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EDITORIAL

IN this age of speed and hurry, abbreviation is counted a virtue, so let us say without apology that the B.S.D. came to life on May 4th, 1933.

The need for a point on which the ideas and theories of all those interested in this strange form of perception, which the French call Radiesthésie, can be focused has been recognized in several other European countries where Societies such as ours already exist.

The recorded practice of four centuries and almost daily examples of the useful application of the dowser's art suffice to convince all but the most obstinate sceptic of its reality and value. But many of those who are familiar with that aspect of dowsing known as water-divining are unaware of the other varied purposes to which the art can be applied and do not, perhaps, appreciate the far-reaching extent of its possibilities.

It seems that the dowser is one whose psycho-physiological constitution is such that he is able to perceive any abnormal or discordant element in his environment, and that, as an aid to perception, he usually provides himself with an instrument of one kind or another, be it a forked stick, a twisted wire, a straight wand, a metal spring or a pendant weight.

Hence it is that the expert dowser is able to detect the presence of any matter alien to its immediate surroundings below the surface of the ground and the existence of unhealthy tissue in animals and plants.

Further it appears that by the use of certain methods and devices—of which a few are common to all dowsers but most are individualistic—the expert can attain a high degree of accuracy in discerning the position, nature and extent of his objective.

But this is not the whole story.

A recognized phenomenon bearing some resemblance to that of scent, is the existence of an immaterial residuum which can be appreciated by the dowser after the object from which it originated has been removed.

Whilst adding a complication to the technique of dowsing, this phenomenon may partly explain the undoubted ability of certain dowsers to fix the direction of a dead or living animal, often from a considerable distance.

Readers will remember the startling series of articles in the papers a few weeks ago, telling how the Leicestershire dowser, John Clarke, by the aid of a well-known device discovered the positions of five dead bodies within the space of a few weeks. Other cases have been recorded such as that of Jacques Aymar in 1692, and it is probable that any very sensitive dowser could develop his faculties to this end. The value to the police of a dowser trained as a tracker need not be emphasized. The familiar knell, 'Missing from her home', would lose its dread significance, and the criminal who left a personal possession at the place of his crime would seal his own doom.

There is yet another aspect of dowsing in which the psychical element appears to be the dominating factor, namely, the ability to obtain over a map the reactions which the dowser would experience on the ground. The evidence in favour of the successful application in certain cases of this extraordinary and inexplicable faculty cannot be ignored. Perhaps it can best be described as a physical reaction due to subconscious perception in which the familiar movements of the dowsing instrument are reproduced more or less accurately.

Let us leave it there for the present.

NOTICES

SUBSCRIPTIONS and applications for membership should be sent to the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.

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Communications for the Editor and inquiries should be addressed to Colonel A. H. Bell, Backwoods, Lindfield, Sussex.

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It is proposed to hold a few informal meetings during the next few months at which members can discuss their views and experiences and exchange information.