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for 20th-century education than the usages of the word *official*.

What is deplorable is a pre-Copernican mentality in the age of nuclear physics. This mentality will not promote survival—unless it be of a pre-Copernican world. Surely this is not Hook's wish.

JOSEPH GALLANT  
Mount Vernon, New York

### The "Abominable Snowman"

It is probable that the footprints that have been reported from the snows of the Himalayas as being those of the "Abominable Snowman" may have been made by several orders of mammals [W. L. Straus, Jr., *Science* 123, 1024 (1956)]. In April 1953, tracks that looked like the photographs published in several popular magazines as being those of the "Abominable Snowman" were seen by the writer along the snow-covered trail to Baltistan, near Sonamarg, Kashmir. Some of the tracks were old, and some were fresh. The fresh tracks were large—4 to 6 inches wide and 10 to 14 inches long—and appeared to be made by a biped. In some of the fresher tracks the imprint of the toes became more and more pronounced as one followed the track, and then the toes disappeared and the tracks became larger. The bottom of the new and larger tracks showed a pattern like a rough weave but within a few yards became smooth and free from any distinguishing marks.

The tracks were made by men wearing snow sandals to protect their feet, not from the snow but from ice crystals that form from thawing and freezing. These sandals were woven of a plant that seemed to be much like the cattail, *Typha*. The plant grows in marshy areas and is cut in the fall and dried, but before it is too dry it is woven into a crude sandal. These snow sandals are worn by many inhabitants, either because they are too poor to buy leather or because they belong to a Buddhist sect that will not use leather. The sandals first wear under the toes, so the imprint of the toes is clear in the snow. When the wear goes too far, the foot-covering is discarded and the track changes suddenly. Discarded sandals were examined but were not saved, for the "Abominable Snowman" was considered to be the product of the imagination of men who saw "animal" tracks that had been enlarged by melting of the snow. Although the use of such snow sandals may be a local custom, it is quite possible that some of the tracks reported by explorers were made by men wearing the type of sandal described here.

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## EQUIPMENT NEWS

The information reported here is obtained from manufacturers and from other sources considered to be reliable. Science does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information. All inquiries concerning items listed should be addressed to Science, Room 740, 11 W. 42 St., New York 36, N.Y. Include the name(s) of the manufacturer(s) and the department number(s).

■ **COMPARATOR MICROPHOTOMETER**, for measurements on photographic plates, uses a tiny mirror to deflect light from the line being measured, while light from the remainder of the field is used to project an image. The measuring optics are able to resolve the double component of the iron "triplet" at 3100 Å when the linear separation on the plate is 28  $\mu$ . Scattered light is less than 0.5 percent. The electrical output of the multiplier phototube is measured by a servo slide-wire assembly. An electronic control circuit automatically selects the point of minimum transmission of the spectrum line and stops the scanning operation to permit reading. (Jarrell-Ash Co., Dept. S668)

■ **SWEEP OSCILLATOR** has two ranges, 10 to 500 and 400 to 950 Mc/sec. Two series of calibration marks are provided at harmonic frequencies of 5- and 50-Mc/sec crystal-controlled oscillators. Sweep-width is variable from 5 to 40 Mc/sec with sweep rate approximately 60 cy/sec. The output waveform contains less than 5 percent harmonic distortion at full output. (Kay Electric Co., Dept. S670)

■ **POWER SUPPLY** furnishes high-voltage excitation for multiplier phototubes. Output voltage ranges from 500 to 5000 v d-c. The unit is designed for scintillation-counting applications. Regulation is 0.005 percent, and noise and ripple are 50 mv peak-to-peak. A standard cell furnishes voltage reference. Current capacity is 10 ma. (Hammer Electronics Co., Inc., Dept. S671)

■ **FUME HOOD** is fabricated with spherical corners throughout to eliminate points where hazardous deposits may accumulate. The hoods are made of stainless steel integrally welded and ground smooth. Service connections are mounted on raised circular platforms that are pressed into the sheet metal. Cup sinks and sink bowls are integrally welded. (Warren Corporation, Dept. S673)

■ **ZONE MELTING** device for purifying silicon eliminates container contamination by eliminating the container. The silicon rod to be purified is supported rigidly at its ends, while the molten zone, which is swept along the rod by induc-