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"THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE IS THE LEGITIMATE SOURCE, AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE THE TRUE END OF GOVERNMENT."

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ORIGINAL.

## A CASE OF CLAIRVOYANCE,

BY THE SCHOOLMASTER.

In the Eastern section of Nameless county, in the state of Blank, there is a village that may be distinguished by the characteristic name of Rustytown. In this village there flourished, not many years ago, a merchant named James Alden. It so happened that during the meridian of this individual's glory, that is, while he was handing large quantities of goods over his counter, and customers were handing their change over the same to the tune of some scores of dollars per day, during this tide in the affairs of man—while this identical merchant was flourishing, not alone, in his glory, for sooth to tell, he had been one of the spliced portion of humanity, for a short period, there came into the neighborhood, one of those evil geniuses that infest all parts of the Earth, a Yankee. Concerning the particular turn of Dame Fortune's wheel by which this personage came into the village, this deponent says nothing; but the relations herein contained, will be confined to the occurrences that happened after his debut on the stage of society in the rusty little village before mentioned. The ostensible occupation of this yankee, whose name we shall call Prospero Jonathan, was that of school teaching. His services in the capacity of pedagogue had been formally solicited by, and duly tendered to the district of Rockside, some two miles above Rustytown, on the limpid creek that went brawling amid the bleak hills, and turned the village gristmill.

And having thus introduced the heroes of our tale to the most courteous reader, it becomes our bounden duty to say, that they both belonged to that class of bipeds commonly known by the sobriquet of b'hoys. This we do in order to put the reader on his guard against any wicked and malicious deception, which the twain may attempt to put upon him; for it is always proper, ere we trust, to know in *whom* we trust, and above all to put no confidence in the modern, and quite numerous class of b'hoys. We should not, however, have questioned the reader's good sense by cautioning him as aforesaid, had not experience taught us, that certain *wise* people in Rustytown, did, once upon a time, venture, with their eyes open to the b'hoyish character of our heroes, to put confidence in a certain clairvoyance humbug, which they got up to edify an unsophisticated community. Dismissing the caution, however, we will proceed at once to the unfolding of our somewhat mystical, and truly wonderful tale.

One evening in December, the usual corps of loungers were assembled in the store of Rustytown, and, among them, the Yankee Schoolmaster. During the usual routine of trading, joking, and story-telling, our heroes attempted looking each other out of countenance. It will be readily understood, that the attempt to look such brazen faced fellows out of countenance, was about as likely to be successful, as an attempt to look into the middle of next week, through a clairvoyant tobacco pipe, and we presume the writer's character for veracity will not be endangered by stating the fact, that the merchant became tired of playing the fool in this manner, and feigned to be in the mesmeric sleep. He began to breathe in a peculiar manner, closed his eyes, and leaned against a sash and glass partition, that separated a certain watch-maker from the vulgar crowd, while repairing the noisy, perhaps we should say, silent articles that compose the "bump of time" in the head of mechanism. Both were standing during the operation, and the particular performance was altogether unexpected, by the Schoolmaster, and got up without a second's premeditation by the Merchant. It was altogether one of those things of impulse, the thought of which frequently flashes into one's mind, and is acted upon without plan or object. Neither actor had any design or expectation of deceiving by so transparent a case of ironic humbug. By the way, we should mention that Mr. Alden was somewhat notorious, throughout the country, for feigning clairvoyance, having once stolen a watch, and hidden it, for the purpose of testing a real clairvoyant; and failing in getting the individual to "set" on it, and hatch out its whereabouts, did himself go into the clairvoyant state, and tell the people where it could be found. Also, at a number of "parties" in different neighborhoods in the township, he had been put through the motions for the purpose of ridiculing "the science," and all the people of Rustytown did know, that he was not a believer in Clairvoyance, Mesmerism, or Psychology, and that all these demonstrations, as himself exercised, were shams. Therefore while James Alden is breathing so singularly, jerking and shaking so unaccountably, and holding his eyes shut so 'possum like, we entreat the reader not to believe—not to fall into the unpardonable error of believing that he is mesmerized.

