

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For addresses where you can get 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 653. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **HOLIDAY CANDLE** glows throughout its entire base when lit. Coated with a frosty-looking casing that does not melt or drip, the candle is about three inches square at its base and burns for 200 hours.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **AUTO RACE** track and two racing cars give children a real thrill. Played by two, the inexpensive non-electric toy has a race track that is tilted by controls operated by each player. The controls can be used to speed your car around the track and to hinder your opponent's car.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **LENS THAT** clamps on light bulbs is said to throw three times more light into the selected area than the light bulb would throw there without it. Working on 25- to 100-watt lamps, the lens can be adjusted to put the concentrated light where it is wanted.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS** for streets and buildings are made of a butyrate plastic and are lighted from within. For store windows, three big candles are set in an aluminum base, as shown in the photograph. The candles also can be attached to street lamp posts. A three-dimensional re-



lief plaque shows Santa entering a chimney.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **WHITE "BLACKBOARDS"** are designed especially for children. Eliminating chalk dust, the easy-to-see boards come com-

plete with special crayons that wipe off any washable surface. The board's kiln-dried wood frame is finished in a clear lacquer and is decorated with colorful decals of animals.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **SALAD SERVICE** sets, consisting of a wooden knife, fork and spoon, are hand-carved from Mvuli and Musharagi woods by natives of Kenya Colony, Africa. Each handle is carved into the form of a native in ceremonial dress, his neck being trimmed with silvery-looking wire.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **KNIFE RACK** and sharpener holds six kitchen-type knives in vertical slots, and has a "three-second carbide sharpener" mounted in its center. Using a built-in pad impregnated with an adhesive, the device can be mounted on practically any flat surface, whether wood, metal, tile or glass.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

⚙️ **TOY ELECTRIC** generator is designed to be belt-driven by a toy steam engine. When running about 1,500 revolutions a minute, the generator creates enough alternating current to light a 3.8-volt flashlight bulb mounted in a nickel-plated standard.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952

• Nature Ramblings •

➤ WE CAN be more patriotically American in our Christmas shopping by "buying British" when it comes to holly.

This is not based on a semi-altruistic impulse to help our transatlantic ally by giving him our money for his wares. It is simply that if we buy English holly, we do not buy native American holly, and in that case we let our native American woods stand unrobbed to the degree of our abstention.

For the English holly offered in American markets is all cultivated, and helps to make an honest living for those who raise it. American holly, on the other hand, is almost always stolen; for the collectors and dealers are seldom the owners of the woods where the holly grows.

Even if they are, they are robbing themselves and their heirs, for stripping the woods of these bright-berried bushes and small trees leaves the next generation inevitably poorer.

Actually, when we purchase English holly on an American market stall, we are not

Buy British!



"buying British" in the literal sense. The English holly we see here is not imported. It is the long-since-naturalized descendant of originally English ancestry—like an Alden or a Dwight or a Calvert.

The nurseries where holly is grown for the market are mainly in the Pacific Northwest, where the climate is most like that of northwestern Europe, although substantial amounts of English holly are grown also in some of the eastern states.

English holly can be distinguished from the native American species readily enough. It has bigger, brighter, redder berries and its leaves are a darker, glossier green, usually with somewhat spiner margins. It looks more like the holly of Christmas-card paintings.

Holly, both English and American, is one of those peculiar plants that has its berry-producing, or female flowers, and its pollen-producing, or male flowers, on different bushes. This makes it necessary to have one otherwise unprofitable, because berryless, bush for every dozen or so of the berry-bearing bushes.

Plant physiologists, however, have now discovered a way to make berries develop from unpollinated female flowers, simply by spraying them with a dilute solution of one of the growth-promoting chemicals, or hormones. To be sure, these fatherless berries do not contain fertile seed, but that does not make any difference, so far as their ornamental appearance is concerned.

Science News Letter, December 20, 1952