

eyes fixed steadily on the ground ahead. Nothing happened. I realized that now I looked the same as all the others at whose manner I had been so alarmed. Nothing happened. Still nothing . . . *Something* had happened. The wire was twisting. With all my strength I hung on, tightened my grip. The wire kept on twisting downwards, the end of it into my palm, until I had to let go with the pain of it. From the length of the wire and the direction in which it turned I could see plainly that Chief Witch-doctor could have done nothing to cause that force. There was something I couldn't understand. His wrists couldn't have moved the wire in that direction; it wasn't physically possible. Also the wire was too long (about 2 ft.) to be moved by a man's hand with that force. Nobody could have been more sceptical at the start; now I was beginning to wonder.



It was only at certain spots that the wire reacted in this strange way. I tried by myself; the force was not as great, but it was strong enough to be noticeable, at times to wrench the wire from my hands. It appeared that only some people had the "gift"; Chief Witch-doctor had it unusually strongly; I noticeably. I spent an hour trying to return to my former state of scepticism, but I went away convinced—of what I didn't know. I had red, sore palms, the skin had been broken in places from trying to hold that wire. It was no use.

Later in the afternoon I tried again over the hill. The results were so strong that I judged we must be above a subterranean ocean. I asked the two physicists on the staff what they had to say. That morning I would have agreed with them, now I couldn't. The one (M.Sc., Oxon): "It's an old wives' tale. There is no known physical explanation; it just isn't possible." I wasn't much impressed by that; I expected something more logical from

this man (M.Sc., Oxon). After all, there is no physical explanation for many things in this world, but you can't just say they don't happen. The other (two years at Victoria College): "It's an old wives' tale. There is no known phy—" "Yes, I know," I interrupted, "but how do you account for water-diviners earning their living if there's nothing in it." Vict. Coll.: "They have a little knowledge of geology, and the rest is just

natural shrewdness." M.Sc. Oxon and Vict. Coll. agreed patronizingly that my success was only self-deception. I had, in spite of my scepticism, willed the wire to twist. I had willed so strongly that my hands didn't heal for several days. Previously I had always been told of my weakness of character. This was a new angle.

The next time I went on leave I decided to read some books on the subject, to try to find out who "had something there"—the Chief Witch-doctor or the M.Sc., Oxon. It was interesting; in parts it certainly was amusing. I read many pages. But I still know little more than I did before. At the public library three volumes on divining (or dowsing) were squeezed among books dealing with mental radiesthesia, hypnotism, and insanity. That didn't impress me much.

The reason, the books said, references to dowsing are few in the records from early times is probably that it was in such common use that no one bothered to write of it. The art can be traced back to before Mohammed, and in the fifteenth century German dowers were imported into England to try to discover lost tin-mines in Cornwall. At that time it was used chiefly for finding minerals, and the use of it to discover water does not appear to have become general until much later. In 1518 Martin Luther condemned it as "Black Magic," and some of its exponents to death for witchcraft. In the seventeenth century Jacques Aymar caused a