Now in every community, we shall find a greater or less number of persons, who are always on the alert to magnify all unusual phenomena into a mysticism of some sort—wiseacres who behold in all uncommon occurrences, and in many that are not so, the germ, if not the full flower, of a wonderful, marvellous unheard of and never done witch act, or special providence. We need not say that such people were found in Rustytown; but giving the hint that other places are as bad, in this respect, if not in others, we pass on with our relations.

At the moment Mr. Alden was exhibiting these ridiculous mesmeric symptoms, a certain Pharisaical personage, well known in the village, in passing behind the counter, where his reputed honesty was a passport, caught sight of the closed eyes of Mr. Alden, and inquired of Johnathan if he had ever put him into that state before. Now, Yankee and b'hoy as this schoolmaster was, he had yet too much regard for truth to lie directly, when a simple evasion would answer as well, or even nearly as well. Nor was he generally slow to take a hint; and in him was verified a part of the old saying—'a nod is as good a wink.' Catching a glimpse of the fun that might follow, he reflected a half minute, busying himself apparently in making more potent passes over the subject, though really he was more industrious in contriving what answer to make to Mr. Alderman's question. At length he replied, yankee like: "well, I worked as much as two hours before I put him to sleep the first time." Now as he had chopped wood six weeks on one of the Green Mountains, when a boy, it is evident he *had* worked two hours, before he had even seen the present subject.

No experiments were made with the view of demonstrating to sceptics the reality of the phenomina; for, as no one disputed this, such proof seemed unnecessary. Besides, it might have turned out to be a somewhat difficult matter, to perform experiments popularly without previous connivance, and both partners were completely *dumb founded* by the credulity of the company, and the turn this credulity had given to the intentionless foolery of the Merchant. At length, the wake up passes were made; and the subject recovered from his apparent somnolency, and giving the Magnetizer the wink, consented, with seeming reluctance, to be put through again, according to the latest authorities.

Perhaps we should have said, ere this, that Rustytown, like nearly all other villages in the United States, had been, at different times, the theatre of the exhibition of Mesmeric, Clairvoyant, Psychological and Rappery experiments; and that the principles and phenomena of these homogeneous conditions were as well understood among the members of that community, as they perhaps are by those of any other community of ordinary intelligence and discernment. This fact, in connexion with the particular physiognomy of the before mentioned, experiment, would throw the blame of the deception, so far at least, as much, if not more on the spectators, than upon the operators; for as it was not a respectable imitation of those cases they had previously witnessed, the presumption should have been that it was humbug. Those will agree with us in this general conclusion, who believe as we do, that in the Nineteenth Century, and in the United States of America, that, if he is not born so, no man has any right to be a fool, or in other words *no man has any right to make a fool of himself*. Yet, in spite of this plain fact, there are thousands who blame impostors, without censuring those who allow themselves to be imposed upon. In an imposture there are always two parties—the impostors and the duped. Justice would blame the wolf *less* for the exercise of his bloody appetite, when the mutton is thrust under his very nose in his cavern under the deep earth, than when he filches it from the remote fold. It would divide the blame between the wolf to devour, and the provocative of that will. True enough it is wrong for the impostor to take advantage of public *gullibility*, which, as it were invites him to deceive: but the existence of such a state of the public mind is evidently *as* wrong. I do not, by any means, pen these remarks to render men more suspicious of each other, but to induce them to guide their suspicions by reason, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." This world is too much like a robbin's nest, wherein every mouth is open to swallow whatever may be *thrust* into it, without attempting to get it filled by the *exertions of the owner*. The man who bawls loudest to attract the public ear—the one who forces his wares down peoples' throats, is the acknowledged leader; while the calm, candid, and unostentatious reasoner is passed by unheard. Generally, a man's success in gaining converts to any new theory, be it one of morals, religion, philosophy, or reform, is just commensurate with the amount of humbug and extraneous trumpery with which he bedecks his subject: so that it is not by the exercise of reason that folks believe, but rather *by the "exercise" of the advocate*, who is "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." But one object is to narrate facts that actually occurred; not to indite a moral lecture to a world that groans beneath a load of humbug; we therefore pass on to the second visit of Mr. Alden to the famous state of Psychology, after the wink had been exchanged between the twain conspirators.

