

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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HELICOPTER, built at home, weighs 350 pounds, has a rotor diameter of 21½ feet, and can perform all the maneuvers of a full-sized craft. It has a range of 120 miles and a top speed of 60 miles per hour. Powered by a 40 horsepower motorcycle engine, it can fly more than 30 miles on a gallon of gasoline.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959

PLASTIC GOGGLES to deflect grindings, small pebbles, dust and other eye-injuring particles also absorb glare. Weighing less than one ounce and comfortable to wear by themselves or over most prescription glasses, they are available in clear or green lenses with matching frames.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959

MARINE SNAP FASTENERS, used to secure protective covers to control panels, cockpits, hatches, outboard motors and dinghies, work fast, hold fast and need a minimum of maintenance and replacement. The fasteners are rustproof brass with nickel, chrome or black finish.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959

LEVELING DEVICE, shown in the photograph, that replaces plumb bobs and spirit levels consists of a small steel ball sealed into a plastic container, one inch



in diameter. It is especially useful on the base of a mechanical universe, which must be kept level to measure sun time and relative time in all world time zones. The device may also be used for leveling stoves, shelves, desks, etc.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959

GAS-FIRED OUTDOOR LAMP has a tiny pilot-light that burns continuously, and

a simple remote-control unit, installed inside the house, for turning the lamp up at night. The lamp is of weather-proof construction and uses natural, manufactured, mixed, or LP gas.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959

DOG HAIR-DRYERS of cast aluminum hang on cages by sturdy swivel brackets. Useful for pet shop owners, kennel owners and veterinarians, the dryers send out a flow of air—adjustable from cool to hot—that soothes as it dries. The quiet motor of the 18-inch-long unit is said not to disturb or frighten animals.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959

BUILDING PANELS of green-colored aluminum provide low-cost, attractive material for residential sidewall panels, roofs, patios, carports, decorative fences, interior wall covering, summer cottages and boat shelters. They have a 48-inch width after lapping and come in lengths of 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 feet.

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BEVEL SQUARE with eight-inch nickel-plated blade doubles as a T square. The unbreakable, one-piece plastic handle is said to be perfectly square on all edges to permit precision measurements.

Science News Letter, June 13, 1959



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

TRUE JUNGLE—the tropical rain forest—seems barren of mammal life to the man who walks mile after mile across the open forest floor which is cool, damp and dark from the shadows cast by the trees towering overhead.

Where are the kinkajous, the coatimundis, the sloths, the anteaters and other tropic creatures? Is this jungle a desert?

To find the typical jungle mammals, a man has to set his sights high: as high as the treetops, as a matter of fact. For that is the main theater of life for large jungle creatures.

A whole world exists in the high forest canopy of the typical rain forest, its creatures perfectly adapted for life among the limbs. Some jungle mammals like the opossums, coatis, squirrels and kinkajous make fairly frequent forays to the earth, but soon return to the treetops. Others, like certain anteaters, sloths and monkeys, spend prac-

Jungle Treetops



tically their whole lives in their green mansions.

Nearly all arboreal or partially arboreal mammals have hand-like feet, with long, pliable toes and strong claws for secure footing. Some, like the opossum and certain monkeys, have thumbs which are opposable to the fingers or toes for a good, solid grasp.

An exception to the hand-like foot is seen in the sloth. This topsy-turvy creature

spends most of its time hanging bottoms up from the limb of a tree. For this unique kind of life it has developed tremendous hooked claws with which it suspends itself.

Another useful adjunct for life in the treetops is a prehensile tail such as is carried by the kinkajou (see illustration) and the American monkeys. This sensitive tail is used both for grasping and for balancing. Often arboreal animals without prehensile tails have bushy tails—very useful as a parachute and cushion.

The arboreal anteater of the American tropics almost never leaves the trees. It has a long prehensile tail and grasping feet to help in its search through the limbs for ant nests.

The creatures of the treetops in general have excellent eyesight, which sometimes is developed at the expense of the sense of smell. Man shares his well-developed hands and eyesight with the tree dwellers, his ancient ancestors.

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