiritual Powers more than arms. If the Allies do not fight with the Spiritual Truth, even though we should win the war, our cause—that of freeing Europe and the German people from the bondage to tyranny and the strengthening of the ties of good fellowship between all nations—will be lost.

It is up to us now, and all together, to lend our weight to those Spiritual forces who are fighting in this great cause.

Spilsby, Lincs. JOY AND FRED ATKIN.

The Rev. Owen R. Washburn, of Guilford, Vermont, U.S.A., writes saying that on October 13th he received a communication from Daniel Webster, a leading statesman of his day in America, in which it was prophesied that Japan will join the Allies, that the arms embargo will be repealed by the U.S. Congress, that President Roosevelt will serve a third term (of four years), and that Russia will quarrel with Hitler and then "no more Germany."

PROFESSOR SAURAT'S LECTURES

PSYCHIC Research, the scientific foundation of Spiritualism, owes much to many distinguished Frenchmen—the late Dr. Gustav Geley and Dr. Eugene Osty, Professor Charles Richet, Rene Sudre, and others. The first two in turn were responsible for the brilliant work done at the Institut Metapsychique in Avenue Niel, Paris, which Institute at one time received a grant from the French Government.

It is, therefore, important to note that at the present time the Institut Francais du Royaume-Uni (Universities de Lille et de Paris) situated at Queensberry Place, London, is opening its doors to the public for lectures in English on Psychical Research, and a course of six lectures will be given during January to March by Professor Denis Saurat of the University of London (King's College).

As will be noted in our advertisement columns, Professor Saurat is to give a lecture entitled: "Psychical Phenomena and the Christian Religion" on Tuesday, November 28th, at 6 p.m., when Dr. Matthews, the Dean of St. Paul's, will preside.

From the preliminary information of the forthcoming course after Christmas, it is learnt that the lecture to be given on November 28th will be introductory to the series in English. (The same course will also be delivered in French). All students of Spiritualism and Psychical Research should make a note of this important opportunity to study the work of our friends and allies, the French, in the domain of Psychical Research.

The titles of each of the six lectures in 1940 have not yet been publicly announced, but it would be specially advisable for those interested in the forthcoming series to attend on November 28th.

There is no doubt that the 1940 course of lectures will be the reverse of simple. From a preliminary glance at the selected titles, it may be assumed that Professor Saurat will do much to explain the advanced knowledge of the psyche gained by very thorough and impartial investigation. To encourage those interested in the scientific foundation of our work, a personal reference to Professor Saurat may be excused. The Professor has the gift of lucid exposition. He conveys ideas with great clarity and sometimes much humour, as anyone will know who is attending his lectures on "The Present Situation of our Civilisation."

One cannot anticipate much intentional humour in Psychical Research, but inasmuch as it deals with the very essence of our existence, humour surely has a place. A conversation with Mr. Waite is recollected when some natural oddity was referred to, and Mr. A. E. Waite said, with his delightful drollery: "The Universe is not without an element of waggery." If that element should raise its head in Psychical Research, Professor Saurat will assuredly assist it with an encouraging word. And such is all to the good in tackling difficult problems.

MERCY PHILLIMORE.

CLAIRVOYANT GLIMPSES

A very pleasant surprise awaits readers of the booklet, *Charmed Magic Casements* (Bournemouth Times, Ltd., 2/-) which is announced as containing "clairvoyant glimpses by Nesta of the Forest." The "clairvoyant glimpses" are there, and many of them are both interesting and evidential of the reality of what has come to be called "Extra-Sensory Perception." But, in addition, there are a number of delightful historical and topographical sketches of places in and around Bournemouth and people who have been associated with them. There is, for instance, a chapter on "Bournemouth's Links with Caractacus and His Father, King Bran the Blessed," in which the curtains of time are lifted from Hengistbury Head ("that sheer geological freak which abuts from the headland to the East of Bournemouth Bay") and other mysterious places. The book is edited by Peter Phillips, and there is an attractive picture of Nesta.

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W. STAINTON MOSES

ON reading your article (LIGHT, November 2nd) on the 110th anniversary of the birth of W. Stainton Moses, may I add a few lines from one who was educated at both the schools he was at—Bedford Grammar School (as it was then called) and University College School, at which he was one time a teacher of English. I have been told by Masters he worked with, what a wonderful personality he had, and how he was loved by all his pupils. I have before me the University College School Register, 1831-1898, and in it his photo and description. E. A. G. DANIELL.

* * *

From a lady who does not wish her name to be used, we have received the script of a message purporting to be from William Stainton Moses, written on November 5th (All Souls' Day), the centenary of his birth.

"Tell my old friends," said the Communicator, "that . . . we are working with all our power to aid the world through this dark period of its history. It is, indeed, a dark age and one which needs all Christian men and women to work with us in stemming the tide of evil which is sweeping over you like dark clouds."

A SPIRIT MINISTRANT

HERE is the narrative of a recent happening in the English hospital at Nice by a lady who was a patient there at the time. The story is told in a letter dated October 29th, 1939, and the event took place a few days before that time:

"At the hospital we had a gentle little ghost. She had died one night while I was there, but later on that night she appeared at the bedside of another patient who had long been paralysed and could not speak a word. The ghost touched her on the shoulder and told her not to worry 'for she was cured and could now speak.' The dumb woman was so startled that she must have cried out, for the night nurse came in. At once the woman began to talk freely and naturally, telling the nurse all that had happened. Of course the nurse said it was a dream: but the poor mute is still able to talk, and she declares that it was *not* a dream, but that it really happened."

F. BLIGH BOND.

THIS FREEDOM

The seasons come, the seasons go,
The tides for ever ebb and flow,
And all above, and all below,
Unerringly is guided.
And man alone can choose his fate,
His soul to damn or elevate,
And Life, and Death, for ever wait,
How awful is this freedom!

H.D.B.

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LECTURES

Professor DENIS SAURAT will lecture in English at the Institut Francais, Queensberry Place, South Kensington, S.W.7, on PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION on Tuesday, November 28, at 6 p.m. Chairman: The Very Rev. W. R. MATTHEWS, K.C.V.O., D.D., Dean of St. Paul's. Admission free (without tickets), subject to accommodation, to any person sending in advance a post-card to the Secretary. Please ask also for details of other lectures, Anglo-French social meetings, French lending library (including postal service), etc.

MISS ESTELLE W. STEAD

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