The *operee* accordingly sat in a conspicuous position on the counter, while the operator, standing before him made the attempt to assume the mesmeric dignity—in which attempt however he was only partially successful. The subject played *his* part admirably, while the Magnetizer grinned—not horribly a ghastly smile—for the ghastliness was acted by the other, but a smile that said to the lookers on, as plainly as a smile could say anything, "it is all gammon." Wise men should have intepreted it thus, but the sages of Rustytown did not, for which in spite of the savage remarks we have just made on the crime of peoples' making fools of themselves, we beg the reader to pardon them. It is needless to describe the vague, mesmeric stare, wilder than the glance of the hungry wolf when he scents his prey from afar, the laboured breathing as unhumanlike as the panting of the iron horse, and the spasms, convulsions, and grimaces that would rival those of a sick monkey, after his first "foray" on the weed. All these mystic phenomena had their influence on the credulous gazers, and we may say, that

> *True as mythologic gods,*
> *He was sent to undiscovered Ends,*
> *In the way prescribed by Doctor Dodds.*

But the subject being again fairly in the state—shall we say it—of humbug; immeasurable was the wonder of the gaping crowd, when, on touching the bump of philoprogenitiveness, he daudled a cap on his knee with all the tenderness of a Hindoo mother, and more diverting still, the mysterious roll of wide open eyes, when the charmed index was applied to the organ of combattiveness, and the aforesaid cap was laid upon the levelled knee of the psychologized Merchant, and received a severe slapping for the avowed reason that it was cross. Again benevolence was excited; and the *Operee* ransacked his pockets, produced a handful of silver, and deposited the same in the hands of the Operator. But, when acquisitiveness received a nudge, the gift was peremptorily demanded, the demand backed up by a wrench of the withholding hand, and finally a clinch and back hug followed, topping off with a scuffle, that came near smashing the glass of the aforesaid tinker. Self esteem was next subjected to the influence of the "nervo vital fluid," and a strutting perfomance followed, while the bump, of which big-bug-a-tiv-ness is a function, seemed to enlarge in a degree commensurate with the expansion of credulity in the minds of the 'suckological auditory.'

The next operation surpassed all of the aforesaid. The subject was front faced to the audience, and combattiveness was subjected to the magic excitation, and the information given him that there were enemies round about, when he discharged himself, in the shape of chain shot, at the now cowed company. No Sampson ever put to flight an army of Philistines in a manner more sudden than a road was cleared before the valiant psychologized. Mr. Alderman beat a retreat behind the counter, by bolting over it. The rest kept the floor; but acted the part of peacemakers by keeping as far from the enemy as circumstances allowed. One luckless, long legged wight, who was more clumsy than discreet, by allowing a too close proximity betwixt his devoted carcass, and 'the mighty man of war,' received a kick and blow simultaneously, that lifted him from the floor, and deposited him like a bale of damaged goods on the counter. To conclude, the subject went through the various stages of intoxication in the marvellously short space of one minute—was awaked—felt green, all over kinder—had headache—was numb—and did'nt know fairly what he had been about. These symptoms were seemingly, in some measure removed by passes made transversely &c., while the crowd were talking about the enormous strength, and superhuman agility which had been exhibited.

After what had passed we need not say that the plotters were quite impatient to hold a private interview. Slowly—as the sands fall through an hour glass—one by one—the crowd departed—leaving the Merchant and Schoolmaster alone. The reader can imagine the scene that followed better than we can describe it. We will venture to say however that when our heroes looked at each other, this time, they somehow or other, both got out of countenance, and burst into a united ha! ha! That made the crockery on the shelves about them fairly tremble in fear of a smash.

"Fools!" said the Merchant.

"Perfect fools!" said the other—and another ha! ha! echoed among the piles of crockery.

"We'll keep this up till we pull the wool over the eyes of the whole community."

"But we cant't do it."

