

LIBEL AND SLANDER OF PHYSICIANS.

A description of what constitutes libel and slander affecting physicians and surgeons is given by L. D. Bulette, Esq., in the *International Medical Magazine*. Words which cause an appreciable injury to the reputation, if they are false, constitute a libel when written or printed; a slander when spoken. Words which are clearly defamatory are actionable, *per se*, without the necessity of proof that any particular damage has resulted from their use; if they merely tend to injure the reputation of another, some perceptible injury must be proved. When the words or language used imply gross ignorance and unskillfulness in his profession, the medical practitioner may sue. It has been held that to call a physician a "quack" is thus actionable. The same is true of words charging that a physician is "an empiric and a mountebank;" or that "he is no doctor; he bought his diploma for fifty dollars;" or that "he is a quack, and if he shows you a diploma it is a forgery." It is also actionable without proof of special damage, to say of a physician, "He has killed the child by giving it too much calomel;" or "He has killed six children in one year;" or "If Dr. X. had continued to treat S., she would have been in her grave before this time."

On the other hand, it is not actionable without proof of special damage to say: "He is a two-penny bleeder;" or "He is so steady drunk he cannot get business any more." The same is true of words charging a physician with adultery unconnected with his professional conduct.

But it would be otherwise if he had been accused of seducing or committing adultery with one of his patients. It is not actionable to charge one who is not legally authorized to practise physic or surgery or to receive compensation therefrom, with ignorance of the healing art, or with having destroyed human life by misapplied efforts, nor to say of such a person, "He is a quack" or an "impostor."

HENRY GEORGE ON DRUGGISTS' PRICES.

"When I go to a druggist's and buy a small quantity of medicine or chemicals, I pay many times the original cost of those articles, but what I thus pay is in much larger degree wages than profit. Out of such small sales the druggist must get not only the cost of what he sells me, with other costs incidental to the business, but also payment for his services. These services consist not only in the actual exertion of giving me what I want, but in waiting there in readiness to serve me when I choose to come. In the price of what he sells me he makes a charge of what printers call 'waiting time,' and he must manifestly not merely charge waiting time for

himself, but also for the stock of many different things only occasionally called for, which he must keep on hand. He has been waiting there with his stock in anticipation of the fact that such persons as myself, in sudden need of some small quantities of drugs or chemicals, would find it cheaper to pay him many times the wholesale cost than to go farther and buy larger quantities. What I pay him, even when it is not payment for the skilled labor of compounding, is largely a payment of the same nature, as, were he not there, I might have had to make to a messenger.

—*National Druggist.*

PAN-AMERICAN MEDICAL CONGRESS.

SECTION OF GYNECOLOGY AND ABDOMINAL SURGERY.

All members of the medical profession are cordially invited to attend the meetings of this section to be held in Washington, September 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th.

The sessions promise to be exceptionally interesting, many valuable papers having been contributed. Those who may wish to read papers before this section and who have not yet sent in their titles and skeleton abstracts are requested to do so at once.

Papers have already been contributed by the following distinguished gentlemen from the United States and Canada: Drs. T. Johnson Alloway, Montreal, Can.; A. W. Abbott, Minneapolis, Minn.; J. M. Baldy, Philadelphia, Pa.; H. J. Boldt, New York City; Augustus P. Clarke, Cambridge, Mass.; Ernest W. Cushing, Boston, Mass.; Andrew F. Currier, New York City; L. H. Dunning, Indianapolis, Ind.; Geo. R. Deane, Spartanburg, S. C.; W. E. B. Davis, Birmingham, Ala.; Joseph Eastman, Indianapolis, Ind.; Geo. M. Edebohls, New York City; De Saussure Ford, Augusta, Ga.; William Gardner, Montreal, Can.; T. H. Hawkins, Denver, Col.; John R. Haynes, Los Angeles, Cal.; Edw. W. Jenks, Detroit, Mich.; Jos. Taber Johnson, Washington, D. C.; Howard A. Kelly, Baltimore, Md.; Florian Krug, New York City; G. Betton Marsey, Philadelphia, Pa.; Lewis S. McMurtry, Louisville, Ky.; R. B. Maury, Memphis, Tenn.; Wm. F. Myers, Ft. Wayne, Ind.; E. E. Montgomery, Philadelphia, Pa.; Robert T. Morris, New York City; Chas. P. Noble, Philadelphia, Pa.; Joseph Price, Philadelphia, Pa.; Geo. H. Rohé, Baltimore, Md.; Jas. F. W. Ross, Toronto, Can.; Chas. A. L. Reed, Cincinnati, O.; I. S. Stone, Washington, D. C.; R. Stansbury Sutton, Pittsburg, Pa.; T. Algeron Temple, Toronto, Can.; A. Vander Veer, Albany, N. Y.; W. B. Ward, Topeka, Kan.

BROOKS H. WELLS, W. W. POTTER,
71 West 45th St., N. Y. City, *Ex. President.*
English-Speaking Secretary.