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EDITORS:

A. H. WRIGHT, B.A., M.B., M.R.C.S. England.

J. E. GRAHAM, M.D., L.R.C.P. London.

W. H. B. AIKINS, M.D., L.R.C.P. London.

Subscription, \$3 per annum, in advance.—Address, DR. GEO. A. PETERS, 482 Yonge Street.

All Exchanges, Etc., should be addressed to DR. W. H. B. AIKINS, 68 Gerrard Street East.

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BIOLOGY IN MEDICAL EDUCATION.

BY PROF. R. RAMSAY WRIGHT, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

A question of the greatest interest to the profession is at present engrossing the attention of the Senate of the University of Toronto;—whether it is possible to bring about a more intimate relationship between the University and her medical undergraduates than is at present effected by the system of examinations. One of the proposals made, which would certainly result in bringing together more closely the arts and medical students, is that the preliminary scientific training of undergraduates in medicine shall be entrusted to the University Professoriate. It is this proposal which induces me to offer a statement of my views on the character and extent of previous training which a student ought to have before entering on the study of the medical sciences. I begin with the subject of Biology, which is under my own supervision.

It is the more necessary that I should do so, because the opinion has been freely expressed by at least one gentleman engaged in Medical Education, not only that the knowledge required to pass the University Examination in Biology is entirely useless to the medical student, but that the falling off in the numbers of medical graduates is to be wholly attributed to the imposition of this Examination. I hope to show (1) that the latter statement is not correct, and

(2) that, even if it were, the University would not be justified in dispensing with the Examination in question.

I do not propose to support the first assertion further than by stating that some gentlemen, who have looked very closely into the matter, agree with me in attributing the diminished number of graduates in medicine (1) to the imposition of a separate Matriculation Examination; (2) to the elevation in standard of the New Curriculum; (3) to discrepancies between it and that of the Council; and (4) to the exacting of Annual Examinations. Since these changes were carried out in 1878 the regulations have been from time to time modified with regard to the 1st, 3rd, and 4th particulars, with the result of a corresponding increase in the number of candidates presenting themselves for examination at the University. It is improbable that the University will desire to add to the number by lowering the standard of Examination.

The remainder of the space kindly placed at my disposal I propose to occupy by defending my second position, viz., that an examination in Biology, similar to that at present held by the University, must be continued, because it aims at ascertaining whether the student is possessed of a kind of knowledge and of a kind of training which are invaluable to him at that period of his studies.

It is surprising that so much ignorance and misconception prevail as to the place which Biology now occupies in the higher liberal education of to-day as to its objects, and as to its