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 931. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit $1.50 for one year's subscription.

GLASS FIBER KITS for the home repairman can be used in the home, shop, garage or boathouse. The kits include a plastic glass and two sheets of a film that can be made into a "prefabricated" patch. The repair material will not rust or rot.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

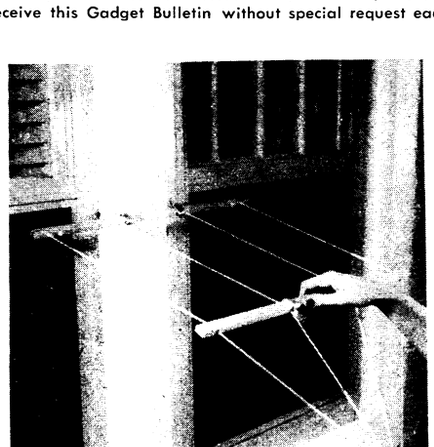
SPORTSMAN'S CHAIR doubles as a walking cane. The aluminum device is a cane when folded and a three-legged chair when opened. It weighs four pounds, has a nylon seat and stands 34½ inches high.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

GLASS CUTTER cuts in both directions. It has a natural diamond cut on both sides to provide a cutting edge in contact with the glass regardless of angle or direction. The cutter is fitted in an aluminum handle.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

CLOTHESLINES for indoor or outdoor use is portable. The dryer, shown in the photograph, is portable. The dryer eliminates the need for a permanent line by providing four parallel plastic lines with up to 55 feet of drying space. The hardwood



crossbars hook onto walls or posts without tools. The clothesline weighs one pound.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

RAZOR-TYPE SICKLE for lawn cutting and trimming has a replaceable blade made of razor blades. Nine blades in all form the garden tool cutting edge. The trimmer has a safety guard. It will take any double edge razor blade.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

TRANSPARENT TEMPLATE permits anyone to produce accurate plans and diagrams. A British invention, the template is fixed to a toggle hinge to form a pantograph and the whole is attached to a folded base.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

WOUND DRESSING FOR TREES is said to end "tar baby" pruning. The material sets quickly to form a smooth black seal against moisture and decay while natural healing is taking place. It is packaged in a 12-ounce push-button container.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

COMBINATION PHOTOGRAPHY HELPER unites a rangefinder and flash exposure meter. The rangefinder focuses from three to 100 feet. The exposure meter operates on the guide-number principle. The all-metal helper measures two and one-half inches long.

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958

Nature Ramblings

By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ THE LATINIZED scientific names for plants and animals sometimes seem most uninteresting, to say the least, at first glance. But if you look into the meaning of the Latin, you often find a nice description, a fanciful imagination at work, or even a bit of humor.

Take the name of the order of sea cows, Sirenia.

If you think back to your Homer, you will recall that the sirens were the irresistible seductresses of the sea who lured seamen to a disastrous end. Now, it is within the realm of reason that some ocean-weary sailor might mistake a basking sea cow weighing half a ton for one of these tempting maidens of the sea. Perhaps, however, the namer of this order was something of a humorist.

Although the animals superficially re-

Some Sirens!

semble the seals or walruses, sea cows are probably much closer kin to the elephants.

The order Sirenia is distinguished from all others by paddle-shaped forelimbs, in which the digits are all enclosed in a common covering of skin, and by the absence of hind limbs. They are totally aquatic. Even the young are born in the water.

How long can a sea cow, or manatee, stay under water? One ten-foot Florida sea cow averaged 12 minutes at a stretch under water, with 77 seconds for breathing in between. In emergencies, they can probably stay under much longer.

The birth of a sea cow has been witnessed, and the story of how the mother manatee taught her newborn the ways of living under water is a fascinating one.

Immediately after giving birth, the mother righted herself, bearing the calf on her back. In this way she kept the baby out of water for 45 minutes. She then sank slowly until only the calf's nose was above water. For about two hours more, the mother sea cow alternately lifted and lowered her offspring out of and into the water, each time shortening the stay out of water. Her next step was to submerge the calf completely for a short while. This act was carried on for another two hours. Result: at the end of this time, the baby sea cow appeared as happy under water as on top!

Science News Letter, April 19, 1958