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

⚙ *LEMON SQUEEZER, for use at the table to add juice to fish or other foods, is a gravy-boat-shaped transparent plastic pitcher with a hinged top under which a quarter-lemon may be placed. When the two handles are brought together the lemon is squeezed and the juice strained in one operation.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

⚙ *PLASTIC COMPASS, ruler, protractor and T-square in the same unit has one end equipped with a magnifying plastic button which permits accuracy when placing over a point to serve as a circle center. One edge of the device has pencil-point holes for making circles of five-eighths to six inches in diameter.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

⚙ *TOY WATERWAYS, for boys and their dads, are sectional plastic canals for tiny boats or plastic ducks. They may be purchased with plastic circulating pumps to supply currents to move motorless boats, or without it self-propelled boats are used. Raising and lowering locks are furnished if wanted.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

⚙ *METHOD OF CLASSIFYING information and then finding it again uses a random number code. Half a dozen different subjects can be listed on each card by notches and then combinations of these subjects can be searched for by a sorting box. Complex or simple chemicals used in research can be classified and searched for new and special uses.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

⚙ *ELECTRO-MECHANICAL recorder, installed inside coin vending machines, gives a printed coin count against drinks and other products dispensed. In addition, it provides a continuous, permanent, legibly printed record for accounting and other departments, with nine duplicates if desired.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

⚙ *AIR-PRESSURE DEVICE, to transfer with safety a liquid from one container to another, as from an oil-can to a camp stove, is a two-holed plug to fit the original container with an air-pumping tube with a bulb on its end and a delivery tube. The latter extends to near the bottom of the original container.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

⚙ *NYLON-COATED WIRE rope is made in sizes suitable for uses ranging from carriage-returns on typewriters to steam-shovel cables. The ropes operate at high or low temperatures, are flexible when wet or dry, and the nylon coating protects the wire and is itself unaffected by oils, cleansing agents, marine growths and alkalies.*

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948

• Nature Ramblings *by Frank Thone* •

➤ GENERATIONS of American school children have learned to recite Longfellow's immortal poem about the village blacksmith shop that stood under a spreading chestnut tree. Most of them, it is safe to guess, have taken the tree's name at its face value. They have thought of it as a large specimen of the now almost extinct species *Castanea dentata,* once producer of the tastiest edible chestnuts in the world but virtually wiped out during the present century by the deadly blight fungus.

Alas for the easy assumptions of youth! Longfellow's "spreading chestnut tree" was not a chestnut at all, but a horse-chestnut, belonging to the quite different genus, Aesculus. The chair made for Longfellow out of some of its wood, when it was felled years after he wrote the poem, is still preserved in the Longfellow House in Cambridge, along with other specimens from the same tree. They are all unmistakable horse-chestnut wood, not true chestnut.

Longfellow's Chestnut Tree

When you come to think of it, however, it is not at all remarkable that Longfellow should have applied the name in the way he did. He had got much of his education abroad, in lands where the horse-chestnut was, and still is, a favorite for street and park planting. The beauty of Paris in spring, for example, which has inspired many a poet since Longfellow's time, is due in part to the blossoming of the lovely candelabrum-like flower-clusters of its many horse-chestnut trees. And since the horse-chestnut is often called simple "chestnut" in the colloquial speech of many Europeans, it is only natural that Longfellow should have picked up the usage in that way.

The horse-chestnut usually planted, known botanically as *Aesculus Hippocastanum,* is not native to this continent, but was brought here from Europe. There are several species in the same genus that are native Americans, found mainly in the originally forested area east of the Mississippi; these are usually known by the folk-name of buckeye.

Science News Letter, September 4, 1948