



by passage through a greater thickness of the layer of air.

There may, however, be a very slight atmosphere on the Moon, comparable with that 50 miles or more above the surface of the Earth, which is estimated to be about a twenty-thousandth as dense as the air at sea level. Such a concentration would be a fair vacuum.

One piece of evidence in favor of this is the fact that in all the vast number of hours that astronomers have spent observing the Moon through their telescopes, they have never seen a meteorite hit its surface. Such a collision, especially as it hit the dark side of the Moon, should make a flash that would be easily visible through a telescope. With the number of meteorites that reach the Earth—millions each day—it seems that the nearby Moon would be similarly bombarded. If they do not hit the surface something must stop them.

We know what keeps most of them from hitting the Earth's surface. It is the atmosphere, which causes such friction that they burn up in the flash of light we call a "shooting star," or "meteor." As a result, all but a very minute proportion are consumed while still 50 miles or more above the ground. Thus, it seems possible that the Moon might have an atmosphere compara-

ble with that of the Earth's at such an altitude. It would still stop most of the meteorites, but would be thin enough that it would not cause appreciable absorption of a star's light as it was occulted.

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Celestial Time Table for February

Feb.	EST	
3	10:00 a. m.	Moon nearest, distance 226,700 miles
6	2:54 a. m.	New moon
7	2:00 p. m.	Moon passes Jupiter
	5:11 p. m.	Moon passes Venus
8	12:07 a. m.	Moon passes Jupiter
	12:34 a. m.	Moon passes Mars
	1:00 a. m.	Planet Pluto nearest, distance 3,253,700,000 miles
	1:10 a. m.	Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum
10	9:59 p. m.	Algol at minimum
11	10:00 a. m.	Venus passes Jupiter
13	2:55 p. m.	Moon in first quarter
	6:49 p. m.	Algol at minimum
15	5:00 a. m.	Moon farthest, distance 251,400 miles
	11:00 p. m.	Venus passes Mars
21	4:12 p. m.	Full moon
23	10:19 p. m.	Moon passes Saturn
28	5:59 p. m.	Moon in last quarter

Subtract one hour for CST, two hours for MST, and three for PST.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1951

INVENTION

Bag Shrinks To Fit

► A BAG for packaging and preserving perishable foodstuffs, that can be shrunk to fit the food closely after being applied, brought patent 2,538,025 to Garnett V. Moore and Carroll R. Irons, Midland, Mich. The patent has been assigned to The Dow Chemical Company of the same city.

This flexible bag is made of about 73% vinylidene chloride and 27% vinyl chloride. After the food, such as meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, is put in the bag air is evacuated and the opening sealed with a hot iron or otherwise. Then bag and contents are submerged in water close to

but not up to the boiling point. The bag shrinks tightly about its contents.

Preserving bags made of this material are claimed to be superior to similar bags of other materials in that they have no tendency to shrink at any temperature encountered in shipping. At temperatures between 85 and 100 degrees Centigrade, however, they will shrink from 30% to 50%. They are clear and transparent. They are capable of being stored for prolonged periods at freezing temperature without becoming brittle.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1951

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