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THE NEED OF MORE WELL-TRAINED PRACTITIONERS OF MEDICINE

DURING the past year SCIENCE has published a number of very interesting and instructive articles on medical education. However, in reading these articles carefully, the thought struck me that not one of them touches upon the most vital question of all, namely, Are the medical schools of this country to-day preparing their students primarily and principally for the services which the citizens of this country need most? Personally, my answer is, No. I fully realize that this is a rather bold statement to make and one with which some very well-qualified educators will take sharp issue, and yet I believe it is absolutely true. My opinion is based on an extensive experience with a large number of recent graduates—graduates from many of the more prominent and some of the less prominent schools of the country. The old adage, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," is apropos here. The only way to determine definitely whether a medical curriculum, ever so carefully worked out on paper, produces the desired result is to see the recent graduates in action at the bedside. Judged by this standard, I do not believe that the graduate of to-day, with all his fine scientific training, compares favorably as a general rule with the graduate of say twenty-five years ago whose training may have been a little less scientific but much more practical.

The purpose of medical education is to provide for the present and future citizens of the country the best medical care, service and attention that is possible under the circumstances, and judged by this standard, present-day medical education leaves much to be desired.

The country needs a relatively large number of well-trained general practitioners of medicine and a relatively small number of specialists, research workers and sanitarians; and yet the medical colleges are turning out ever-increasing numbers of the latter and relatively few of the former.

Two very interesting and extensive surveys, one by Dr. William A. Pusey, past president of the American Medical Association, and the other by a committee, headed by Dr. Matthias Nichol, Jr., have recently been made, both of which prove conclusively that in many rural sections of this country there is already a shortage of general practitioners of medicine and that there are almost no young men locating in the country. Space prevents printing the evi-

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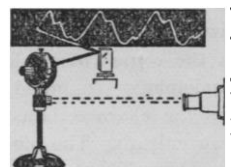
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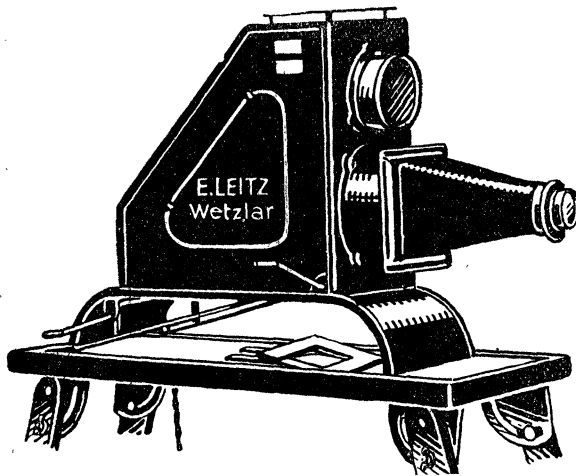
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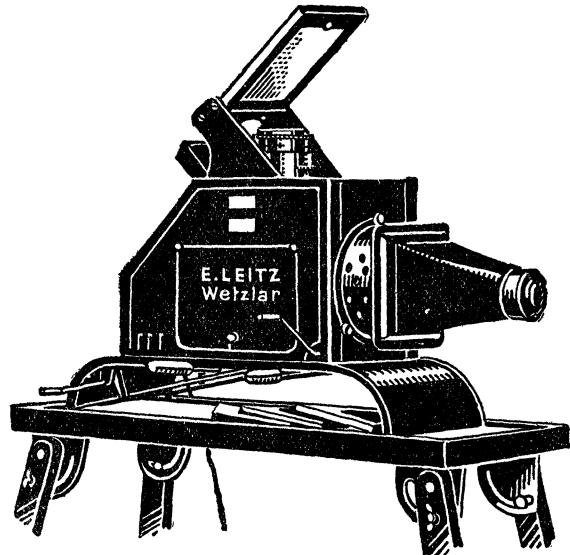


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