

• 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 1042. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

PLASTIC ANCHORS, available in six-, 10- and 15-pound weights, will not rust or corrode. Styled for modern boats, the anchors come in several colors and are easy to clean. Lead cores give them their weight.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

MULTI-GAUGE BARREL LINERS permit hunters to change their shotguns from one gauge to another. The aluminum tubes are simply inserted into the shotgun barrel. A small screwdriver is the only tool needed. The liners are sold in gauges for 12, 20, 28 and 410 gauge shotgun barrels.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

BLACKTOP PAINT colors asphalt drives, patios, parking lots or tennis courts. The aluminized pigment is said to reflect the sun's rays and keep painted surfaces cooler. The coating, applied with a long-handled roof coating brush, prevents erosion or water absorption, and resists gasoline and oil damage. It comes in several colors.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

CARVING KNIFE, shown in the photograph, features an adjustable guide or "slicing control" attached parallel to the stainless steel, serrated edge blade. The guide may be set for thicknesses from one-sixteenth to one-half inch. The knife is sold in two



models, one with plastic handle and the other with a handle of sterling silver inlay.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

DISPOSABLE GLASS CLOTH cleans windows, mirrors, and other glass objects without liquid or wax cleanser. The four-ply fiber polishing cloth is silicone treated to aid in removing dirt and fingermarks.

When dirty, the outer sheet may be discarded and the remaining three used. Twelve cloths are included in each package.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

FALLOUT SLIDE RULE is a circular rule designed for Civil Defense workers. The plastic slide rule helps determine when rescuers can enter a contaminated area, how long rescuers can remain and when the general public can safely return to the area.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

TURBINE GENERATOR KIT, for young students, demonstrates how water power is used to produce electricity. Water from a faucet turns a water wheel, which moves a magnet next to a coil of wire to generate six- to 12-volt alternating current. The current rings a bell, included in the kit.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960

CHAIN FIRE ESCAPE can be stored in a compact container fastened on an interior wall beneath a window. If the ladder is needed, two pins are removed and the container swung out over the window sill, where it forms a small platform with hand rails. The chain ladder drops from the container and, for steadiness, may be hooked into a brace in the ground. The unit is made of lightweight aluminum.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960



Nature Ramblings



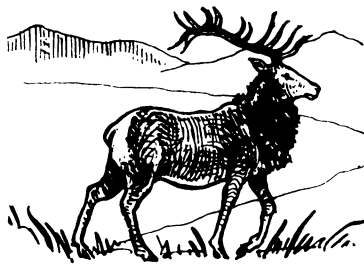
By HORACE LOFTIN

EVERY HUNTER has dreamed of a massive pair of antlers perched above his fireplace, a trophy of the largest and finest buck ever taken by anyone in the neighborhood. Presumably our caveman ancestors shared this hunter's dream. If our caveman great-uncle ever got his wish, he would need an outsized fireplace. Antlers in those days ran up to 11 feet from tip to tip!

The bogs of Ireland have been a storage place for such gigantic antlers, fallen from the magnificent Irish elk of many thousands of years ago. From time to time, these antlers turn up, furnishing inspiration for the yarn-spinners at the local pub. "Ah! What foin beasts we had in the old days, now!"

The Irish elk was, indeed, a fine animal, probably the greatest in size of any of the deer family. It has been suggested that his very bulk and the huge antlers he bore led to his extinction. Why, one wonders, were such antlers evolved? What possible adap-

A Set of Antlers



tive advantages could 11-foot antlers provide?

The best answer is that, probably, the oversized antlers provided no particular advantage to the animal. They were the result of, or function of, his otherwise enormous mass.

It has been shown with modern deer that antler growth is directly proportional to the overall size of the animal, and that antlers grow at a faster rate than the body. If a modern-day elk were to grow to the

size of the Irish elk, its antlers would then be as supersized as were those of his extinct relative.

Among the deer with the smallest antlers is the little roe deer of Europe who has small antlers with but three points. The rabbit-sized pudua deer of Chile bears only a tiny spike for an antler. Some antler-less members of the deer family are thought to represent "pygmy" races, derived from stock that was larger and well antlered.

Antlers are quite distinct structures from the horns of cattle and similar animals. The cow's horn is covered with a hard material similar in nature to our fingernails. Further, the true horn is never shed. Antlers, on the other hand, are made only of bone. They are covered with a skin of "velvet" during their growth, but this is soon lost. Once a year, the deer sheds his antlers, leaving nothing but a hard "burr" on the skull. This is replaced the following season by a new and larger set of antlers—larger in proportion to the growth of the animal.

Science News Letter, June 4, 1960