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CONTENTS

<i>The Choice of a Profession—Medical:</i> PROFESSOR ELLIOTT C. CUTLER	603
<i>An Objective Demonstration of the Shape of Cells in Masses:</i> PROFESSOR FREDERIC T. LEWIS	607
<i>William Otis Crosby:</i> PROFESSOR DOUGLAS JOHNSON...	609
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>The National Physical Laboratory of Great Britain; New Foreign Members of the Royal Society; The World Forestry Congress; Activities of the Rockefeller Foundation</i>	610
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	613
<i>University and Educational Notes</i>	615
<i>Discussion:</i>	
<i>An Outdoor Optical Experiment:</i> PROFESSOR HENRY NORRIS RUSSELL. <i>Seismic Wave Velocity and Densities of Crustal Materials:</i> JERRY H. SERVICE. <i>Field Trips in Geology:</i> PROFESSOR W. C. MORSE. <i>Special Characters for the Typewriter:</i> JNO. D. RIGGS. <i>Radio Information:</i> L. S. MAYER...	616
<i>Scientific Books:</i>	
<i>Strangeways on Tissue Culture:</i> PROFESSOR GEORGE A. BAITSELL	618
<i>Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:</i>	
<i>A Cathode Ray Oscillograph for Several Simultaneous Waves with Stabilized Linear Time Axis:</i> PROFESSOR FREDERICK BEDELL and HERBERT J. REICH	619
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>The Isolation of a Crystalline Protein with Tuberculin Activity:</i> DR. FLORENCE B. SEIBERT. <i>Preliminary Notes on the Structure of Plant Protoplasm:</i> PROFESSOR ROBERT H. BOWEN. <i>The Use of Subscript and Superscript Exponents in Mathematics and in Chemistry:</i> DR. ELLIOT Q. ADAMS.....	619
<i>Science News</i>	x

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THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION— MEDICAL¹

IN accepting the kind invitation of Professor Hartson to address you to-day I was fully conscious of my inability to place before you a complete picture of the possibilities of medicine as a career. As a matter of fact, the field of medicine has become so broad that even those possessed of the maturity, wisdom and experience of a long life devoted to medicine in its widest purposes would find it difficult to speak with authority on any but a limited aspect of the question at hand. It is, nevertheless, true that any university teacher in medicine must have a sufficiently general knowledge of the topic to outline to you the general scope of medicine, and at the same time depict to you the aim, ambitions and rewards that are common to those working in the many diverse fields of this profession. I am, therefore, very grateful for this opportunity.

Medicine is that science which relates to the prevention, cure or alleviation of disease. Undoubtedly in most ancient times it dealt purely with the alleviation of suffering. Doubtless it had at that time the closest possible relation with religion, for disease, even down to recent times, was looked upon as a visitation by an evil spirit. The cure was obvious—the evil spirit was either bought off or chased away. As mankind became civilized, certain diseases were seen to recur regularly and in each instance to cause the same symptoms, and a true medical science developed, and the devil was relieved of another undeserved opprobrium. Soon a connection was seen with external conditions, and man learned a little regarding the prevention of diseases and began to study the conditions under which the body was most likely to remain free from disease. By the fourth century before Christ medicine had become a learned profession, and in the writings of Hippocrates, that great leader of the School of Cos and usually spoken of as the "Father of Medicine," we find not only a very clear description of many diseases but lengthy discourses concerning the conditions under which the body can be kept in good health and disease prevented.

In view of this it may seem extraordinary that quackery, miracle healing and a very diversified number of medical cults exist and flourish even to-

¹ Address to the senior class of Oberlin College, May 25, 1925, as an exercise in a course covering vocational guidance.

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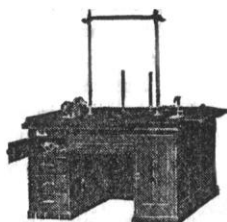
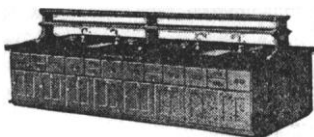


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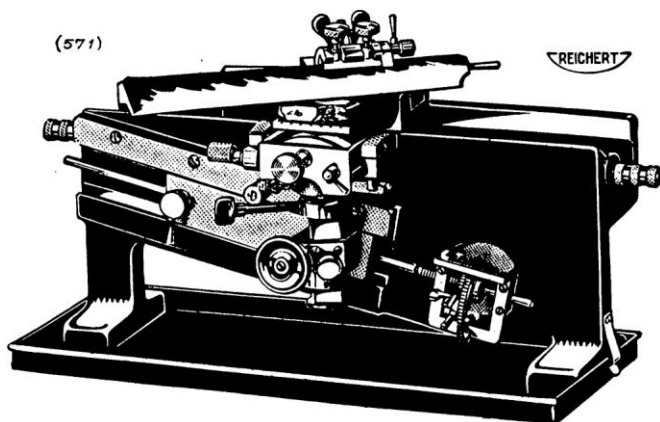
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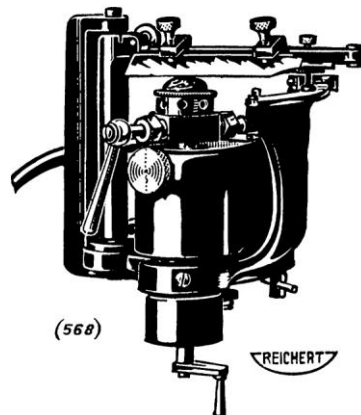
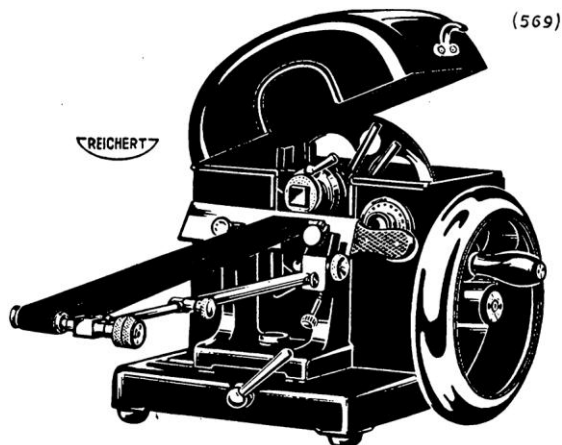
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