

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

For addresses where you can get more information on the new things described here, send a three-cent stamp to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N ST., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 632. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **BALL-BEARING ROLLERS** make it easier to open and close drawers, sliding doors, showcases and filing cabinets by cutting down sliding friction. The ball-bearing assembly can be glued into woodwork or fitted by means of attached flanges.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **HEAVY-DUTY GREASE** lubricant containing permanently suspended lead dust is designed to cover working parts of gears and bearings so that the actual surfaces are protected. In older equipment, the lead resurfaces the pits and score marks, somewhat restoring the bearing surfaces.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **RADIATION DETECTOR** will measure from 0.02 to 500 roentgens per hour on a single, easy-to-read logarithmic scale. Designed for radiation monitoring in the field by civil defense, military or industrial personnel, the battery-operated, palm-sized device requires no warmup and has a plus-or-minus accuracy of 10%.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **WALLPAPERING OUTFIT** is designed for amateurs who want to paper their own walls. As shown in the photograph, the kit contains a paste and a



smoothing brush, paper cutter, scraper, seam roller, casing wheel, plumb bob, chalk and a cleaning sponge. Illustrated instructions are printed on a board especially designed to hold wet brushes while the kit is being used.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **ALUMINUM FILL-SOLDER** for auto bodies takes 50% less heat than tin-alloy solder, fills dents without shrinking or warping the metal, and feathers to a smooth, invisible edge. The solder will stand a 350-degree Fahrenheit infrared bake and will take lacquer or synthetic finishes.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **HAND-AND-FOOT CHECKER** notes beta-gamma contamination of both sides of hands and feet automatically. When a technician working with radioactive materials steps on the machine and puts his hands in paper-lined slots, the unit signals if the worker should be decontaminated.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **PLASTIC DISPENSER** handles either liquid or powdered soap, and is designed for circular or semi-circular industrial wash-fountains. Attached to the sprayhead of the basin, no supporting tube is required.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

⚙️ **WINDSHIELD VISOR** for inside the car reduces sun glare and is easily installed. Made of a flexible plastic that resists warping, cracking or tearing, the visor is stained an optically transparent green.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952

# • Nature Ramblings •

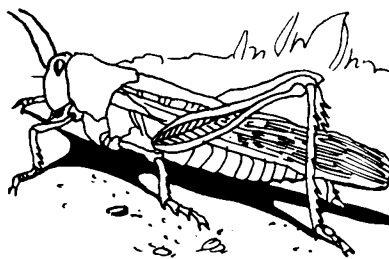
➤ **OYSTERS, ESPECIALLY** if served raw, are very likely to provoke that classic wisecrack about the degree of courage that must have been possessed by the first man who ever ate an oyster.

There are, of course, plenty of people who haven't plucked up that much courage even yet. To them the true ostreophile always remarks, "so much the better; it leaves more oysters for me!"

Whoever the first oyster-eater was, he must always remain nameless, for he was prehistoric. There is, however, no need for erecting a monument to his anonymous memory, for he and his numerous descendants have left plenty of monuments to their liking for oysters and other shellfish on beaches all over the world.

There are shellmounds that the uninitiated easily mistake for low natural hills. These are the accumulated relics for oyster-roasts and clambakes that must have gone on continuously for centuries. There are even similar mounds of snail-shells in North Africa—the obvious witticism being that this is the original home of Frenchmen.

## Was It Courage?



But oysters and clams and snails are only the beginning of the catalog of strange foods that people eat in various parts of the world. Insects, both as larvae and adults, are prominent items. Tastiest, probably, would be the grape-bellied honey-ants of Mexico. More widely distributed is the eating of locusts, which are simply big, fat grasshoppers; these dainties are consumed in many lands where locusts swarm, all the way from the Mediterranean basin to the Philippines.

Strange sea dainties are to be found on the menu, too: squid and sea urchins in southern Italy, sea-cucumbers and the giant sea-worm known in its dried form as beche-de-mer in the South Seas, and, of course, the inevitable bird's-nest soup and shark-fins of "real" Chinese restaurants. Raw fish is eaten just about everywhere. Mark Twain recorded, with a proper inlander's shudder, seeing native Hawaiians eating fish "raw and alive!" when he visited the islands years ago.

The chances are that this business of eating "queer" foods was pioneered not by any bold man but by one of our pre-hunting ancestors who lacked the means for killing and cooking larger game.

Certainly our existing simian poor relations are not too discriminating in their choice of tidbits; some species of them at least will eat insects and their grubs, centipedes, scorpions and fat spiders. It may be, after all, that oyster-eating is just an evolutionary hangover.

Science News Letter, July 26, 1952