

How many persons would rather go out of their way than walk under a *ladder*, or, if they do venture to pass under it, do so with an involuntary shudder? With what shrinking dread does the midnight watcher hear, or fancy he hears, the "death-watch"? Many an otherwise brave man would rather face death at the cannon's mouth than alone and at midnight enter a "haunted house," or feel his flesh creep as by the uncertain light of the moon he passes a lonely, quiet graveyard. With what blind confidence does the sufferer from cramps in the feet retire to rest after first turning up the soles of her slippers and placing them under the foot of the bed, trusting to some unknown mysterious influence to ward off the threatened attack. How the sailor dreads going to sea on Friday; or what ship-owner would send his vessel from port on that day if it could possibly be avoided?

The list of examples might be extended almost *ad infinitum*, but time and space will only allow brief mention to be made of the so-called "clairvoyant state" and "spiritualism." It is not the intention of the writer to enter into these subjects at any length, but merely to make a few observations on one aspect of the question, that, to a certain extent, interests and affects not only the public, but the medical profession, and, if possible, to throw some light on the veil of mystery and humbug which surrounds the doings and vaunted "cures" of the clairvoyant and spiritualistic "doctors."

To the weak and superstitious the performances and revelations of these clairvoyant impostors are so wonderful and attractive that it is not surprising they should be by them referred to an inherent supernatural power possessed by the exhibitor. This being the case, it is not difficult to understand with what unbounded confidence and superstitious awe they will submit themselves and their ailments, real or imaginary, to one who professes, and whom they believe, to have the power of so separating the soul from the gross material body as to see through them, read their thoughts, see every organ, and watch every function of their body going on, and, of course, in disease determine with certainty what part, organ or function is at fault, and what are the remedies suitable to re-establish health.

The *modus operandi* of the spiritualist, though not so profound and inscrutable, is ingenious, and of much interest to the medical