"Some calves suck naturally,"

"And some don't;"

"But nearly all can be learned,"

"We can fool some, but not everybody."

"I can make the best believe it. A falsehood told with the intention of recalling it, is not fairly a lie."

"But we must get up a plan. We must have a practical theory."

"We will try Psychology first, which needs no plan, and if that won't answer we will pump on clairvoyance."

"But there was more pheno-magnetism to-night than psychology, and you don't know the location of the phrenological organs."

"I can remember all you touched to-night."

"Very well. At the end we will appoint a lecture on mesmerism. I will put you into the state of—humbug—and inform the auditory that you are perfectly insensibly, and to show them that I tell the truth, I will prepare to pull a tooth; upon which you will jump up, open your eyes put a thumb—you know—and "O-P-H," "O-K." The conspirators separated.

In justice to our heroes we should say, that the further continuance of the humbug was mainly for the purpose of getting up a greater degree of interest in the meetings of the village lyceum. Messrs. Alden and Jonathan, with the assistance of about one other, had brought it into being, and desired that the meetings might be conducted in a way creditable and beneficial to the community. But because men love to be humbugged, a real attempt, unostentatiously carried out, to benefit the people of Rustytown and vicinity, had not met with much encouragement. It is true that the most liberal, intelligent, and respectable of the people had been regularly seen at the meetings, and most of them had identified themselves with the proceedings; but the great unwashed, who most needed the benefit were away. Now this *pozzuming* merchant and humbugging schoolmaster were willing to assist in the good work of enlightening those who were sinners through ignorance; perhaps after all however more for the comfort and convenience of living among intelligent neighbors than from any really philanthropic motive.—Was it not justifiable to attract them by the glare of falsehood to the sublime presence of truth. Thus at least thought our heroes, and we shall merely assert that that the motive was a good one, and promise not to quarrel with those who question the means.

The manner in which the humbug was introduced to the lyceum, it may be proper to mention. That it might not appear might not appear as if by design on the part of the conspirators, Mr. Alden informed some disorderly boys who were at the store the evening of the before mentioned experiments, that if they did not behave themselves properly at the next meeting of the lyceum he would be put into the psychological state, and drive them out of doors. We need not say to the reader who has perused Byrom's story of "The three Black Crows," that the report soon got currency, that Mr. Alden was going to be magnetized at the next debate, and the most wonderful and never-to-be-performed experiments made.

After the meeting thus specified had been called to order, and the question selected for discussion on that particular evening duly disposed of by the wisest and most respectable of the villagers, for of course no others engaged in such proceedings, some one inquired if Alden was not going to be put to sleep.

"What should I be put to sleep here for?" said Alden.

"I heard you was going to be," said a voice.

"I'd like to know who has told such a story."

"That's the general understanding," said a new voice.

"I hav'n't made any such bargain," said the merchant, "I told some boys at the store, one evening, that if they didn't behave I'd be psychologized and turn them out of the house; but I gave no one any reason to suppose I was in earnest."

"Well everbody did suppose you was in earnest."

"What do you think about it, Schoolmaster," said the merchant? "Will it do?"

"Do? Be sure it will. There are persons present who are interrested in the 'science,' and it is no more than right to gratify a laudable curiosity. In consequence of the impression that has gone abroad, and which you have been influential in creating, it is no more than right that you should be psychologized."

"Well, as people have come here with that expectation, I don't know that I've any objection; but mind! don't make me tear round as you did at the store, the other evening, for I was lame all the next day after it.

"All right," said the Muster as he squared himself before the subject. So one huumbugger put the other into the state of Humbug; and the humbuggees sat round grinning their delight, while the whites of their eyes, rolling up like moonshine, betokened the verdure of their understandings. Then some region of the somnambules caput was excited, when breaking through the control of the operator, he undertook to find his way to the seat in which his wife was seated, but missed his reckoning and kissed her next neighbor. Had he travelled across the schoolroom as many times as he had gone round the stove in his store, or if he had had as good a chance unseen, on this occasion as once before, to open his eyes, he would not have made this mistake; but as he came *within one* of whom he intended, we may conclude that he did not do as badly as many others might under as difficult circumstances. The *miss* operated however as a new peg to hang belief on. "Alden would not kiss a young lady in a public congregation," said the village sages. So they swallowed the second variegated performance with as much avidity as a shark would swallow a handspike.

