

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **COASTER-ASH TRAY** combination simplifies serving beverages. Pressed from sheet aluminum, each tray consists of two cuplike parts, one for ashes and the other for a can or glass. Available in sets of four, the combination trays are in pastel or metallic colors.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **SKILL TOY** registers points by ringing a bell mounted on its handle. The Y-pronged toy whirls a captive rubber ball on a 10-inch rubber string until the ball hits a semi-rigid plastic tripper plate that rings the bell. The toy is moved up or down and back and forth to produce the whirling action.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **ASTRONOMICAL TELESCOPE** has a 42mm achromatic objective lens. The 38-inch long telescope features an interchangeable eyepiece holder. It offers 67, 100 and 200 power and also has an attachment clamp said to give solid, vibrationless viewing.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH-RADIO** combination is powered by four flashlight batteries. The tubeless six-pound unit is housed in a case measuring eight and one-half by 11 inches. The set, shown in the photograph, is designed to play 6,000 rec-



ords or for 750 hours without a battery change. An electrical governor permits constant turntable speed even when the battery power fades.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **CIGARETTE CASE** has a built-in music box. Powered by a spring mechanism and wound up by key, the music starts to play when the case is opened. The music

continues for two and one-half minutes. The case itself is made of metal.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **FLUID DISPENSER** is semi-automatic and described as eliminating losses, contamination, and guesswork of old-fashioned bottle pouring. The laboratory dispenser can be drop calibrated. A safety lock knob on the steel and aluminum device prevents accidental opening.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **CHECKWEIGHING MACHINE** is said to be capable of proving weight accuracies in the range of one part in 5,000 up to one part in 20,000. Automatic transfer mechanisms place a commodity on, and remove it from, the weighing element with a minimum of impact. The machine is available in capacities from one gram to 100 pounds.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957

⚙️ **IMPORTED TRIPOD** designed for the chest, also can be used as a repro stand and a table tripod for any size and weight movie or still camera. Made of aluminum, the tripod has rubber tips which allow it to rest comfortably on the chest of the photographer. It folds up into eight inches and fits into a carrying case.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

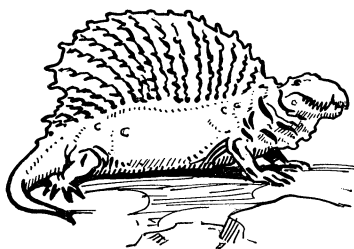
➤ **READING** the record of the rocks, geologists learn that for some 60,000,000 years most of the earth enjoyed a rather uniformly hot, moist climate. This was the so-called Pennsylvanian Period, the age when great fern trees furnished the coal deposits of today.

During this period, plant life grew lushly. Marine life was abundant, and several types of land animals evolved. There were flying insects, many fishes and amphibians, and a few very primitive reptiles.

Then a change slowly came about in the climate, beginning some 220,000,000 years ago.

During this so-called Permian Period, which lasted perhaps 30,000,000 years, the weather was much drier and more varied than before. Parts of Asia and Australia maintained the unvarying aspect of the Pennsylvanian era. But in other places, there were marked wet and dry seasons,

### Permian Pioneers



semi-arid climates and areas of arctic cold.

In the rocks laid down during this Permian Period, geologists first find a fairly abundant number of fossils of land animals. Most numerous were the amphibians, already present in earlier ages but showing greater variety of form and species in the Permian. These were the masters of the earth then. But the masters had new competition.

From a few primitive forms in the Penn-

sylvanian, much like the amphibians in structure, reptiles began to spring forth into their own.

Fossil remains indicate these early reptiles ranged from "lizards" a few inches in length to the bizarre finned-backed Pelycosaurus, some of which were at least eight feet long. The fins of these creatures were supported by spines as much as three feet long that emerged from the backbone.

Another reptilian type of this period was the Therapsid, whose skull was much like that of the modern mammals. Probably the Therapsids represent man's closest known relatives among the reptiles.

It was not until the next great geological period, the Triassic, that the Age of Reptiles was ushered in. This was the time of the dinosaurs, when reptiles ruled the earth. It was the Permian pioneer reptiles, however, who blazed the trail to dominance by successfully competing with the amphibians, rulers of the earlier age.

Science News Letter, November 16, 1957