

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⊗ **HAND MOP** has a permanently attached plastic cup that wrings out the mop by being pushed down the wooden handle onto the cellulose strands. The strands are said to be highly absorbent, spongy, odorless, scratchless, dripless and durable. The mop is useful for all bathroom and kitchen chores.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **OIL AND GREASE CLEANER** for removal of stains from all rough and porous surfaces such as concrete, brick and cinder blocks, is a combination cleaning and drawing compound that removes stains from deep within the pores rather than from just the surface. The liquid is applied by brush, allowed to stand a while, and hosed off with water.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **CARPENTER'S TOOL** of aluminum combines into one unit a level, protractor, scale, bevel and square. The unit can be adjusted into various triangle shapes, or made into a T-square, and has a special scale for making common rafters and window sills.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **TOY FROGMAN** of flexible, water-resistant polyethylene has no metal parts or rough edges. A rubber bulb and lead enable youngsters to propel the frogman,



shown in the photograph, through the water as the bulb is pressed. When the bulb is rotated, he turns. Air bubbles breaking to the surface from a tank on his back add a touch of realism.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **KITCHEN COLANDER** of ivory-colored polyethylene is lighter than metal yet will not collapse even when fully loaded. It is not affected by chemicals, foodstuffs

or detergents, and can be cleaned with boiling water.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **SNACK TABLE SET** consists of four plastic-topped tables each shaped like a circle with a curved segment cut out. Placed together, they form a single table shaped like a four-leafed clover. Three wooden legs on each table screw on or off. When not in use the tables may be stacked in twos.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPE KIT**, prepared for training students in nuclear science, but also useful for sample preparation and spectrum analyses, consists of microcurie amounts of 14 long-lived isotopes. These are prepared in five-milliliter liquid solution and enclosed in half-ounce glass containers.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959

⊗ **STOP-WATCH HOLDER** prevents damage to watches used in science and industry due to handling with wet, dirty, oily or greasy hands. Made of corrosion-resistant metal, it has three set screws to hold the watch in place and a rubber cushioning ring to protect the watch from damage if dropped. The holder does not interfere with operating the watch when held in the hand.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ THE FIRST reports of Sputnik I to reach the front pages probably did not cause a fraction of the excitement raised by a story on the earth's oldest satellite that appeared in the newspapers of the last century. According to this news account, the invention of a powerful telescope had enabled scientists to observe life on the moon!

Day by day the stories grew. At first, great cities were reported on the moon. Then the inhabitants were discovered: bat-like creatures with the general shape of humans, or humans with bat wings. Indignation was expressed at the fact that the moon's populace wore no clothes.

Before the story had run its course, quite an elaborate tale had been woven about the life of this old satellite. Finally the truth came out: an imaginative "reporter" had dreamed the whole thing up as a circulation stunt.

But we should not be surprised in this

Rambling Far Afield



age of man-made satellites to read one morning in our news papers an account on life from outer space. These reports will not—for some time—describe the fine details of genus and species of life on Mars or Venus. We must be satisfied with sketchy data gleaned from measuring devices in exploratory satellites. It will be enough at first to state definitely that life does or does not exist on the planets.

But sooner or later, and many eminent men of science believe sooner, we will be

landing space vehicles on the planets, probably first on Mars. Whether manned or unmanned, these vehicles will be able to gather important information about life from outer space and relay the information back to earth.

What will we find out there? Not the kinds of living things we are used to in our earthly nature ramblings, certainly. Assuming we do find evidences of life, this may be of several kinds.

First, there may be a form of "pre-life," representing the physical and chemical conditions that must have been present on earth just before the first living things appeared.

Then, there may be no existing life but signs of extinct living things. Or it may be similar to life on earth in general aspect, but differing in particulars in keeping with the unique conditions of each planet. Or it may be life based on a totally different system, perhaps without the carbon chemical basis of earth's life.

Science News Letter, March 28, 1959