Here Mr. Alderman requested the Schoolmaster not to tell the subject there were enemies around, and, by preferring the request put it into the head of the Operator to do the very thing he was requested not to do. For the fun of seeing the pale faces of the suckologers he informed the subject that there were enemies, and they twain must fight. In order to keep the imaginary enemies within look-on distance, the 'man of war' was told that he must keep within a circle which was indicated by the Operator's finger. Accordingly, the sleeping partner went through the operation of fisticuffs and kickups in the most scientific manner imaginable, and to make use of a quotation from a popular song, the twain were much like

> "Old Joe kickin' up behind and before,
> And a yellow gal kickin' up behind old Joe."

And, while the sleep-waker was thus going it with a perfect looseness, he would sometimes get outside of the magic circle, when some one more cowardly than the rest, would lean his caput towards the door as if preparing for a lurch among the "outside barbarians." No one however got badly enough scared to run away and the performance ended with a full house.

The same week the schoolmaster happened in at the store one evening and did there get up a new form of the humbug. The merchant was selling a piece of cloth to a simple-hearted customer, and a word passed between the plotters was a sufficient theory for the experiment, that followed. The Schoolmaster paraded himself conspicuously on the counter and began to stare mesmerically at the merchant. This was soon observed by some of the loungers who watched curiously to witness the effect. More and more dignified grew the gaze of the Yankee, as he sat with the gravity of a toad at eventide, when watching the zig-zag flight of some insect he intends to victimize. Soon the merchant began to yawn, stretch, rub his eyes, and stagger. Still erect as a toadstool sat the Mesmerizer, and the suckologers stood round as eager to swallow the humbug as a young nighthawk might be to gulp the first morsel with which paternal solicitude has supplied it in the gathering twilight. They saw the stare of the Schoolmaster, and the drowsiness of the Merchant, and considered one to be the cause of the other. The Subject leaned his elbow on the counter, and rested his head on his hands. He made a mighty effort to throw off the drowsiness, shook himself like a maddened lion of the Cimbrian waste, and looking at the Schoolmaster, still redolent with meek dignity, he appeared to have just learned the cause of his drowsiness, and seizing a huge roll of red flannel, he hurled it at the human battery, which was struck, and both game and ammunition rolled off behind the counter, to the no small amusement of the spectators, but to the greater edification of the two showmen. The discomfitted mesmerizer picked himself up, droopingly and humble as a bilked gobbler, while one among the crowd exclaimed: "Gosh! I should'nt want to be got under the influence as easy as that!"

But the time came when the edge was worn off of psychological experiments, and acting on the principle that novelty is an element of success in gulling the public, our heroes conjured up experiments in Clairvoyance. The form they selected as the particular garb of the new humbug, was that of examining persons for diseases, and describing their appearance and character. They made confidents of a couple of Doctors, who were to be put *en rapport*, and examine as well as assist in conducting experiments. One of these Doctors was to scratch the subject's hand, and the other to press the back of it with his thumb, thus giving the grip as a sign of fraternity, while being put in communication. The Clairvoyant was to be blindfolded, so as to satisfy the spectators that he could ascertain who was before him by the ordinary exercise of his senses, and the persons examined were to come up slyly as they chose, so that he should have no apparent indication whatever of their personality. If the examined could be thus indicated, by the Doctors, the subject, by his acquaintance in the neighborhood, could give a correct description. This, it was deemed would be satisfactory to those who were formerly only "suckologers," and convince them, as well, of the truth of clairvoyance. Certain conspicuous personages were selected to be indicated by distinct signs—such as the pinching the clairvoyant's shoulder, elbow, wrist, &c. in making the passes that were necessary to establish a communication; and if others came up a similar cabalistic sign would inform the subject to draw off, get mad, be mum, and the operator would inform the audience that no sympathy could be established on account of opposition of temperament, dissimilar character or something of the kind. One of the Doctors informed the subject beforehand of the contents of a couple of small vials which he would have in his pocket.

