

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE SERVICE, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 925. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☛ **WROUGHT IRON DECALS** are designed to complement wrought iron porch columns. They can be used on picture windows, glass doors, garage doors, planters or shutters. Double-sided, the decals come in either black or white on clear backgrounds and are non-directional. They are available in large and small sizes.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958

☛ **TELEVISION PROGRAM FINDER** can tell you at a glance what channels are carrying your favorite programs. Pet programs are identified on a peg-board by varicolored plastic pins. Each pin represents a different channel. The day of the week and time of day are listed on the styrene plastic board.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958

☛ **DISPOSABLE SYRINGES** are designed for applying bonding agents, potting compounds and other uses. Molded of polyethylene plastic, each syringe has a tapered tip so that orifice diameters may be enlarged by cutting back the tip. There are also steel one-and-one-half-inch hollow needle tips.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958

☛ **LAWN AND HEDGE TRIMMER** connects to garden hose and is powered by water pressure. The trimmer, shown in the photograph, has a four-inch, four-tooth rotary blade. The two-and-one-half-pound



cutter rolls along next to walls and under shrubbery on plastic wheels. It has a detachable handle and built-in water control valve.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958

☛ **DRAWING KIT FOR THE BLIND** produces raised lines on a thin plastic film by the use of a small ball point pen and a rubber-surfaced writing board. Firm writ-

ing pressure with the inkless pen results in a series of tiny bumps that appear as raised lines on the upper surface of the film and can be traced with the fingertips.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958

☛ **CONTOUR TOOL** is a scribe that can be used for fitting linoleum, tile, wood, plastics and sheet metals around pipes, cabinets, door sills and frames. It marks circles or scrolls from one to 25 inches in diameter and follows irregular, uneven lines and surfaces.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958

☛ **SHOP VERNIER CALIPER** of stainless steel has a dull chromium finish to reduce glare when reading the scales. It is designed for measuring of outside, inside and depth dimensions with a measuring capacity of five and five-sixteenths inches. Graduations are 1/1000 inch on the lower scale and 1/128 inch on the upper scale.

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☛ **EXERCISE DEVICE** can be set up and used anywhere in the house. Exercising action is similar to that of riding a bicycle, but instead of pedals, the user puts his feet into rope stirrups that operate on a pulley. Stand and handles are of tubular steel and the exerciser is compact enough to fit into a dresser drawer.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► TIME AND AGAIN, the hard but honest gaze of a scientist has stared away our myths, superstitions and favorite beliefs, supplanting supposition with fact. We live in a better, healthier world because of this.

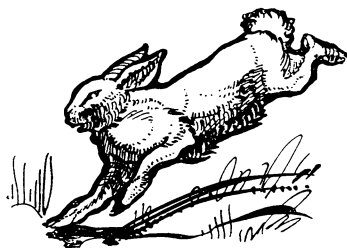
But sometimes we might wish there were a bit more sentiment in science as some fine old belief tumbles. Take the case of the rabbit.

We all grew up with Aesop's, Uncle Remus' or Walt Disney's stories about what a smart, handsome and lovable rodent Br'er Rabbit is. Even a 1954 edition of Webster's dictionary defines the rabbit as "burrowing rodent." However, the consensus among mammalogists today is: The rabbit is not a rodent!

Why not? And if not, what is old Br'er Rabbit?

The kind and structure of teeth form one of the most important means of classifying

### Two Extra Teeth



the different orders of mammals. They give a world of information about the habits and family relations of the animals. Now, for a long time the teeth of the rabbits, hares and pikas have been troubling the specialists.

Typical rodents have no more than two upper and two lower incisor teeth, the gnawing tools they use so efficiently. Rabbits and their kind have four upper incisors! Granted, the extra two teeth are small and without the cutting edge of the middle,

rodent-like incisors. But this, plus a few other irregularities, was enough to have them stricken from the Rodentia and elevated to an order of their own, the Lagomorpha.

(Until not too many years ago, and even now, for some scientists, this group of animals was placed in a separate suborder of the rodents.)

The North American lagomorphs consist of the rabbits, hares and the little-known pikas. The pikas, which live on the slopes of our western mountains, look something like the common guinea pig. Their hind legs are not elongated like those of the rabbits and hares.

While other features set them apart, rabbits differ from hares in one striking respect. The young rabbits are born naked, blind and helpless, while newborn hares come with eyes open and body well furred. Thus, the baby hare is on his own long before his pampered cousin.

Science News Letter, March 8, 1958