

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 964. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **POCKET-SIZE PILL VIALS** are molded in one piece with caps attached so they cannot get lost. They are made of polyethylene because of its low cost, resistance to breaking and easy moldability. The vials can be easily marked with stick-on labels, hot stamp, printing or silk screening.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **TWO-PLY BLANKET** for outdoor sportsmen is made of two different synthetic fibers and can be folded to book size for easy storage. The combined properties of both materials make the blanket warm, washable, water-repellent and resistant to mildew and fire.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **SELF-POWERED BRIEFCASE RECORDER**, operating on standard dry batteries, picks up and records voice within 60-foot radius. No wires, warm-up period, or exposed microphones are necessary. Recording is continuous up to four hours on each side of a non-flammable safety-film belt. Records are permanent and indexed.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **AUTOMATIC STILL CAMERA** has an electric eye that computes the light reading and sets the lens opening. The lens requires no focusing. An indicator in the



viewfinder glows green, showing enough light for picture taking, and red for inadequate light. Action is continuous, virtually instantaneous and the camera, shown in the photograph, is always ready for use.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **FLASHLIGHT** has precision-built compass mounted in its unbreakable head. The compass also serves as the flashlight lens and can be read easily in daylight or dark-

ness. It is hermetically sealed and shock resistant.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **SPONGE MOP** has two surfaces designed to operate as a unit. A cellulose sponge section, which is soft when wet, picks up water and loose dirt. A urethane foam strip surface, which is abrasive and non-absorbent, dislodges stubborn spots. Rinsing out is accomplished by a finger-tip-touch squeezer.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **ICE SKATING RINKLINERS** of plastic come in sizes from 40 by 40 feet to 100 by 200 feet, for home, playground or community use. They are made of one-piece, heat-sealed polyethylene, four one-thousandths of an inch thick. Cold-proof and non-brittle, they hold their water during warm spells.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958

⚙️ **PHOTOELECTRIC EXPOSURE METER** can be used with all types of cameras, loaded with black and white or color film. It is calibrated in A.S.A. speeds from 6 to 1600, has "f" stop openings from f/1 to f/32, and shutter speeds from four seconds to one one-thousandth of a second.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

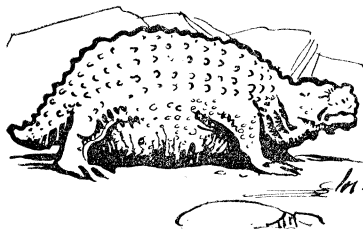
➤ FOR MILLIONS of years the giant reptiles ruled the earth. These gargantuan figures were the dominant animal life of the world, and lesser beasts lived in their shadows. Then something happened—slowly or suddenly, we will never know—which led to the absolute extinction of these creatures from the face of the earth they once ruled.

What was that "something" that meant disaster for the dinosaurs? We do not have a specific answer, or answers, but we can be pretty certain that their end was connected with a change in their habitat and their inability to cope with the change.

Perhaps the earth's prevailing climate grew too cold or too warm for their way of life.

Their very success might have caused their fall, as too great a number of them overtaxed the resources of the ancient land. As the competition among the reptiles in-

Dinosaurs and Men



creased, other creatures (for example, the humble ancestors of the present-day mammals) probably were able to displace the giants from their own realm.

Some one million or so years ago, a new type of mammal appeared. He had an ape-like appearance, but in most features he was highly unspecialized. He had thumbs that opposed his fingers, peculiarly structured feet, hind limbs and pelvic bones that allowed him to walk more or less upright, and a skull-case (and brain) of large proportions. But aside from these

features, this new mammal was seemingly not much of a specimen for the battle for survival. No great muscles, no giant size, no wings for flying, no teeth or claws for defense, no special fleetness of foot.

Yet this creature has risen to become the one animal that has, as a species, most completely dominated the earth. The dinosaurs' rule was much less extensive. Man has spread from above the Arctic Circle to the equator to the Antarctic. He can live on deserts, in mountains and jungles, on the sea.

The secret of man's success has been his lack of physical specialization, coupled with his highly specialized brain. He does not need fangs, for he can create weapons from stone and atomic fission. He does not need fur, for he takes it from animals and can make it from synthetic fibers. Because of his brain, he has been able to "alter" his environment to his taste.

He truly rules the earth.

Science News Letter, December 6, 1958