At the close of a very interesting debate, Mr. Alden was put into the newly annexed state of clairvoyance. The schoolmaster made a bit of a speech, saying that he felt considerably interested in this case, and designed to make a few experiments merely to satisfy himself of the clairvoyance of the subject. He made the experiments publicly, to gratify those who, with himself, believed that such a science should be investigated. He cared not whether others believed in the reality of the experiments or not, but for his own part he was satisfied there was something about them quite unusual.

An elder was the first to present himself, and was correctly described. Next came the Doctor, and a couple of vials were apparently seen in his pocket, one of which contained morphine, and the other nux-vomica. The vials were produced, and almost wrenched from the Doctor's hand by the half sceptical Elder, who examined their contents and pronounced all right.

Mr. Slope-forehead now sat down, but as he was not one of the number specified by signology for the evenings performance, nothing was told him. The Operator excused the failure by saying, that as the man had been excited in the debate, no sympathy could be established between him and the subject. This explanation was not satisfactory to Slope-forehead, but the Elder was thenceforth a confirmed believer in Mr. Alden's clairvoyance. Others were astonished as those only can be astonished, who behold and believe the wonders of "suckology" and clairvoyance.

It occurred, this evening, that a certain personage was present, who, it is true, had not himself been initiated into the very mystery of mysteries, being only a Levite in the outer vestibule of the temple of the science, but had been master of ceremonies while others were crossing the threshold of the Sanctum Sanctorum. He had been engaged in practicing medicine by the aid of clairvoyance, and hail came up for the purpose of testing the case, having, as he stated, doubts of the honesty of the heroes who figured in it. He was perhaps a somewhat dangerous investigator, but the conclusion was to try the humbug on him, and risk the result.

The miller was the next to sit down for examination, a handkerchief being tied over the subject's eyes by one of the initiated, and all things apparently fair, on the part of the humbuggers. During the performance, Mr. Alderman, to prove a principle which he held as true about clairvoyance, stopped up behind the communicant with a small vial, and exclaiming "I'll put it in his cap," placed it there in accordingly, and replaced the cap on the head of the Miller. He did not say what the article was, but its whereabouts, being known to the blind partner, afforded him scope enough for the game that followed. He leaned his head toward the Miller, as if to look out of the top of his head, and scrowing his shoulders as if his head was a gimlet, and his shoulders the handle, appeared to be boring into occult mysteries.

"Ah! I see what they're about said he. They wan't to fool me but they can't."

He then took the cap from the man's head, as readily as he could have done it with the help of his eyes, and with well dissembled spite flung it on the floor. The waking partner was perhaps more surprised at the success of this experiment than any of the gaping spectators; but instead of attributing it to any mysterious instinct, he supposed it to be merely one of those lucky hits which prove the truth of the "sublime art of guessing" and are after all about as mysterious as any real case of clairvoyance.

The professor, before mentioned, was examined and became as complete a dupe as any one. He even declared that Mr. Alden was a better subject than a certain clairvoyant character, whom he boasted that himself was the first to put into the state, and whose performances had given the people of Rustytown the little knowledge they possessed of the science. The declarations of this professor sunk the "suckologers," deeper into the quicksands of credulity, and the many truths told in a manner which could not be fathomed by the uninitiated imparted to the already rolling ball on accelerated velocity.

The examinations were made with a degree of charlatan humor, that sensible people should have been disgusted with; but instead of having such an effect, the popularity of 'the science' was greatly increased by it. As a specimen, when Mr. Alderman came up he was too full of faith to use any precaution against letting the subject find him out by other means than his alledged instinct. The subject leaned forward, twisted and wrung himself into as many shapes as a ball of putty was ever wrought into, and after going through the boring operation got off a lingo much after this sort.

