



UTILIZATION OF POTATOES.



ILLUSIONS OF TOUCH.

ILLUSIONS OF TOUCH.

One of our readers has recently put us in mind of an experiment which is represented in the annexed figure, and which every one has been acquainted with from his schoolboy days. The second finger is crossed over the index, and, with the two fingers in this position, a pea or marble is rolled about on a table or in the palm of the other hand. The sensation experienced is precisely the same as if two separate balls were being touched. Although, as we have said, this experiment is well known, we believe that the true explanation of the illusion of touch is not generally understood. A learned professor of sciences has recently given us this in concise form, which we here reproduce.

In the normal position of the fingers the same ball cannot touch at the same time the exterior sides of two contiguous fingers. When the two fingers are crossed the normal conditions are exceptionally changed, but the instinctive interpretation remains the same, unless a frequent repetition of the experiment has overcome the effect of our first education on this point. The experiment, in fact, has to be repeated a great number of times to make the illusion become less and less appreciable.

It is easy to perceive that in the domain of the sense of touch, the judgment, being formed instinctively, finds itself at fault when the normal conditions are modified; thus it happens, for example, when we have on the lips an accidental pimple or swelling, the glass from which we drink appears to have a distorted edge. Facts of this nature are very interesting to study from a philosophical point of view, for they demonstrate that the judgment which we form in regard to external material realities is based upon the interpretation of our sensible impressions. The impression of our senses is something entirely physical, and in no wise psychological. Interpretation is an affair of habit and education.—*La Nature*.