• New Machines and Gadgets •

If you want 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 427. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit $1.50 for one year's subscription.

FULL-VIEW GOLF bag, about one-third the length of ordinary bag, is made of lightweight plastic and aluminum and has slots for 12 clubs with the shaft of each held firmly in a separate space by means of a locking mechanism. Clubs do not touch each other, and the one wanted can be released from its lock by a finger flick.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

ADHESIVE PLASTER, which can remain on the body of a patient for long periods without irritating the skin, contains two fatty acid salts of zinc: zinc propionate and caprylate, respectively. These substances combat the growth under the plastic of bacteria which cause the irritation.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

CLOTH CUTTER, for home dressmakers, is a "pinker" that cuts without a blade and never needs sharpening. It produces a non-raveling bias-cut zigzag by means of two steel disks, instead of by shears, with rotary action worked by conventional scissors handles.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

FLIPPER, FOR PANCAKES, meatballs and eggs, shown in the picture, resembles the ordinary kitchen article but turning is accomplished without twisting the wrist. Thumb pressure on a lever rotates the patty-holding end of the flipper, turning it upside down.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

CAKE CUTTER AND SERVER, usable with cheese and other foods, is a keen-edged knife with a blade that curves backward near its extremity, bearing fork-like tines at its end. The short flat-tined fork prevents the food from splitting while being transferred to a plate.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

DESK-TYPE FACSIMILE machine permits the sending and receiving of telegrams direct from the executive's desk. The outgoing message, written or typed, is placed on the cylinder of the typewriter-sized machine, a button pressed, and electrical impulses, transmitted as a stylus passes over the copy, flash over the wire to make an exact pictorial reproduction at the receiving end.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

IMPROVED CARBINE for general hunting has a hinged forearm at the front end of the stock under the barrel which can be turned down to form a five-inch grip or rest. It snaps up instantly for carrying or for use as a convenient firearm. This 37-inch carbine of .22 caliber is similar in design to the Army's M-1 carbine.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948

• Nature Ramblings by Frank Thone •

The Blessed Meek

➤ GRASSES, among the meekest of all the world's green folk, at last receive their meed of praise: the entire Yearbook of Agriculture for 1948, newly published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture ($2), is devoted to them and their manifold uses. Several scores of scientists in the Department and elsewhere have contributed to its chapters, under the general editorship of Alfred Stefferud.

The seeming meekness of the grasses is deceptive, it appears from an examination of the important chapter by Mrs. Agnes Chase, one of the world's leading researchers on grass botany. Grasses evolved late, at about the time when hoofed mammals were beginning to become important on earth. Their flowers are small, lacking the conspicuous petals and sepals of more easily recognizable blossoms; hence they have been put near the bottom of the botanical scale by earlier classifiers of plants. But this turns out to be a simplicity of efficiency; stripping away all non-essential parts has enabled grasses to do their business in the world with most amazing success.

Grasses, Mrs. Chase points out, pioneer into the toughest situations. They are the outmost seed plants in polar regions; only the far more primitive lichens and algae go beyond them. They hold the drifting sands of dunes, the shifting and eroding soils of gulleys and the cuts, fills and other man-made wastelands created by engineering works. The big, tough kind known as cordgrass has built millions of acres of shorelands out of what were once tidal flats, the sport of the sea.

Grasses, the other writers remind us, in chapter after chapter, have their impact on man's life in a hundred ways. They feed his livestock in pasture and from the silo, they beautify his parks and lawns, they give a footing to his sports from football to golf. Finally, as corn, wheat, rye, barley, rice and sugarcane, they feed him; and as bamboos they offer materials for furniture and tropical housing.

Science News Letter, August 14, 1948