"Well the man has considerable ponderosity of the corporative system. This ponderosity holds him down some, so he'd like to lie still, rather than work much." Here a pause ensued during which the boring was repeated, and the information bored out thus rehearsed. "He likes money as well as his neighbors. He'll work too—oh! how he will work, when he gets treble pay for it. It takes profits to move him though, and they operate on him much as money did on Scrapewell's mare." Here the subject lored again. "He's benevolent though—very benevolent. He takes money from other people and gives it to himself." Another boring performance—"He thinks he's sick sometimes; but I don't. He is never sick of much of anything but a bad bargain. Once in a while he's sick of work, but he gets acquainted with it so seldom that this happens only once in a dog's age." The subject bored out more chips. "Ha! ha! he!"

"What are you laughing at?"

"Its enough to make a howling dervish' laugh to see 'em."

"See What?"

'Well this man's immortalized *his* name. The effects of his acts becoming material entities, will *cry aloud* in future generations."—Great applause.

After a few other examinations the seeing partner was inspected. The Clairvoyant gave a theory of *Religion* which may yet appear as a specimen of A. J. Davis' theology, but its effect on the suckers is all we have to deal with at present. At the couclusion of the metaphysic and theological coloquy, a degree of solemnity rested on the company. Mr. Alden had not a mind capable of inventing such a masterly theory—such a connected chain of logic, such profound principles of Metaphysics, said the sages sitting about as if for judgment on a respected king whom they had predetermined to acquit and *eulogize* by their verdict. In the estimation of these good people, his experiments they had witnessed, placed clairvoyance in a sphere as high and holy as the far off stars that glittered so glowingly before the enrapt vision of the clairvoyant. They had listened to one who stood on enchanted ground—who was high priest in the very Sanctum Sanctorum of the spiritual temple of the universe, and though the ideas were far different from those they professed to believe, and were altogether unorthodox, yet they assented, for they dared not dispute the more than sibylline oracle.

The news spread like fire in the prairies, till the fame of the Rustytown Clairvoyant echoed from the Elk Mountain to the frosty peak of Ararat. It was the topic of topics. By the glowing fireside of the home-hearth—where small children looked up into the wondering faces of parents, and elder brothers and sisters—in the sitting room where the social party were congregated to while away the winter evening with friendly chit chat, and the lively sallies of wit and light effervesuence of mirth—along the snow-covered highway, where teamsters urged their loaded horses, and men of business and lovers flew along with the merry jingle of sleigh-bells; and out in the hoary woodlands where the lumberman met his fellow in the half trodden path, that the snow had fallen over deeply, it was talked about, and wonders upon wonders were conjectured about its marvellous objects and causes. Numbers who had never before believed the science, were convinced. The only difficulty was that the success was too great, as expectations of future developements, when the subject had become an old resident of the State, had already risen high above the reality, and might, by creating disappointment, cause some one to test the matter in a manner which it would be unable to bear.

At a subsequent experiment disease was made the subject of examination. In this the Blindfold partner was, as usual, very successful. Numbers of the ills that flesh is heir to, were pointed out, and the aches and pains of the patients fully described—even better, some of them declared, than they could have done it themselves. "I like to see the blood gush through this man's heart, said the subject, while examining a huge, meat-eating, middlepated peasant.

"Can he see all that's inside of a man," said a bystander.

"He can that," said Mr. Alderman.

"Yes sirce! said Timothy Shylock.

"Can he tell what will cure diseases?"

"Aye! said Mr. Alderman, I'd give more for his opinion than for the say of forty wide awake, Doctors.

After the brilliant success, the partners in humbug began to talk about going on a clairvoyant excursion, and of adopting the profession as a permanent business.

They all began to hint very slyly of private experiments, in which wonderful accounts were given of the way to wealth amid the mineral treasures of California and Oregon. The people listened as to the voice of the Sibylline Oracle. Mr. Alderman thought the clairvoyant instinct a God given power, which those who possessed ought to employ in alleviating the maladies that flesh is heir to—in instructing, elevating and refining fallen, depraved, and sin-crushed humanity. Mr. Alden's instinct was a fortune of health to the sick, and a harvest of wealth to its possessor. The Messrs Clairvoyant performers could not fail of getting rich, if they adopted the profession.

