

A NEWSPAPER PICTURE OF DR. PLAYFAIR.—The London *Star* thus describes the defendant in the suit which has recently caused so much excitement in London: "Dr. Playfair, the defendant in the case which is now exciting so much attention, is one of the most distinguished of living gynæcologists. The public rush to his consulting room, and his house in George Street, Hanover Square, is the resort of much talent, some rank, and a certain amount of fashion. Dr. Playfair is below the middle height, not especially attractive in appearance, and wearing thick, disfiguring glasses. In manner he is urbane, and he has a habit of rubbing his hands softly together in a way that suggests that his treatment would be gentle."—*Medical Record*.

* * *

THE LACK OF PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS.—It is safe to assert that there is an ominous decline of patronage in every department of professional work. Very few if any of the hitherto successful practitioners are overworked. The falling off of receipts averages from a third to a half of those earned in previous years. Hard times explain this in a great measure, but not altogether. The average number of sick is no less than formerly, but there is a growing disposition to avoid the so-called calamity of adding a doctor's bill to the other general and pressing expenses of household necessities. The man who formerly paid the physician a modest sum gets advice free in the dispensary, or pays a small bed fee in some of the many so-called hospital charities, and has his medical and surgical advice thrown in free of extra charge. Many of the larger hospitals are run on the cheap boarding-house plan and openly compete with the family physician by reducing medical service to the lowest level of volunteer gratuity. Promiscuous prescribing on the part of laymen is an outbreak of hereditary taint from grandmothers, and needs only the slightest provocation to bring it into full recognition as the manifestation of an alarmingly prevalent evil. Worse than all, however, are the penny-a-line prescriptions contributed by medical men and paid for by the column, always to mislead and often to harm the ignoramus who takes them at their face value. Many apothecaries, when they have not curealls of their own, peddle the doctors' prescriptions and dodge the law by refusing to do more than sell a medicine. The patients themselves do the same thing with their friends, and one prescription may serve an entire community. The intelligent layman would scorn the imputation of ignorance of the fashionable drugs. He has his own remedy for grippe, headache, and rheumatism; his own cough mixture, his own mineral water, and his own tonic. His good doctor started him in the business and he naturally claims his rights as a free and independent citizen.—*Medical Record*.