

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **CRYSTAL RADIO KIT** is said to require no wiring, soldering or drilling. It has a printed circuit and permanent connections are made with a screwdriver. A preassembled dial cord permits use of a slide rule dial. The kit comes complete with earphones.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **FLOODLIGHTING FITTINGS** include surface-wall and through-wall mountings that eliminate separate splice boxes. Designed for building facades, patios, gardens and parking areas, the fittings are made of aluminum and are tapped one-half inch.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **ASTRONOMICAL TELESCOPE** for the do-it-yourselfer comes with all the optics needed for making a six-inch reflecting instrument. The kit consists of a mirror blank, a tool for grinding the blank, two lenses, a first surface diagonal mirror, magnifying lens and eight assorted abrasives.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **HOSPITAL DRUG DISPENSER**, shown in the photograph, holds 20 tablets, releasing them one at a time when plunger is pressed. The unit's clear face permits an



immediate visual inventory, an aid in positive control of drug supplies in hospitals. Made of rust-free butyrate plastic, the dispenser is designed for easy handling.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **HOOK GUARD** for fishermen prevents snarled treble hooks. The guard can be snapped on and off. It is available in spin-

ning or casting sizes and is described as permitting fishermen to carry treble hooks in their pockets without snagging their clothes.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **FLAT SCALE** for drawing board use keeps its back to the drawing board and all eight scales toward the user. Unlike its triangular counterpart, it does not have to be twirled. Made of a clear acrylic plastic, all eight scales have been laid out side by side.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **FAST-ADJUSTING TRIPOD** made of aluminum weighs four and one-half pounds. A guide-on adapter aids in attaching cameras and a panhead locks securely in any position. The panhead can be tilted to either side as well as moved vertically and horizontally.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

⚙️ **ELECTRIC THERMOSTAT** can be used in temperature ranges up to 700 degrees Fahrenheit. It is designed to control three separate heating phases, one of which is on continuously when the dial is moved from "off." The control is available in nine ranges and is housed in a pressed steel case.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958



Nature Ramblings



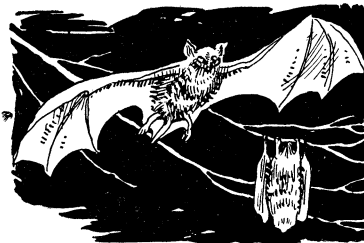
By HORACE LOFTIN

Flying Mammals

➤ RELATIONS between humans and bats have been somewhat strained for the last several thousand years or so! In general, bats are harmless enough, but their "unnatural" form, their nocturnal habits, their secrecy have caused men to fear and distrust them. Superstitions have grown up around the dim figures of bats flitting in the twilight, and perhaps the most chilling of these is the legend of the vampire.

The vampire is supposed to be a supernatural being who changes himself at will, or on the full of the moon or other variation, into a bat that sucks the blood of helpless victims. This legend can be traced far back into the folklore of Europe and Asia, long before the New World was discovered.

There are no blood-sucking bats in the Old World that may have led to the rise of this legend, and it must be accredited to some prehistoric yarn teller. Oddly



enough, however, the explorers of tropical America did find a bat nourished wholly on the blood it sucks from living victims. Naturally enough, they called it the vampire bat!

There is nothing supernatural about this mouse-sized creature, regardless of its unusual means of livelihood. It usually attacks sleeping animals—horses, fowls, an occasional man—making a neat slit with its razor-like teeth, then lapping up a small

amount of blood. Rarely does the victim awaken during the bat's feast and generally little harm is done to the supplier of the feast.

The vampire bat, *Desmodus rufus*, is the exception that proves the general rule of the harmlessness of bats, however. Some groups of bats are carnivorous, some are fruit eaters and the majority are avid eaters of insects.

The order of bats (Chiroptera) can be distinguished from any other mammals by their wings and the ability of true flight. The front limbs are highly modified for flight, with the fingers greatly elongated to support the membrane which acts as the wing.

Being called "blind as a bat" is no insult, since they have good eyesight. Even better than eyesight for their purposes, though, is a "radar" system of high squeaks which echo back from an insect, letting the bats know where to strike for him in the dark!

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958