In the meantime the Merchant made a profitable sale of his store, and talked of going to California or Oregon with the proceeds. "If James Alden can tell where to find deposites of gold, can we not soon get rich?" Said the Schoolmaster.—

Who could doubt the affirmative of the conditional question?

But the story went forth that Mr. Alden had seen the richest imaginable deposites of the yellow ore, salt springs of exceeding value, mines of copper, and beds of coal, to say nothing of quicksilver platina, brimstone, saltpetre, petroleum, &c., beneath the jagged peaks of the cascade and coast Ranges, and under the snowy top of the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains—all of course out of the top of his head. It was but necessary to put Mr. Alden into the two states of Clairvoyance and California, and he would guide (the blind leading the sound-eyed,) his seeing Partner to Natures greatest safes of mineral wealth, and the two operators on credulity, might become the richest millionaires of the wide round world.

But the lyceum had nearly discouraged our heroes. The interest did not wane, but it certainly did not increase. In spite of clairvoyance, which, in fact, had done more to sustain the stated meetings than the intelligence or public spirit of the community, it was destitute of such attraction as alone could gain for it the support of such a people. We will not say that such attractiveness would have been rather the lack of merit than its possession, but we strongly favour such an opinion. Mr. Alden had broken his merchantile prison, and his thoughts ceasing to act in the circumscribed sphere of his store, the clairvoyant performances became distasteful. With the Schoolmaster the experiments were an old story, and the constant inquiries about the science, and echoes of clairvoyance! *Clairvoyance!*—CLAIRVOYANCE! Began to grow wearisome. Nearly all the people of the vicinity had sucked down the blessed instinct. There was no inducement to prolong the humbug. Accordingly, on a certain Saturday evening, our heroes concluded when and how to spring the mine, expose the science, and show the people their folly. They pitched upon the next Tuesday evening for the downfall of clairvoyance. They had played the game with a bold hand and so they determined to carry it out. The announcement was posted at the store as follows:

NOTICE.—Messrs. Alden and Jonathan will give an exhibition at the Rustytown schoolhouse, on Tuesday evening next, at early candlelight, in which they will explain *their* theory of clairvoyance and perform experiments *in a manner* to satisfy the *most fanatical*.

JAMES ALDEN.
PROSPERO JONATHAN.

The news circulated rapidly. Hundreds were studying all sorts of tests during the following days. Pockets were to be loaded with untold of articles, and even things distant from the scene of action were to be inquired after.

Meanwhile the belief became general, that James Alden was suffering in mind as well as in body on account of the mesmeric influence. He was rapidly becoming an imbecile. He had fooled away his store to obtain funds to carry on his clairvoyantic operations, as the word was terminated by the vulgar. Some of the more superstitious dupes even affirmed that the experiments were sinful, and on this account harmful to soul and body; and dark hints given of dealings with a certain personage who dwells where roaring hot fires blaze continually.—And the ball kept rolling, but though it gathered no moss, yet the agglomerated mass of humbug, credulity, and folly became so huge, that it rested on the whole community.

On the day appointed for the ultimate demonstration of signology, the father of the Merchant, happening in at the store expressed doubts of the clairvoyance of his son, and by so doing offended Mr. Alderman. The dispute that followed ran high, and finally terminated in a bet of forty dollars a side, that young Alden could not specify a single article which his father would place in his pocket. Mr. Shylock, in jockey phrase, went Mr. Alderman's halves. Writings were drawn, and, with the stakes, put into the hands of the watchmaker.

Mr. Jonathan, on his way to the village, to act his part in the exhibition, was not a trifle startled by hearing the affair of the bet. He still concluded to keep a stout heart, and proceed as circumstances dictated. Arriving at the store, he found Mr. Alderman so sure of winning that he had already planned the disposal of the winnings. He would not keep money gained by such means, but would get shot of it all, in the course of a month, for benevolent objects. Shylock was equally sure of winning, but calculated to keep what he should get.

The Conspirators adjourned to the gristmill, where the Schoolmaster was in favor of backing out of the bet operation, but ascertained that the dupes had bound themselves so that the intended exposition would throw the stakes into the Elder Alden's pocket.—