

Perhaps some of you may recall the case of the distinguished obstetrician and author, Playfair, who is said to have been mulcted in a fine of £5,000 for implicating inadvertently a family friend in a scandal, through the occurrence of an abortion ten months after her husband had left his home and wife for service in India. The case, I believe, was afterwards conceded to be a case of "missed abortion," but the occurrence is said to have blighted the after life of Dr. Playfair.

EXPERT MEDICAL TESTIMONY.*

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At the outset let me say that I am entirely at issue with the Western judge who divided witnesses into three classes, the liar, the damned liar and the expert witness. So far as my own experience goes, my deliberate judgment is that there is no class of witness more conscientious and reliable than the medical expert. One hears in loose talk, "If you get half a dozen doctors to swear one thing, I will get you half a dozen to swear the opposite." In my experience and reading I know of no such case, although I have been concerned in several cases in which I have known such statements to be made with a pretended knowledge of the facts. I particularly recall a celebrated murder trial, on account of which, it is said, a limit was put upon the number of experts who might be called in any case, and I venture to say that if I read to you gentlemen the cross-examination of the Crown doctors and the chief examination of the defence doctors, you would not be able to say which were witnesses for the defence and which were for the Crown, speaking from the substance of the answers given, though by the form you might detect a difference. In that case there was in the totality no difference of testimony on behalf of the medical witnesses for the Crown and the defence, although the press and the public almost made a scandal of it.

There is too much thoughtless, too much prejudiced and too much malicious abuse of the medical expert witness; and there is much more ignorant than well-informed criticism of him. This is true not only in our own country, but in many other countries. I speak more particularly of Anglo-Saxon communities, where the

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