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

REFLECTING TELESCOPE offers 45-power magnification for viewing moon craters and mountains in detail. The inexpensive portable unit is 36 inches high on removable 18-inch legs, and has a three-inch-diameter, 20-inch-focal-length, aluminized mirror and Ramsden eyepiece. An 18-page instruction booklet comes with it.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

LIGHTWEIGHT SPORTING RIFLE, 30-caliber, weighs 6½ pounds but packs a heavyweight punch with high accuracy. Made of strong, high-quality Swedish steel, the rifle has an improved self-cocking action and a sleek, clean design.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

SELF-ADJUSTING FLOODLIGHTS for outdoor use make any type of reflector lamp last longer in lighting home gardens, parking lots, etc. A full-floating socket insures a weatherseal and a cushion-spring cradle adjusts to different lamp shapes to minimize common causes of early lamp failure. The lights are made for medium or mogul base reflector lamps in 70- to 500-watt sizes.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

SYNTHETIC CHAMOIS CLOTH of nitrile rubber and nylon is not harmed by

grease, oil or solvents. For use around the home or in industry, the imported cloth, shown in the photograph, can be laundered without harm and can be stored damp or dry. It cleans glass, woodwork, furniture, walls and autos.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

AUTOMOBILE VENTILATOR is a synthetic rubber sleeve inserted in the top window channel and the glass then rolled up. It prevents window frosting and steaming, draws out smoke and fumes, and acts as a pressure reliever for easy door closing.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

PARTY GOBLETS, for decorating cakes, are tiny goblet-shaped, clear-plastic containers pointed at the bottom so they may be stuck into the top of a cake. In addition to providing "short toasts," the miniature goblets can be used to hold birthday candles.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

FIVE-IN-ONE SAW resembles a kitchen hand mixer in size and shape, but offers the features of rip, band, keyhole, hack and scroll saws for working metal, two-inch lumber, plywood, plastics or leather. Special bevel quadrants permit tilting of the saw shoe, and a chip blower improves vision and reduces blade drag.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

HEAVY END ALUMINUM PIPE offers increased strength and thickness at pipe ends where welded or threaded joints are made, and uses less metal in the pipe body. Manufactured by a new extrusion method, it is lightweight and works with standard fittings.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

Nature Ramblings

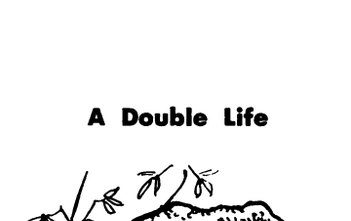
By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ TO SAY the least, you would probably be rather surprised to find a dinosaur in the neighboring woods. Well, something very much like this occurred in South Africa in 1938. A fisherman hauled in a very odd fish in his seine which was turned over to experts for identification.

The find literally shook the scientific world, for it was a fish representing a group that was supposed to have been extinct for more than 100,000,000 years. Since that time, other examples of this living fossil have turned up in African waters, especially near Madagascar.

What was especially exciting to scientists about this discovery was that the fish, a coelacanth, was of the kind from which the land animals with backbones are supposed to have originated. Many of its features, including bony, lobed fins reminiscent of the limbs of terrestrial animals, suggested this was the fish that first ventured on land

A Double Life



to stay, giving rise eventually to the amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

The transition from life on water to land was not a quick or easy process. Indeed, the living examples of the first great experiment still lead a "double life," spending most of their time on moist land, but returning to water for reproduction and rearing of the young. These "experimental animals" are the amphibians, including the toads, frogs and salamanders.

In both structure and way of life, the amphibians stand between the wholly aquatic fishes and the wholly terrestrial reptiles. They are the first of the backboned animals with true, bony limbs for crawling, but these legs are relatively weak. The typical adult amphibian has lungs or other means for breathing air, though the young are still equipped with gills. Most of the species are able to spend a majority of their life on land. Their lack of a suitable protective skin covering makes them susceptible to drying out, however, and they are restricted to moist environments.

The "transient" nature of the amphibians, representing a step between fishes and higher vertebrates, can be seen in their relative lack of success as a group.

There are probably only 2,500 living species of amphibians, compared to ten times that many fishes and more than twice as many reptiles. Still, in their quiet, secretive way, they have managed to survive for many, many millions of years.

Science News Letter, January 3, 1959

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