

he had suspected, it curved and passed directly below the spot where he had seen the 'ghost'.

Water! That, it seemed, was probably the answer. A tingling sensation suggests a force-field—like that around an electric wire. If a stone can somehow 'record' the emotions of a man who threw it more than two thousand years ago, is it not equally possible that the 'field' of water can somehow record emotions, like a magnetic tape? Or perhaps the field acts like the low current in the head of a tape recorder and somehow causes events or emotions to be imprinted on their surroundings? Or like the flash of a camera that imprints a picture on the photographic plate? As a dowser, Tom was sensitive to the force-field of water, so he might well 'pick up' a recording that was invisible to non-dowsers. In the case of the old woman at Hole Mill, the spot where she had appeared and the spot where Tom was standing had been connected by the force field of the water, like a telephone wire.

The ancients believed that there were supra-normal powers associated with streams; they were called naiads or water nymphs. Then there were wood nymphs or dryads, mountain nymphs or oreads and sea nymphs, the nereids. A classical dictionary defines a nymph as 'an inferior divinity of nature'. Is it possible that man was personifying real forces of nature—forces that he recognised 'in his bones', and assumed to be supernatural in the same way as he assumed the thunder and lightning to be deities? Perhaps, suggests Lethbridge (in *Ghost and Divining Rod*) there are various kinds of fields connected with water, woods, mountains, open spaces, and he suggests calling these 'naiad fields', 'dryad fields', 'oread fields', and so on. The emotions of the man who committed suicide in the Great Wood were imprinted on a 'dryad field', and played back two days later when Tom and his mother passed near the spot. When Mina felt someone urging her to jump over the cliff, she may simply have been picking up the emotions of someone who stood there and contemplated suicide; but, as Lethbridge remarks, this does not mean the suicide actually happened. The man may have gone home, had a large whisky and felt much better.²

The 'field theory', of course, contradicts—or at least modifies—Sir William Barrett's cryptesthesia theory. Barrett was inclined to the 'second sight' theory because there are many cases in the history of dowsing when the diviner has been able actually to see the underground water. Barrett cites a Miss Miles, who located a lost underground cistern and was able to describe its exact appearance. Presum-

ably second-sight, like ordinary sight, does not require 'fields' for its operation. This room I am sitting in does not need a 'field' in order for me to see it; just light bouncing off the walls. But Lethbridge's experience of being able to walk in and out of 'ghouls' led him to test various objects with a pendulum. He concluded that every object has a field that extends around it. Its radius is the 'rate' for that object. So, for example, a copper penny would have a field exactly thirty and a half inches wide, extending around it, as well as upward and downward in the form of a cone.

Presumably, then, emotions can impress themselves on any kind of field (or be recorded by it.) Water, however, seems to have a peculiarly active field. Dowsers insist that much illness is caused by sleeping above an underground stream and will often advise people to change the position of their beds. I have known at least one person who benefited considerably from changing the position of her bed, after two dowsers had independently advised her that she was directly above a stream. (Significantly, the first dowser, Bill Lewis of Abergavenny, diagnosed the underground stream from five hundred miles away by dangling his pendulum over a sketch of her bedroom; the second dowser, Leonard Locker, located the same stream on the spot—although he had not seen or been told of the earlier result.) It seems that long-term exposure to the radiation of water can be as harmful as long-term exposure to radioactivity.

My own original reaction to Lethbridge's theory of ghosts was that it fails to cover the many cases in which ghosts have behaved as if they were intelligent beings. A case I remembered that seemed to support this objection was the one described by Beverley Nichols in his autobiography *Twenty-Five*.³ This took place at a house called Castel Mare in Middle Warberry Road, Torquay. Beverley Nichols, his brother and an Oxford friend, Lord Peter St Audries, decided to investigate the 'haunted house' one Sunday evening in the late 1920s. It was said to be haunted by the ghost of an insane doctor who had murdered his wife and the maidservant there.

The three young men found the place oppressive, but in no way frightening. Nichols was standing alone in the upper hall, waiting for his companions, when he had a sensation as if his thoughts were going in slow motion; a black film seemed to cover the left side of his brain, as if he were being anaesthetised. He managed to stagger outside before fainting. He came round feeling oddly tired and low. The other