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U. OGDEN, M.D.,
EDITOR.

R. ZIMMERMAN, M.D., L.R.C.P., London,
171 Church Street Toronto, Corresponding Editor

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All Communications, Letters and Exchanges must be addressed to the Corresponding Editor.

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Selections: Medicine.

BRIGHT'S DISEASE.

The sixth International Congress of Medical Science was held in Amsterdam during the week from September 7th to September 13th.

Bright's Disease.—The following note was presented to Section 1—that of Medicine—at the discussion on Bright's disease, by Professor Semmola of Naples. It comprised a *résumé* of the communication made by Dr. Semmola to the International Medical Congress at Brussels, on different kinds of albuminuria, which was reported in the *Gaz Méd. de Paris*, 1875; also a *résumé* of further researches made by Professor Semmola, and communicated to the present International Congress of Amsterdam. He said:

1. My first researches were conducted as far back as 1850. I think that I was the first to show the classic influence of alimentation and diet on the quantity of urine which is secreted in Bright's disease. (See Jaccoud's work, *Manual of Internal Pathology*, Paris, 1873, vol. ii. p. 685.)

2. This influence of diet on the increase or decrease of albumen in the urine, according to the greater or less amount of nitrogenous elements in the food, was the starting-point of all my researches. It led me to conclude that it is absolutely necessary to direct our attention not only to the renal lesions, but also to general nutritive disturbances in which the albuminoid bodies are either not at all, or only imperfectly, assimilated and consumed.

3. This idea, which I have always endeavoured to develop concerning the etiology of Bright's disease, has, to my mind, been con-

firmed by another classical fact which has hitherto remained completely misunderstood. I mean the considerable and progressive decrease in the quantity of urica which is formed in the organism from the first stages of chronic Bright's disease. (See note at the end.)

4. I have always insisted on this classical and fundamental point, and have repeatedly made communications on the subject to the Académie de Médecine of Paris and to that of Naples. I especially insisted on this point in Paris (1867) and in Brussels (1875), and have convinced myself by the study of three hundred clinical cases that the decrease of the urica from the first stages of Bright's disease is owing to a defective oxidation of the albuminoid matter.

I find that in all books authors speak of the defective excretion of urica; but I have never yet been able to discover anything about the defective formation, which I am sure is a principal and fundamental fact; a characteristic phenomenon of Bright's disease.

It is caused by the total or partial absence of the cutaneous functions. In consequence of this suppression of the respiratory functions of the skin, two chemical disturbances arise, which are closely united from a biological point of view—viz., the alteration and inassimilability of the albuminoid substances, and defective combustion, *i.e.*, a decrease in the formation of urica. I leave it to experimental physiology to elucidate the part which the cutaneous functions play in the assimilation and combustion of albuminoid matter. I shall merely restrict myself to pointing out the intimate connection between the two which has been revealed by the pathological condition; and I foresee that it will lead to the solution of a problem which is of great import-