

charge on the revenues of such municipality. This is a great step forward and shows at once the inevitable trend of public opinion on this subject.

One more question of importance to us generally as a profession and I am done. We continually have our attention drawn to the case of a brother practitioner being forced to defend a suit for malpractice or else submit to blackmail. I am sorry to say that, unfortunately, the conditions in certain individual cases are such that the latter alternative has to be accepted and rather than be ruined, or perhaps have a reputation blemished, a settlement is made out of court. Not so, gentlemen, in other cases. A man's honour is something very dear to him and cannot be rudely assailed. A firm consciousness of rectitude in his action over-rides all appeals to a so-called common sense, and so he calmly submits to an action, and is content to allow himself to be tried. Unhappily his jury is composed always of men who in the nature of things cannot appreciate the refinements and technicalities of medicine or surgery, nor are they trained in knowing the vagaries of the human frame when exposed to disease or accident. The plaintiff often induced by low or sordid motives, or animated by jealousy or spite, perhaps goaded forwards by a hidden enemy of the doctor, takes his course with nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The defendant knowing full well the disastrous results of defeat in the withdrawal from him of public confidence, which is his only stay, uses every means to win. He is forced to employ the best available legal talent to fight for him, and eminent counsel with handsome retainers become necessary. Legal technicalities arise, and he is taken from court to court while the bar and bench wrangle over abstruse questions of law and the original suit is a mere circumstance.

The case finally is disposed of, and may be won or lost; but who do you suppose has supplied the sinews of war? Why, the doctor of course, and it oftentimes happens that he is absolutely impoverished, and has spent the savings or earnings of years in fighting for a principle and to uphold the honour and dignity of himself as a man, and of the profession to which he belongs.

Gentlemen, this ought not to be so, we ought and we must in some way stand shoulder to shoulder. It must be understood and published broadcast that our profession is too sacred a thing to allow it to be trampled upon with impunity. Actions for malpractice will surely continue, and if deserved cannot be defended, but unrighteous and unholy suits of this kind must be fought unhesitatingly and unsparingly, and when the public know that they cannot frighten a doctor into paying up hush money, but rather that he will be backed up and supported by