

SOME DOWSING EXPERIENCES

By HELEN M. G. WEDDERBURN-MAXWELL

We first thought anything about water-finding when my husband, the late Major Wedderburn-Maxwell, of Glenlair, asked Mr. H——, factor on a neighbouring estate, to come and find a spring on one of his farms.

Before lunch he was playing with his forked rods—metal ones, if I remember rightly—and said to my husband, "You have a try." To the astonishment of both it proved that my husband had the power—"stronger than I have it," said Mr. H——.

Mr. H—— told us many wonderful and interesting things, and especially that water-finding is by no means the only use of the rods. "Like to like" would be a good motto.

After lunch we went out and he picked a spray from a wayside plant. With that in his hand he walked along, holding the wire over the edge of the path, and whenever he came to the same species of plant the wire dipped in salute, but paid no attention whatever to any other sorts. This I saw myself.

One of our neighbours told us that he wished to test this theory, and one day he asked Mr. H—— to locate the roots of a tree. So, with a leaf of the tree in his hand Mr. H—— walked round it. Presently, puzzled, he said "I can't find any roots on this side," and then his host told him that all the roots on that side had been cut off when they were making drains.

Mr. H—— told us that the wires differentiate between one person and another. He asked his two maid-servants to bring all their gloves, roll up each glove separately inside out, and lay them on the table. He then took one glove in his hand and the wires went down to all the gloves belonging to its owner.

One evening, the owner of the estate of which Mr. H—— was factor asked him to go in after dinner and show some experiments to amuse his shooting party. All the men's caps were collected and he was given one. To his astonishment the wire went down to cap after cap. It turned out that they all belonged to the host's brother, who was staying in the house.

He could follow the track of a fox by "introducing" the wire to a spot where it had been.

I have heard that in the Hartz Mountains they used to track men in this way, but gave it up as the murderer, say, might be wearing an article of clothing belonging to someone else.

As to water-finding proper, Mr. H—— said each person must find his own rates. His was, for every stride, say one yard, away from the spring while the pull on the wire was still felt, the spring was one foot below the surface.

Now for some of my husband's experiments, all of which I witnessed, unless I mention the reverse.

I was not present one day when he was over at a neighbour's with his wires. Suddenly, in the hall, the wire went down, at which the onlookers jeered, saying that there was a Hall below in the basement and certainly no water there. He insisted that there must be, and at last the butler stepped forward and said a case of soda-water had come in that morning and was standing below.

Neighbouring lairds and farmers used to ask my husband to go and find water or trace the land drains so as to discover where they were stopped up.

On one of our own farms a cottage not a mile from Glenlair stands on a small plateau, a hill behind, and ground abruptly descending past it. It had no water supply, and the wires said there was a spring within a yard or so of the door; so it was dug for. No sign at first, but in the end, right below rock, a beautiful spring was found. I have drunk the water, and better no one need wish.

At Schinznach, in Switzerland, our fellow guests in the hotel planned experiments. One was that on a table out of doors they laid various gold objects, such as watches, brooches, &c., and Major Wedderburn-Maxwell, with a gold ring on a finger, held the wire over them. It went down to each, and suddenly dipped to a clear space. Then one of the onlookers stooped down and picked up his gold watchchain, which he had surreptitiously flung under the table.

Another day my husband was blindfolded and led about the grounds. Suddenly a man held in front of him a tumbler of water. *Down* went the wires, and Major W.-H. exclaimed, "There's water here—I *know* there's water here," much to the amusement of the onlookers, who saw the point of the wire nearly dipping into the tumbler.

On we all went, I nearly at the tail of the procession. Someone said "They have got a hot-water bottle, haven't they?" I said I did not know, and that I was the last person to be told their plans. At last we came to a rough grass field, and I heard murmurs about a man with a spade. At one spot the wires indicated water, and then the man with the spade was ordered forward and dug up a sod, displaying the rubber hot-water bottle which had been planted there. This proves that rubber does not act as a non-conductor.

One favourite experiment was the following:—Major Wedderburn-Maxwell took one end of the wire, and anyone else—a non-downer—took the other. Other persons present were asked to join in between, holding hands or in some way forming a chain, but with one open gap. Nothing happened. The wire remained immovable until the broken link was joined. Say there was a chain of five or six people, the gap between the third and fourth: if No. 3 just put even one finger on No. 4's shoulder, down went

the wire instantaneously to water. Those holding the wires had no idea when this contact would be made. That I can vouch for, as I was often the person to do it, and no one ever knew what moment I should choose.

This refutes the theory of a scientist (since dead), who wrote to my husband that it was his subconscious self, "which could see through the crust of the earth or a brick wall," which actuated the wire.

My husband's theory was that the mysterious power is a form of magnetism. The following seems to bear this out. A young gardener we had proved to possess the power of dowsing, and he, determined that the forked twig he was holding should not go down, held it so tightly that it broke.

My husband used brass, copper or galvanized wire in preference to twigs, as the latter are supposed not to act so well when not freshly cut.

He was a great deal exhausted after prolonged experiments.

