

for a dead person, as the register is then always followed by one turn, after a slight stop. For a male I get eight gyrations and one if dead, eight if living. This extra register is never given if the person is alive.

In this way I can pick up the writer of a letter, and the pendulum will register at the place from whence the letter came, subject to the elimination of those deceptive angle lines. From a photograph, also, the rod will indicate if the subject of the photo is dead or alive; if alive there is no depth register, while if dead, and the body buried, the depth can be fairly accurately stated by the rod's reaction.

With regard to water, I have been called in, in several cases, where wells have been sunk, and no water found, and have been entirely successful. The resident Water Engineer of a big town told me that a lady diviner had indicated a stream running under the pumping station, and asked if I could locate it. This I did, but stated it would be useless boring, as the water was very salt. He told me that, unfortunately, I was correct; a bore had been put down 300 feet, but the water was too salt to be used.

There are many other uses to which the rod and pendulum can be put, and the more one studies it the more fascinating the subject becomes.

If any of our members have been experimenting on these lines their experiences would be interesting.

WATER-DIVINING IN MALABAR

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The divining rod—at first mainly used for locating minerals—is believed to have found its way into the British Isles during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. For a long time it continued to be employed for detecting the presence of valuable ores, but the abuse by the “diviners” of their alleged gifts eventually brought this method of prospecting into disrepute, and the “rod” was used only for locating subterranean water.

Nowadays water divining is generally done by means of a forked hazel twig, but some “dowsers,” as the water-finders are

called in England, use twigs from various trees ; other practitioners favour watch-springs, metal rods, or pendulums of various shapes, and seem to achieve equally good results.

The most common method of divination is to hold the forked twig in both hands and walk over the ground where water is being sought. The twig, twisting in the hands of the "dowser," guides him to the hidden spring, the varying strength of the impulses indicating whether he is getting nearer to it or farther away.

In the hands of some of these diviners the intensity of the "spin" is so great that a strong man cannot keep the twig from moving ; occasionally it flies clean out of the "dowser's" hands. Some so-called diviners, no doubt, are charlatans, but it is equally certain that many "dowsers" actually possess the gift or faculty of being able to locate underground water.

In Malabar, India, the writer recently witnessed a demonstration of divining achieved with the aid of a coconut ! This method does not appear to have been recorded, and hence a brief description may be of interest to *Wide World* readers.

Malabar is a hilly, wooded area, with the Arabian Sea on one side and the Western Ghats on the other. This narrow strip of land enjoys an annual rainfall of over a hundred inches, and in view of this fact you may wonder at first why it should be necessary to resort to water-divining at all. In spite of the heavy rains, however, water-scarcity is not uncommon during the hot summer months.

Almost every house in Malabar possesses its own well, and when a new dwelling is erected the head carpenter usually selects the spot where the well is to be sunk. Most of these men observe certain ancient rules, not only in the construction of houses but in the sinking of wells, and everyone concerned follows the advice of the head carpenter to the letter ; he is the recognized authority.

During a religious conference one of these carpenters, a veteran nearly fourscore years of age, gave an exhibition of his powers as a "dowser." The old man was suffering from fever at the time, but in spite of his poor physical condition the demonstration proved most interesting.

Before the divination began, a small *pooja* (religious ceremony) was performed by the diviner at the spot where he hoped to locate underground water. The actual "dowsing" was done by means of a ripe coconut stripped of its fibre. The *pooja* lasted only a few minutes ; then the nut was placed on the middle of a plank laid flat on the ground.

The "dowser" next called a boy from among the audience

and asked him to squat on the nut. The youngster perched himself with both feet on the coconut and his hands resting on the plank on either side. The old carpenter then threw some sacred ashes on the nut and urged it to move. Presently, to the astonishment of all present, the coconut began to spin slowly in a clockwise direction, the boy, of course, moving with it! When the nut had turned halfway round, it spun back counter-clockwise, reached its original position, and remained still.

These movements apparently had a definite meaning for the "dowser," who interpreted them to us as indicating that there were layers of granite underneath the surface which would have to be blasted before water could be obtained. The clockwise movement, he explained, denoted the presence of water; the counter-swing was due to the granite, which acted as an impediment to the impulse. If subterranean water was entirely absent, he said, the coconut would revolve only in a counter-clockwise direction.

It should be noted that the old diviner did not state the depth at which water would be found, nor its probable volume. This the Western "dowser" is often able to do with great exactness.

The carpenter next inquired whether anyone present would like to test the method. Thereupon an European gentleman squatted on the coconut in the same way as the boy had done, and the whole process was gone through again—not once, but several times. This gentleman was of the opinion that some powerful unseen force acted on the coconut.

Sometimes the speed was so great that he had to show a good deal of nimbleness in balancing to avoid being thrown off. It appeared evident, from my own observation, that the "dowser" was able to increase the rate at which the coconut spun. The energy required to rotate the nut with a grown man squatting on it must be pretty considerable, and it is a mystery to me how it could be applied.

Water-divining as practised in the West necessitates close contact between the "dowser" and his rod or twig; without this "dowsing" is impossible except to a very few performers. A curious point about the Malabar method was that the old carpenter had no contact whatever with the coconut, which in this case served the purpose of the rod, but, as will be seen from the photograph, sat some distance away, and made no attempt to touch the nut.

I have heard several theories advanced regarding the "working" of the nut, but none of them strikes me as at all convincing. It would be interesting to know if any reader of *The Wide World Magazine* can supply a satisfactory explanation.