

SCIENCE

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THE APPEAL OF SCIENCE TO THE COMMUNITY

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THE subject on which I shall venture to speak to you this evening is one which some of you, perhaps, may deem too threadbare for further consideration. The position which science holds or ought to hold among the general interests of the community has formed the theme of many an eloquent and vigorous address, and leaders among the men of science in this and other English-speaking countries have time and again urged its claims upon an apparently or supposedly slothful and perverse generation. If I then venture once more to speak on this topic it is because there are abundant evidences that the past few years have been a time of awakening and awakened interest in science, and that it is our duty to do our utmost to guide and quicken this interest. Has not the well-known Scottish writer, Sir James Barrie, borne testimony that "the man of science appears to be the only man who has something to say just now," although he somewhat unkindly adds the opinion that he is the only man who does not know how to say it? Although a great change has, I believe, taken place in public opinion, in this as well as in my own country, regarding the work of science, there nevertheless exists the necessity of urging, with persistence but also with restraint, the great importance of cultivating what we may call the scientific habit of mind and of securing the right and proper appreciation of the value of creative scientific work. We can not, therefore, consider too carefully or too frequently how, in a spirit of service, we may best frame our appeal to the community and bring to our fellow men a knowledge and appreciation of those benefits and delights which come from a study of nature.

The ground on which the appeal of science has been most frequently and, perhaps, most noisily made has been that of the utility of science, not merely in the practical business of life and of earning one's livelihood, but also in the preservation of life itself and in the provision of physical comfort. "Real gain, real progress," as the late Sir William Ramsay declared, "consists in learning how better to employ energy, how better to effect its transformation," and, looking back over the history, more especially of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, down to the present day, it is easy to mark how great have been the achievements of science in this direction. One thinks, for example, of the develop-

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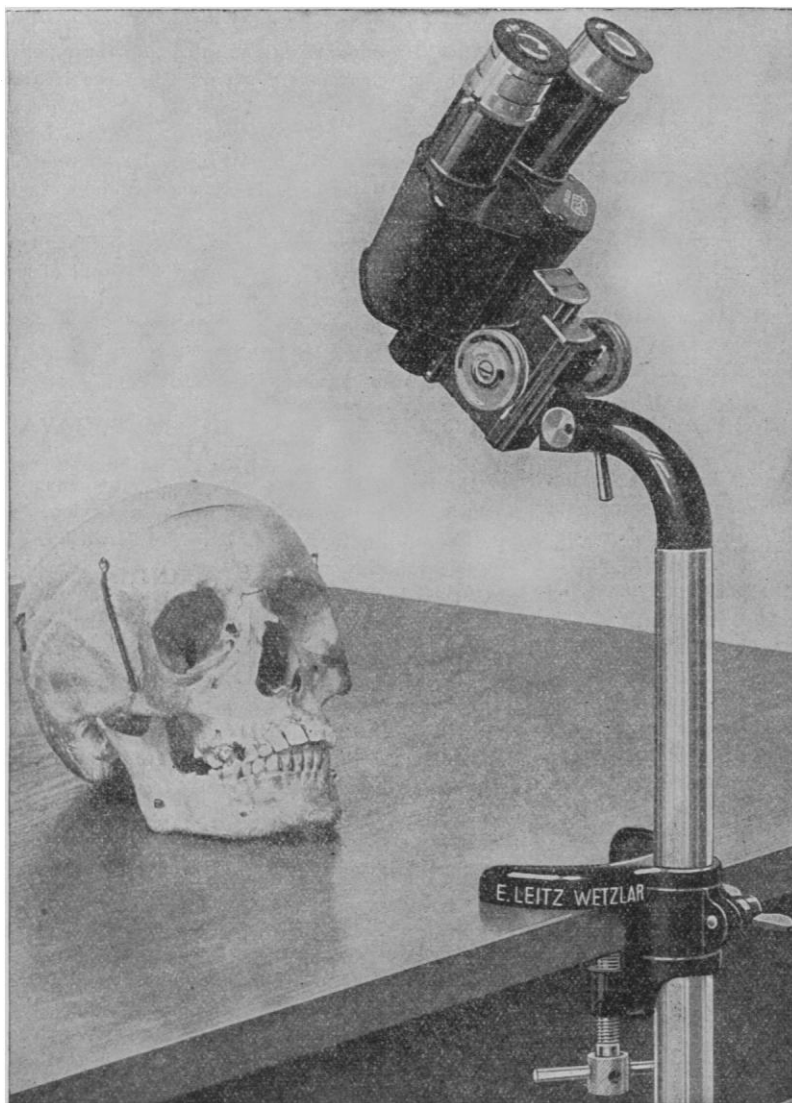
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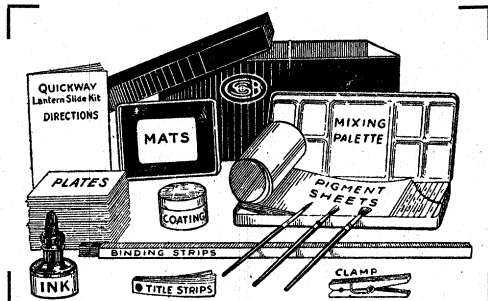
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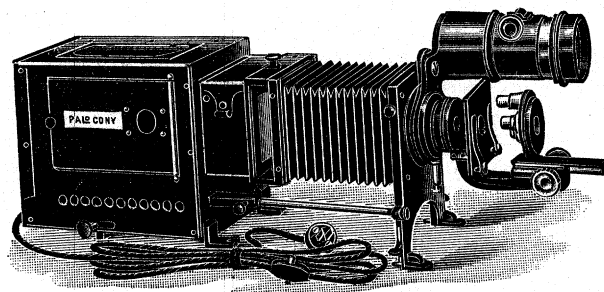
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