of objects in connexion with Madame Hauffe in 1825-28,@@1 and such movements also occurred in presence of the so- called electric girl in 1846.@@2 The second class of phenomena, which we may call the automatic, consists in table-tilting and turning with contact ; writing, drawing, &c., through the medium’s hand ; convulsive movements and involuntary dancing; entrancement, trance-speaking, and personation by the medium of deceased persons, attributed to temporary “ possession ”; seeing spirits and visions and hearing phan­tom voices. This class bears affinity to some of the pheno­mena of hypnotism and of certain nervous complaints, to certain epidemics of the Middle Ages,@@3 and to phenomena that have occurred at some religious revivals. According to quotations given by Chevreul,@@4 the divining-rod was used at the end of the 17th century for obtaining answers to ques­tions, as table-tilting now is. In a third class must be placed the cure of disease by healing mediums. This cannot well be treated apart from mesmeric healing and “ faith cures ” and “mind cures,” and belongs to medical psychology.

The class of automatic phenomena are much the common­est. The investigations of Carpenter on unconscious cerebra­tion and of Faraday on unconscious muscular action@@5 have shown that it is not necessary to look outside the medium’s own brain and organism for the explanation of such things as automatic writing and table turning. It is about the matter communicated by these means that the controversy now turns. Spiritualists maintain that true information is thus given, provably unknown to the medium or other persons present, or at least expressed in a way obviously beyond their powers to originate. Another view, which is now gaining ground, is that the information in some excep­tional cases does not come from the mind of the medium, but is due to the influence wrought on his mind by that of other persons, and more than this is not proved.@@6

At no period of the spiritualistic movement has the class of physical phenomena been accepted altogether with­out criticism. Most spiritualists know that much fraud in connexion with them has been discovered—frequently by spiritualists themselves—and that the conditions favour­able to obtaining them are often such as favour fraud. It is with a full knowledge of these difficulties in the way of investigation that they maintain that unmistakably genuine phenomena are of constant occurrence. Many volumes containing accounts of such phenomena have been printed, and appeal is often made to the mass of evidence so accumulated. “ No physical science can array a tithe of the mass of evidence by which psychism ” *(i.e.,* what is usually called spiritualism) “ is supported,” says Serjeant Cox.@@7 But the majority of these accounts have scarcely any scientific value. Spiritualists have, as a rule, sought to convince not by testimony but by ocular demonstration. Yet, if there is not a mass of scientific evidence, there are a number of witnesses—among them distinguished men of science and others of undoubted intelligence—who have convinced themselves by observation of the genuineness of the phenomena,—a fact of undeniable importance, even without careful records, when the witnesses are otherwise known to be competent and trustworthy observers. Mr Maskelyne has affirmed@@8 that he has witnessed table­turning where he was satisfied that there was neither trickery nor unconscious muscular action. Moreover, if

the phenomena are not genuine, we have to assume a large amount of apparently aimless fraud.

Amongst the proposed explanations of these phenomena that of hallucination need not detain us long. Sensory hallucination of several persons together who are not in a hypnotic state is a rare phenomenon, and therefore not a probable explanation. Moreover, it cannot be regarded as being generally applicable, partly because material traces of what occurs often remain, and partly because of the general agreement not only of all the witnesses but of all the senses as to what is perceived, as distinguished from what is inferred. Nevertheless something of the kind may occasionally have happened, especially at some of the seances of Home.@@9 If collective hallucination really occurs at seances, it is a very interesting fact, and deserves to be carefully studied.

What may broadly be called conjuring is, however, a much more probable explanation of most of the recorded phenomena ; and in the vast majority of cases the wit­nesses do not seem to have duly appreciated the possibili­ties of conjuring, nor to have taken sufficient precautions to exclude it. Besides, not even a conjuror knows all the possibilities of his art and can describe in detail all the accidental circumstances which may on any particular occasion favour deception, and perhaps never exactly recur. We require, therefore, to know not only that the witness is careful and accurate but that he has allowed a suffi­ciently wide margin for the possibilities of conjuring; and some leading spiritualists do not allow this. It is often urged that mediums are not conjurors because they fre­quently fail, whereas “imposture can be reproduced at will,” and because they can produce the phenomena in private rooms, and under conditions which exclude the possibility of conjuring. But the phenomena produced by mediums in private rooms would generally be uninteresting and unsuited to public performance, so that it would not pay a professional conjuror to practise them. Amateur con­jurors might do something in this way, and the present writer has seen one imitate successfully some of the phenomena of professional mediums for “ direct writing”; but to compete with mediums on really equal terms the con­juror must have the same conditions throughout, and this is difficult to arrange, since it involves securing witnesses who are doubtful as to whether what they see is conjuring or not. Still more important to the conjuror is that very privilege of failing whenever he pleases, so largely used by mediums, that he may avail himself of accidental oppor­tunities for trickery, which would be interfered with by a settled programme. The extent to which the absence of programme obtains at seances appears from the following statement by a leading spiritualist who writes under the *nom de plume* of “M.A. (Oxon.)” : “In 99 out of every 100 cases people do *not* get what they want or expect. Test after test, cunningly devised, on which the investi­gator has set his mind, is put aside, and another sub­stituted.”@@10 In other words, the evidence is rarely strictly experimental, and this not only gives facilities for fraud but makes it necessary to allow a much larger margin for accidents, mistakes, and mal-observation. It must be borne in mind that the most excellent moral character in the medium is no guarantee against trickery, unless it can be proved that he was in no abnormal mental condition when the phenomena occurred ; for extraordinary deceptions have been carried on by hysterical patients and others with no apparent motive but a desire to secure attention.

One of the possibilities to be allowed for is that of un-

@@@1 Seherin von Prevorst.

@@@2 Tanchou, Enquête sur l'authenticité des phénomènes électriques d'Angélique Cottin, Paris, 1846.

@@@3 See Hecker, Epidemies of the Middle Ages, 1859.

@@@4 De la baguette divinatoire, &c., 1854.

@@@5 Athenaeum,2d July 1853 ; see also on this subject C'hevreul, op. cit. @@@6 See Ch. Richet, “ La Suggestion Mentale,” in Revue Philosophique,

December 1884, and Proc. Soc. for Psychical Research, vols. ii. and iii. @@@7 Mechanism of Man : What am If vol. ii. p. 313, 1879.

@@@8 See Pall Mall Gazette, 18th, 20th, and 23d April 1885.

@@@9 See, e.g., Report on Spriritualism of the Committee of the London, Dialectical Society, 1871, pp. 367-369, 207. See also Guldenstubbe, De la réalité des esprits, 1857, p. 66.

@@@10 Human Nature, 1876, p. 267.