ABOUT WATER WITCHES. divining rods.
 The articles in The Times in relation The use of the divining rod in finding
Wanter and mineral deposits have had no
more interested or appreciative readers more interested or appreciative readers
than the epople in the mountain ranges
of the Blue Ridge and Cumberland. been part of the life of these people fur-
ther back than any oue can remember. the possession of one of these gitted persons. The respect in which they are
held is in inverse ratio to their numbers.
Fed comforts in order to provide them for pect services in locating wetls. In It ex may
not te quite true that every well in the mountains was located through this kind
of agency, there is no doubt that the
majority were so located, and that the of the witches is boundless. So far as the natives are concerned
this is a country of poverty. They do
not call themselves poor, for all are nearly on an equality in the bare furnish-
ings of their rouses, and the shotes that they raise on the free forage of the woods
in summer and fall, with the corn, hominy, tobacco and moonshine they can
laynp by small trading with the valley
farmers, supply their modest winter needs. Monesp is a thing thadest enters veryy
little into their calculations. A mountain community enjoys more than average
prosperity, in which the cash earrings of
the heads of the fanilies the heads of the families reach as much
as 5 por yoear apiece But all being on
about the same basis there is no compara. tive poverty. Thes get along fromp yeara.
o year, and never having known any other condition they are content. As a matter of course, the
paith cashervices of the wa
Wone make them comfortable. This io satio
fectory all
around. In some way the
impression has become general that
water witch is a supernatural sort crear wire, not made for cor comamanal toil, and
whose magio will ob impaired by the
tind of labor that oo epared, they receive very good care, and mystical gifts with the natural indolence pected and are entirely wwilling to to asve
themselves always for the small service them yearly tributes of stores. Thing the
witches thus get no richer than their neighbors, but they have an easier rime
of it. Sometimes, months will pass in
which one will not be called upon. Whenever a call is made, however, he
must be ready to respond to it. A forked branch of a peach tree is the
only divining rod known in the moun-
tains. Every witch is tains. Every witch is as careful of his
branch as if it were genuine treasure. He selects it when he begins to practice.
his magic. and never changes it wilingly.
When not in use it is carefully hung on the walls of the best room in his cabin.
Whatever ellse may happen. that must thing to beesayed. if his cabind be the firsht fire.
Afterward he might go back for the wif and babies. On every trip he carries it ended he returns it as carefully to it hanging place in the cabin's beast room.
Whether from his own belief that he is
sifted beyond men, or because of the gitted beyond men, or because of the
swe in which he is held by his fellows,
the water witch always means that his work shall be impressive. When armed mith his wig and in search of water he
geems to ose himsel, as if hewere lifted
out of the common sphere into a relation with something morere than human. voodooism employs, but thin scene be-
comes suggestive of that class of superly with no thought of his surroundings
beyond the intensity with which he fol soomemnly up and down, holding the
twig by its forks in front of him, and
seeming to let it liead him instead of being propelled by him. When the free
end of the twig drops from the horizon-
tal at which it has been carried to the
perpendicular he stops suddenty. His
His mistion. Mener. Mark the spot, and the
water. Men
water witcly moes away. The well is dug
through the markings. The mountain-
eers say that water never fails when The water witch Doo wise.
past $k$ nnown in this
pate of country is old Doo Wise. He
Iives in the mountains over beyond Christiansburg, and rarely leaves home.
Indeed it is only with the greatest dififi-
culty that the mountaineers can get him
to point a weell for them. He is above
the need of help from their stores, and of late years when he has gone out with
his rod it was to oblige his friends rather
than for prestige or pay in any form.
The mountaineers understand that he is
in some way related to the old family of Governor Wise and that he was chris-
tened Deatur. At any rate. the abbre-
viated twist of the name by which he is
known did not result from any financial dectoring of the gentlemen from whom
he got his money, although such a deri-
vation might be suspected by those who Vation might be suspected by hose who
date his record with his fortune. He was
always Dow Wise and whether the blood
of proud aristocracy whas in his evins or
not, he came into the mountains after not, he came into the mountains after
the war with as little of earthy substance
as the most scanty native, and for sev-
eral years picked up a s slender living as a About ten years ago a party of pros-
pectors topped at Christiansburg for the
winter. They were looking for coal and


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