

Do You Know?

Sharkskin was used as an abrasive before sandpaper was invented.

Arsenic compounds have been used to supplement quinine in treating malaria.

Tetanus antitoxin, produced by a new method, will not cause the chills often accompanying use of this antitoxin.

Petroleum was used in Biblical days, it is said, for medical purposes, chiefly for wounds and skin infections, and was poured over camels afflicted with mange.

Abaca, from which Manila hemp is obtained, was never grown in the Western Hemisphere until the war cut off the Philippine product; now there are some 27,500 acres of abaca in Central America.

Fog-making machines, developed to hide military operations from enemy eyes, are being tested as a possible means for distributing insecticides over crop areas.

Soybean is now America's glamour crop, furnishing 13% of the total production of edible fats and oils, and being the largest single protein concentrate for feeding farm animals.

Coal, once regarded only as a source of heat and energy, is now a vital source of raw materials for nylon, synthetic rubber, chemicals and other products, and may, in the future, be the principal source of automobile fuel.

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and Howard T. Behrman, M.D.

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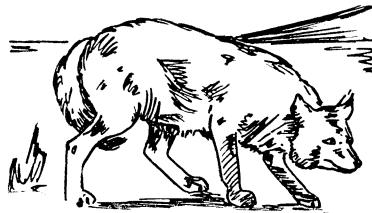
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Poor Relation

► WOLVES were very common throughout this country when white settlers first came; coyotes were confined largely to the untimbered regions west of the Mississippi. Now the wolves are practically all gone from the East and are scarce even in the West, whereas coyotes are still to be found (even if in diminished numbers) throughout their original range, and are even reported to be spreading eastward.

This vanishing of the strong and survival of the weak becomes a little less puzzling when one looks a little more closely at the habits of the two groups of animals, and especially when one takes into consideration the reaction of the dominant killer-species, man, to the twain.

Wolves were predominantly woodland animals: "timber wolf" was not an idly given name. Even the big lobo of the West, the so-called plains wolf, liked to lurk in the timber strips along the streams. That meant that as the East was stripped of its original mantle of forests there came to be fewer and fewer places where a wolf could live as a wolf likes to live.

The coyote, on the other hand, was less disturbed by settlement. He had always been used to more open country, so that the felling of the timber meant less hardship to him. Moreover, his original home was settled much later than the East, and still is more sparsely populated, so that he still has room to get around. His reported eastward roving is understandable on this basis, too: the country has become much more open, so an open-country species can thrive in it.

Farmers and ranchers have always been more hostile to wolves than to coyotes. Wolves were really dangerous

to livestock, while coyotes lacked the strength and courage to tackle anything but stray young animals, and old ones about ready to die anyway. So wolves were harried by skilled professional hunters, while nobody bothered much about coyotes except to take offhand shots at them if they prowled too close to a ranch-house. If they did become too numerous, they were given the uncomplimentary treatment of traps and poison, rather than the honor of individual attention and persistent pursuit.

In general, wolves got the attention that proud aristocrats usually get from invaders: for the comfort and convenience of the newcomers they had to be eliminated. Coyotes, like inconsequential poor relations, could be tolerated; so they are still with us.

Science News Letter, January 26, 1946

AERONAUTICS

Lawrence Sperry Award Goes to Richard Hutton

► THE LAWRENCE Sperry award for 1945 will be given to Richard Hutton of the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation for his notable contributions in the aviation development field. This award is made annually by the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences for an outstanding contribution made by a young man to the advancement of aeronautics.

The award is an honorarium of \$250, in memory of the late Lawrence Sperry who lost his life in a forced landing in 1923 in the English Channel. Presentation will be made on Jan. 28 in New York.

Science News Letter, January 26, 1946

METEOROLOGY-AERONAUTICS

Meteorology Contribution Recognized by Award

► THE ROBERT M. LOSEY Award for 1945 of the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences will be presented to Harry Wexler of the U. S. Weather Bureau, it is announced, for his outstanding contributions to the science of meteorology as applied to aeronautics.

This annual award was founded in honor of Capt. Robert Moffat Losey, a meteorological officer of the U. S. Army, killed in Norway on April 21, 1940, and who perhaps can be called the first American officer killed in World War II.

Science News Letter, January 26, 1946