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NEUROLOGY IN LITERATURE

Some of Trollope's doctors

Trollope has a rather gentler view of the medical profession than Dickens, although Dr Fillgrave receives some adverse comment and, predictably, comes off worse in a clash with Dr Thorne. Many of Trollope's comments still seem apposite. Doctors still love their fees, remain bad actors, and perhaps are still a potential hazard in the houses of young ladies!

Anthony Trollope, 1857, Barchester Towers

No change, gentlemen; not the slightest change—but a telegraphic message has arrived—Sir Omicron Pie will be here by the 9-15 pm train. If any man can do anything Sir Omicron Pie will do it. But all that skill can do has been done.

Anthony Trollope, 1858, Doctor Thorne

Now Dr Fillgrave dearly loved a five-pound fee. What physician is so unnatural as not to love it? He dearly loved a five-pound fee; but he loved his dignity better.

Anthony Trollope, 1858, Doctor Thorne

He was brusque, authoritative, given to contradiction, rough though never dirty in his personal belongings, and inclined to indulge in a sort of quiet raillery, which sometimes was not thoroughly understood. People did not always know whether he was laughing at them or with them; and some people were, perhaps, inclined to think that a doctor should not laugh at all when called in to act doctorially. . . .

To trifling ailments he was too often brusque. Seeing that he accepted money for the cure of such, he should we may say, have cured them without an offensive manner. So far he is without defence. But to real suffering no one found him brusque; no patient lying painfully on a bed of sickness ever thought him rough.

Anthony Trollope, 1864, The Small House at Allington
Young unmarried doctors ought perhaps to be excluded from houses in which there are young ladies. I know, at any rate, that many sage matrons hold very strongly to that opinion, thinking, no doubt, that doc-

tors ought to get themselves married before they venture to begin working for a living.

Anthony Trollope, 1864-5, Can you forgive her

But oh, Alice, if you had seen the Duke's long face through those three days; if you had heard the tones of the people's voices as they whispered about me; if you had encountered the oppressive cheerfulness of those two London doctors,—doctors are such bad actors,—you would have thought it impossible for any woman to live throughout.

Anthony Trollope, 1867, The last chronicle of Barchester

Now Dr Fillgrave was the leading physician of Barchester, and nobody of note in the city—for the matter of that in the eastern division of the county—was allowed to start upon the last great journey without some assistance from him as the hour of going drew nigh. I do not know that he had much reputation for prolonging life, but he was supposed to add a grace to the hour of departure. . . .

"A day or two will see the end of it, Mr Archdeacon—I should say a day or two," said the doctor, as he met Dr Grantly in the hall. "I should say that a day or two will see the end of it. Indeed I will not undertake that twenty-four hours may not see the close of his earthly troubles. He has no suffering, no pain, no disturbing cause. Nature simply retired to rest." Dr Fillgrave, as he said this, made a slow falling motion with his hands, which alone on various occasions had been thought to be worth all the money paid for his attendance.

Anthony Trollope, 1870, The vicar of Bullhampton

She would not absolutely say that a physician was not a gentleman, or even a surgeon; but she would never allow to physic the same absolute privileges which, in her eyes, belonged to law and the church.

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