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## *Original Contributions.*

### THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION TOWARD ILLEGAL PRACTITIONERS.\*

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THE law assumes, and the people take it for granted, that the advertising quack is a legal practitioner of medicine, and that when he advertises himself and his ability in the newspapers he is only exercising one of the inalienable rights of his citizenship. Later, we will examine and determine the quality of this right, only to find that he, too, is an illegal practitioner. For this reason there is confusion in some minds about terms as applied to quacks and abortionists. Some people very properly regard both as the veriest sort of knaves, as well as quacks; others, again, look on the professional advertiser as rather worse than his friend the abortionist, for the reason that the latter may be acting in good faith toward his patient who is in a dilemma, and while breaking the law, makes an honest effort to allay her anxiety of mind and relieve her of her burden. If she threatens to destroy herself if her child is not done away with, and if the abortionist takes this threat in good faith, there may be some moral justification for his act, as the child is sinless and prepared to stand trial for crimes it has not committed. The mother, on the other hand, has sinned by breaking the moral law, and is prepared to sin again by offering her life as a sacrifice for this transgression.

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\*Read before the New York County Medical Association, February 20th, 1899.