

New Machines and Gadgets

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MINIATURE MIXER powered by a flash-light battery mixes bar drinks, chocolate milk, baby foods, gravies and salad dressings. The four-ounce mixer is operated by pressing a button. It has a polished chrome finish and stainless steel removable beater.

Science News Letter, August 8, 1959

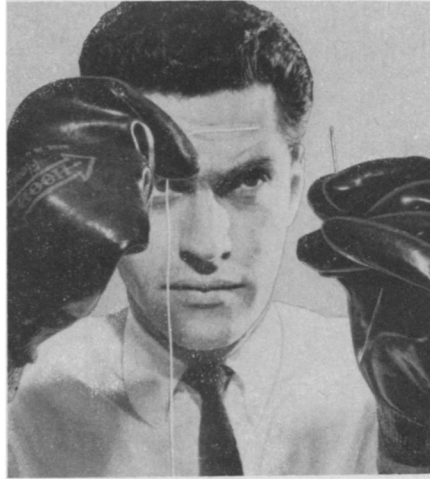
AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM KIT for home and farm can be installed with a screwdriver and hammer. The alarm goes off if the temperature reaches a pre-set level. There are six fire detector elements, each of which monitors 2,500 square feet, a control panel with battery and battery power supply gauge, and other installation supplies.

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IRON-LIKE ADHESIVE is said to repair everything from a broken chair leg to a cracked engine block. It is a putty-like synthetic plastic that becomes a substance like iron a few hours after it is mixed with a clear liquid hardener. After hardening, the adhesive, also useful as a filler, can be ground, sanded, filed or drilled.

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INDUSTRIAL GLOVES coated with tough synthetic rubber are said to be flexible enough to enable a worker to thread a needle. The gloves, shown in the photo-



graph, resist oils, chemicals, acids and greases and are recommended for workers in food, dairy, chemical and petroleum industries.

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ELECTRIC TIMER can be attached to any appliance, including air conditioners, fans, washers, coffee makers and radios. The plug for the appliance is inserted into the timer's plug, which is then plugged into an

outlet. The dial can be set to shut off at any time up to one hour.

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AUTO SPEED STABILIZER for turn-pike driving will hold the car at a constant speed. The electronic unit is set in operation by pressing a button on the floor near the dimmer button. Pressing the button a second time, or pressing the brake pedal, automatically releases the speed stabilizer. Attached to the carburetor, the stabilizer is said to increase gas mileage considerably on any make car.

Science News Letter, August 8, 1959

COMBINATION AWL-SCREWDRIVER has a bradawl that starts a hole in wood and a screwdriver to insert the screw into the hole. The bradawl is put into position for use, or withdrawn, by a thumb-controlled guide ring.

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DIVING PLATFORM is made of a two-foot-square piece of canvas stretched across an aluminum frame and can be used at swimming pools or lakeside summer homes instead of heavier and more expensive diving boards. The forward edge of the canvas is supported by a nylon web strap, instead of aluminum, for safety.

Science News Letter, August 8, 1959



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

YOU CAN SEE the headlines now: **Man Descends From Mole!**

But that will be a mistake, as big a mistake as once was, and still is, made by saying that man is descended from monkeys. Man is descended from a common ancestor with the monkeys; likewise, as you will see, man, monkeys and moles have a common ancestry somewhere back in the dim, early days of mamalian history.

What do moles and human beings have in common that places them out on the same big limb of the family tree? Moles belong to the primitive order of mammals called insectivores, or insect-eaters, along with the shrews and hedgehogs. Man, on the other hand, occupies a place in the order of primates, along with the apes, monkeys and several more primitive creatures like the lemurs of Madagascar (see illustration) and the tarsiers of the East Indies.

Looking at extremes of either order, let

Of Moles and Men



us say moles versus human beings, it is difficult indeed to find any points of similarity.

But less specialized examples of both insectivores and primates are quite similar in both structure and habits. In fact, there is a "missing link" animal in the East Indies that bridges the two orders so nicely that scientists still debate whether to call it a primate-like insectivore or an insectivore-like primate!

This puzzling creature is known as the tree shrew (family Tupidae). The latest authority in mamalian classification places it in with the primates. The animal passes most of its life in trees, looks and acts something like a lemur, but its teeth and other bodily structures show it to be very close to the insectivores.

It is just one step forward from this tree shrew to the lemurs, which beyond all doubt represent very primitive types of primates, probably close to the ancient primate from which man descended. On the other hand, it is just one step backward from this little missing link to the shrews, and another step to the side, so to speak, to the rather specialized moles.

So from an evolutionary point of view, it appears that man and moles are rather close kin, certainly much more closely related than, say, man and the cats or bears. But, please! We did not say man is descended from moles.

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