

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 938. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **EXTENSION CORD HOLDER** leaves both ends of the cord accessible. The holder, that promises to eliminate twists and tangles and save cord from wear and tear, can hold different lengths of different diameter cord. As much or as little of the cord as needed can be used without losing control.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **LABORATORY MARKING PEN** writes on glass, metal, porcelain, plastic, cloth, paper and leather. Ink for the fine-line pen is available in 11 colors and can be removed from slides or instruments with a solvent such as benzol. Yellow and orange inks resist more than 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit temperature.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **WORKING PLATFORM** can be folded horizontally and wheeled through a 30-inch doorway. The British product is all-aluminum and has rubber casters that can be locked to prevent rolling. The telescopic tower can be assembled in 1½ minutes.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **TOY TELEPHONE** offers fun for youngsters and a bit of nostalgia for their parents. The toy, shown in the photograph, is a three-quarters actual size model of the



first dial instrument. Molded of a polyethylene plastic, it has an adjustable mouth-piece and a workable dial. A bell rings as the dial is turned.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **TRANSISTORIZED TV CAMERA** weighs about four pounds, exclusive of the lens, and measures 2½ by 5½ by 7¼ inches. Separate potted, plug-in modules handle the

six basic camera system functions. The tiny TV camera also boasts an automatic electronic light adjustment.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **OFFICE COPIER** can copy anything from a business card to an outside 10- by 16-inch inventory form. The new copier has an improved paper feed assembly and a new trimmer guide for 10-inch paper. It also houses an automatic timer that compensates for voltage changes.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **MINIATURE GREENHOUSES** are made of polyethylene plastic film. The gardener's aid consists of a double thickness of the film 12 feet long that is secured to seven metal wickets. The plastic row cover protects plants against wind and frost and encloses warmth and moisture.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958

⚙️ **KEY-OPERATED WINDOW LOCK** is designed for use on all types of double hung wooden sash. It can be used to lock a window that is partially open, too, to permit ventilation. The lock can be installed by the do-it-yourselfer. A paper template and full instructions come with the lock.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

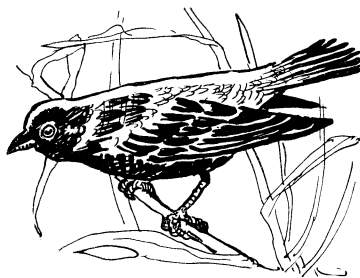
"High over the valley, in the cool nights of September
One hears the call notes of migrating Bobolinks
Falling like golden coins gently dropped
On slabs of porphyry.
Clink-clink, Clink-clink . . ."

► **THIS BIT** of blank verse just about describes the unique voice of the bobolink as well as anything can, for the call notes and song of this bird defy imitation. Not even the mocking bird seems to be able to capture the bobolink's music.

After a long winter's absence while they enjoyed the warmth of South America, these flashing birds are coming back to the fields of much of the northern half of the nation and in Canada. Coming up through the West Indies and Central America, the male bobolinks appeared first on the southern coasts in April.

The earliest comers moved rapidly north-

The Bobolink



ward to the breeding grounds, where they welcomed the females some time later, as well as tardy males.

Now, in early June, courtship and breeding are under way, and the song of the bobolink is at its height. In his spring plumage of black with striking white patches on the wings and lower back and with buffy head and neck, the bobolink looks as handsome as he sings.

Towards middle summer, as the young go out on their own, the bobolinks will change the spring cloak for a somber suit, in keeping with their new rather quiet and retiring habits. Then as summer wears on, they begin to assemble in large flocks along the marshes of the Atlantic seaboard.

By September, preparatory to the winter's migration, they have congregated in immense numbers, especially in the rice-growing areas of South Carolina, where—under the name of "rice bird"—they feast heartily.

Years ago, when South Carolina was virtually the sole source of domestic rice, the bobolinks were the greatest menace to the rice crop. During the nesting season, the bobolinks are largely insect-eaters, and so enjoy a reputation of usefulness and beauty in the north.

Where rice and bobolinks are found together, the "rice bird" suffers a different kind of reputation. But, like many lovable rascals, even there his special charm softens many a heart and stays many a trigger finger.

Science News Letter, June 7, 1958