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MESMERISM AND CLAIRVOYANCE IN NEW YORK.

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A PATIENT of mine, a Mr. B., who is a very intelligent gentleman, and has paid enough attention to the profession of medicine to know its inefficiency in certain cases, and understands mankind enough to be aware of the facility with which the mass can be deceived; has had for many months, attacks, more or less continued, of pain in the left side of the head, which have frequently disabled him. At first I was afraid of some injury to the substance of the brain; but for some time past I have been free from fear on that point, and have been satisfied that it was more a rheumatic affection of the muscles and membranes, for there has been good general health, notwithstanding the continued attacks of the pain.

In treating this gentleman, I always explained, if he did not perceive, the reasons for whatever I did, and we went on satisfactorily in our course of treatment, because we understood each other and were agreed. However, as he did not get well, his friends became impatient and wished other advice to be taken. To please them, he wore Christie's galvanic rings, and took his galvanic bath, to no purpose, except to put five dollars into Christie's pocket; and next, he was pushed hard to pay a visit to a mesmeric doctor, whose clairvoyants never failed to make out what was the matter, and whose prescriptions never failed to cure.

One morning he and I agreed to go together to one of the most celebrated of this class, and have a mesmeric examination of his case. On arriving at the house, we were received by a very plain, unpretending old man, who has more of the farmer than the doctor in his face and manner, and appeared much more likely to be duped himself than to dupe any one. We had to sit for half an hour, while some one else was being examined; and during this time, we were observing and noting what went on. Most of the persons who came, or were about, were women—"the weaker vessels," as Paul has it, and some of them were "weak" enough.

The folding doors now opened, and we had a view of the doctor's

sanctum. He informed us that he must fetch another clairvoyant, for the one he had just been operating with, had been put to sleep three times this morning, and was considerably weakened. He went out and brought in a tall, common-looking young woman, whose manner was very pert and saucy, and who had in her hand a basket and key. She tossed her head, and appeared to be very consequential in a small way. The doctor requested her, very civilly and mildly, to fetch him something, and she snapped at him like a cat at a fly. The doors were shut and opened again, when the doctor requested us to walk in, and we saw the lady seated in her arm-chair, ready for operations.

The doctor stood at the distance of a couple of yards, and made many passes with his magic hands, when the lady soon went off, to all appearance, to sleep. I sat close by, observing the operation. My friend was requested to sit by the lady, that she might examine his case, as she was now ready for her performance. The doctor asked her to say what she saw in this gentleman, and sat down with pencil and paper to record the revelations of science. She said the liver was hard and large, particularly the left lobe. The bile was thick, dark and copper-colored-like, and did not flow freely. There were dark-blue and black spots on the lobes of the liver, and there was a poor and obstructed circulation of black blood, and the bile did not get formed properly-like. (She seemed to have a great liking for the word *like*.) How is the stomach? said the doctor. She said it was larger than it should be; had a great deal of dark yellow, copper-colored-like fluid; she supposed it must be bile in it; the food did not digest—and *it hurts me when I take my breath*. The doctor explained to us, that *she felt what my friend felt*.

"Will you look at the spleen, now?" said he. She said, "There's a kind of eruption about the coats of the spleen, something pock-like, and very nasty; and there's a thickish, yellowish-dirty fluid in it, that does not flow easily." "I feel uneasy and swelled under my ribs," she said. "How are the ligaments?" said he. She replied, they were affected with an eruption in the same manner. (Every now and then the doctor asked explanations of what she said, and her replies were very colloquial, just as much so, as if she were talking in an ordinary manner awake; but the revelations were in one particular tone.)

"How are the lungs?" said the doctor. She replied, "They are sound, but the bag in which they work is dry and husky-like, and there are some little spots in them, but they are not like tubercles; but they don't let the lungs move easy-like." "Oh my! how it hurts me to talk! I don't like to talk. I want to be alone. I don't like company!" (She is now expressing your feelings, said the doctor.) "How is the heart?" said he. "Oh, it does not move easy; the blood is thick, and the bag is dry and husky-like, and I don't feel easy about my heart. It swells-like, and seems of a sort of fulness." (That, Sir, said the doctor, is what you feel.)

"Have you looked at the spine?" "Oh, it looks thick and full and swelled-like. The nervous fluid is thick and yellow darkish-like, of a coppery color; and the spine is painful from the shoulders to the middle of my back, and I can't stand it long." ("She is now feeling what you feel," said the doctor.)

"Did you look at the head"? said he. "The brain is healthy, but the nervous fluid *ain't*, for it's dark and coppery colored-like, and the blood is thick and dark, and don't circulate well. That great vein at the base of the brain can hardly send the blood along at all, it's so thick, for such a pain just come in my temple."

"What condition are the bowels"? said he. "They're dry and weak, and the blood don't circulate in them well, and there's a darkish colored fluid in them, for they don't digest the food properly, and they're bound and costive. I want to wake—I don't want to be here any longer, nor to be asked any more questions." "Well, well," said the doctor, "wait a bit, and you shall wake." Then turning to my friend, he said, "Would you wish her to prescribe for you"? "No," said my friend, "she has utterly failed to detect my case. She has mentioned much of which I am unconscious—but that of which I do complain and have complained for several months, she has not alluded to."

"Failed to detect your case! Sir, that's impossible; she has told you your case, and if you will let her prescribe for you, she would soon cure you." "No, I thank you," said my friend. The doctor then taking her by her thumbs, and putting his hands to the back of her head and nose and forehead, she soon opened her eyes and rose up. Immediately on rising, she asked what they were to have for dinner, and requested money for a beef-steak, which she obtained, and set off to make her purchase. The doctor reprimanded my friend for saying she had failed to detect his case, telling him no clairvoyant could fail—'twas impossible; that they were the only persons who could detect disease, and that a hundred of them would all tell the same thing. My friend replied that if they did all tell the same, they would certainly all be wrong, for she was, as she mentioned a number of things, all of which were notoriously untrue; and the thing of which he complained, she had not so much as glanced at.

The old gentleman insisted upon it, that she must be right, because the clairvoyants were the only persons who knew anything about disease—and they were all agreed. That whatever else he might have, arose from this state of things in his system—and that it was impossible for a man to be well with a body in such a state as his was.

"But," said my friend, "I am not what she represents. I eat, digest my food, my bowels are regular, have none of the pains in my body which she described, enjoy conversation and company, and am the very opposite of what she says. There is but one thing the matter with me, and that thing she has not discovered."

The old man insisted that she was right and he was wrong. I put in my testimony, saying I was his medical friend, and had never found out these symptoms put down to him, nor did I ever hear him complain of them, but that he complained of one peculiar pain in one peculiar place.

"Then," said he, "why don't you cure him"? I replied that the knowledge of evil and its cure did not always go together. He said if I had known what was the matter, I should have known the cure; for they (mesmerists) always knew the cure when they knew the disease. He

then commenced a tirade on my class—told me the clairvoyant knew I was a physician before I came in, and if she could know that, she could know anything else; that the doctors were an ignorant, impudent set of vile pretenders, who took the money out of people's pockets without rendering any service whatever; that they could neither teach nor learn—and were the most abominable pests and nuisances of society. He then demanded a dollar of my friend, which being paid, he abused us both to the door, and slammed the door after us.

My friend and I congratulated ourselves upon having had so much for a dollar—I saying I should want five for so much abuse—he saying he thought he should hardly like to give it for ten. So much for mesmerism and clairvoyance.

J. H. S.

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