

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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THERMOMETER TIE CLASP has a circular thermometer with an easily read dial and non-breakable crystal. Calibrated from minus 20 degrees to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, it is sensitive to within one degree. The same thermometer is also available in cuff links.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

MEMO PAD is actually four pads in one, all contained in a long, slim book folder with padded cover in a choice of eight colors. Inside are smaller pads for memos, appointments, things to do, and phone calls.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

TAMPER-PROOF LOCK is claimed to foil the best efforts of the most prankish youngster to impair its proper functioning. It has concealed screws protected by the lockset trim. Available in a variety of designs in all standard finishes, the lock is particularly designed to meet the specialized requirements of schools.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

TOY SPACE HELMET, shown in the photograph, of acetate plastic is equipped with a radio that will receive several stations. A separate inside headband holds twin crystal earphones in place. The radio itself rests in a pocket on an accompanying



flyng belt. A telescoping antenna that extends up to 60 inches sprouts from the top of the helmet.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

TOOTHPASTE DISPENSER allows the user to put as little or as much toothpaste on a brush as he desires without having to

touch the tube. It can be installed on wood, plaster or ceramic tile walls and is available in six colors. The dispenser may also be used for shaving cream, hand cream, hair cream or ointment.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

BRIDGE TALLIES, for regular or progressive bridge, have recipes for tasty party treats on their backs. They are 2½ by 4 inches. The tallies, which come in sets of eight with two score cards, are printed in a variety of bold colors and smart designs.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

AIR SAMPLER is battery-operated and portable and contains an air pump, a flowmeter, a filter holder and a battery charger in a durable shoulder bag. The sampler allows engineers to take dust or gas samples in the field where no power lines are available.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960

ELECTRICITY TESTER to see if an outlet is "live" tests all A.C. and D.C. voltages from 110 to 500 volts. It may be used to check auto spark plugs and ignition coils, and as a safety tester for short circuits of electrical appliances, radios and television receivers.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960



Nature Ramblings



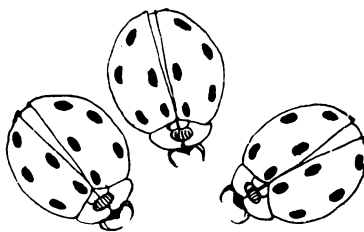
By HORACE LOFTIN

THE WHOLE business began innocently enough. A garden-loving Australian thought the American prickly pear with its beautiful blooms would make a nice ornamental for his rather dry place in the country. So he imported a few and set them out. The prickly pears did well in that semi-arid Australian soil. Too well. For in a matter of time, the prickly pear had invaded the grazing land of vast areas of Australia, leaving thousands of acres unfit for livestock or any other use.

In desperation, the Australians used fire, plowing, chemicals and other means of control, but nothing seemed to stop the march of this cactus. Then someone asked a pointed question: why does the prickly pear not overrun everything in its native home, the southwestern United States? The answer was soon forthcoming. Insect enemies, especially a cactus moth, keep the prickly pear in check on its home ground.

This moth was introduced into the in-

Hide and Seek



festated Australian region and it found itself in a cactus moth's paradise. Laying its eggs in the succulent prickly pear leaves where the emerging young could feed voraciously, the moth spread even faster than the cactus had spread. And where it went, the cactus disappeared.

Today, most of these acres of infested land have been cleared of the prickly pear. But once in a while a patch of cactus will pop up in one spot. Then where moths were not seen before, the cactus moth appears suddenly to strike at this prickly pear, killing it off.

The continued existence of both the prickly pear and the cactus moth in Australia depends on this game of "hide and seek." Enough cactus seed are spread so that a few plants may grow up and produce seed before the moths can find them. By the time the moths get to them, their seed have been spread elsewhere. Thus, a sort of natural balance between the numbers of prickly pears and moths has been struck. You might say that these two immigrants have settled down into respectable naturalized Australians now.

The introduction of a pest, followed by an insect to control it, has worked the other way, too: from Australia into the United States. A highly destructive scale insect of citrus found its way from Australia to California about the end of the last century. An American went to Australia, found the natural enemy of this scale, brought it back and literally saved the citrus industry. This Australian lady beetle earned its naturalization papers!

Science News Letter, March 5, 1960