

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⊗ **FASTENER** for farm gates or dog kennels, safe from chance opening by the animals themselves, is a metal bar six to 12 inches long with a hole at one end for a holding staple and a hinged hook-like device at the other to fit into another staple. To open, this hook must be lifted by the fingers.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

⊗ **PACKAGING MACHINE**, probably the world's largest, automatically wraps stacks of a half-dozen sheets of insulating wall-board four feet wide and ten feet long at a rate of two packages a minute. With it, two men will do the work that requires 16 by hand methods.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

⊗ **FREE-FALL CONTAINER**, to drop supplies from an airplane, has hinged wings on two sides which open by air pressure at the beginning of the descent. They are so placed that they cause the box-like container of this recently patented device to rotate as it falls, decreasing its speed sufficiently so that it hits the ground with very little force.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948



⊗ **TRANSPARENT UMBRELLA**, shown in the picture, provides safety from showers and also safety from traffic. This child-sized protector, with a clear, durable plastic top, is fun to carry because on it are

printed in red or green pictures of policemen and safety mottoes..

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

⊗ **COCKTAIL SHAKER**, bottle-shaped and made of stainless steel, has a cylindrical lower section to hold the liquor and ice, and an overfitting top section the shape of a bottle neck. The shaker is large enough to hold an unopened bottle of liquor to protect it from breakage in traveling.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

⊗ **PLASTIC TRAY**, which fits into a drawer of a woman's vanity or dressing table, has compartments divided in such a way that there is a place for each article used. Nail files, orange sticks, combs, brushes, powder puff and powder can be neatly stored and easily reached when wanted.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

⊗ **FOLDING SKI**, recently patented, comprises a front and a rear section, both of which can be moved in and out of an interlocking engagement, and a hinge member including a hinge plate rigidly secured to one ski section. A guide plate has one end hinged to the hinge plate.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948

# • Nature Ramblings by Frank Thone •

► **THANKSGIVING** Day posters, magazine covers and other popular art almost always show a stalwart-looking Pilgrim Father carrying a bell-muzzled gun and a big turkey-gobbler, with maybe a very pretty Priscilla in the background. It's a nice picture; the only thing the matter with it is that it isn't accurate.

That bell-mouthed firearm, for one thing, isn't an early seventeenth-century fowling-piece. It is a blunderbuss, a "scatter-gun" type of weapon used in its day very much as the sawed-off shotgun was used in Wild West days—as a defensive arm carried by stagecoach guards for the discouragement of highwaymen. It is not even certain that the Pilgrims knew what a blunderbuss was; its first known mention in English print was in 1654, which was 23 years after the first Thanksgiving Day.

The turkey shown in the picture usually looks altogether too much like the domestic birds we commonly see in farmyard and

## Thanksgiving Anachronisms



market. True enough, our domestic turkey is a native of the Western Hemisphere, and is closely related to the wild turkeys the early English settlers hunted in the woods, but it is not the same species. There is a strong resemblance between domestic and wild turkeys, but the wild turkey has light

brown or chestnut tips to its tail-feathers, instead of white. Also, present-day domestic turkeys are usually larger than the wild ones.

The history of our familiar Thanksgiving bird is a strange one. The early Spanish voyagers and conquerors found, among the natives of Mexico and Central America, this very meaty and desirable fowl. They took some back to Europe, where they were presently all around the Mediterranean basin. Thence they worked their way westward again, largely by way of the Danube valley, bearing with them the misnomer that they have never got rid of, falsely ascribing them to a Turkish origin. Finally, from England they were carried back across the Atlantic, to the North American colonies. It is the same story, essentially, as that of the white potato, that frequently flanks the turkey on our Thanksgiving tables.

Science News Letter, November 20, 1948