

do, Italian aviator, flew over this section successfully.

There are cases on record where the Indians have held white men prisoners, Dr. Petruccio points out, but none of these are of recent date. The lure of gold is taking men into this jungle deeper and deeper, and some day more may be learned of Redfern's fate; in fact his plane wreck may be found, but Dr. Petruccio feels that there is small chance indeed that he is alive.

Science News Letter, November 23, 1935

CHEMISTRY

Tarred Roads Spoil Wine Taste, is Claim

SURFACING roads through vineyard regions, by the hot tar process, brings about bad flavor in the wine, is the claim advanced by German vintners. The tar vapors, that fill the air while the road work is going on, condense on the grapes, and tar particles settle on them out of the dust later on. Surfacing of roads with a cold asphalt emulsion is recommended as a way out of the difficulty.

Science News Letter, November 23, 1935

MEDICINE

Blood Pressure Machines At Fairs Disapproved

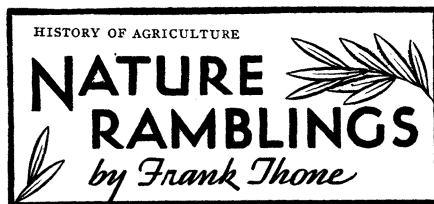
AMUSEMENT parks and fairs will have to get along without a popular new attraction if the American Medical Association can have its way.

The latest device to attract customers at fairs is an apparatus for measuring blood pressure. For a dime the customer learns what his blood pressure reading is. If he is of the nervous type, he begins to worry.

The great danger to the public is in the use of such apparatus without the necessary medical background for interpreting the results, according to an editorial in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. (Nov. 9)

"Any single reading of blood pressure, pulse rate or even temperature, without relationship to the general physical and mental condition of the person concerned, is bound to lead to false interpretations and the associated hypochondria," the editor states. When approached by physicians, the manufacturers of such apparatus "protest earnestly and long that they are doing their utmost to stop the sale of such devices to persons outside the medical profession," the *Medical Journal* states.

Science News Letter, November 23, 1935



Farmers Without Animals

OUR TABLES on Thanksgiving Day are a grand summary of the plants cultivated and used by Indians, and adopted readily enough by white men: white potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, pumpkin, squash, tomatoes, peppers, beans of many kinds, cranberries, avocados, peanuts, Brazil nuts, black walnuts, hickory nuts (including pecans), tapioca, chocolate, vanilla, with tobacco to top it all off. The Indians of the great cultures of Mexico and the Andean uplands were versatile farmers and raised a considerable variety of crops. But they had very few domestic animals. Even the less civilized Indians first known to the English and French settlers in North America did a good deal of farming, and taught the white immigrants how to raise corn, pumpkins and many other products. But these northern tribes had no domestic food animals at all, if we except the dog—which the Caucasian newcomers declined with thanks.

The one really important animal contribution of the New World to agriculture and the dinner table has been the turkey. The nations of Mexico and Yucatan had turkeys in great abundance when the Spaniards came, and both the

bronze and white varieties were introduced into Europe very promptly. Within a generation after the death of Columbus, the bird was already figured and described in Conrad Gesner's *Historia Animalium* as "the fowl of the Indies." It got the name turkey later, probably by its introduction into the then Turkish lands of the lower Danube and thence to the northern and western parts of Europe.

Our domestic turkeys are descended from these Mexican turkeys, re-introduced from Europe, and not from their wild cousins of our own forests. So when we carve the turkey on Thanksgiving Day we may be continuing a laudable practice initiated by the Pilgrim Fathers, but we shall not be working on exactly the same kind of bird.

One reason why the red natives of the Americas had so few domestic animals, probably, is that there were almost no animals here that could be tamed. The beasts we commonly think of as typical of the American forest and prairie faunas—deer, elk, bison, pronghorn, bighorn, peccary—are still either too shy or too fierce and intractable to be captured and tamed. So the Indian let them rove and contented himself with hunting them when he wanted meat. Only the turkey, and in South America the llama and alpaca, could he induce to share his villages and serve his purposes.

Science News Letter, November 23, 1935

● RADIO

Tuesday, November 26, 4:30 p. m., E.S.T.
OCEANS AROUND US, by Capt. Jean H. Hawley, Assistant Director, U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 4:30 p. m., E.S.T.
AMERICA 8,000 B.C., by Edgar B. Howard, University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

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