

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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DROUGHT ON THE RANGE

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Authority on Meteorology.

In civilized countries human beings no longer die of hunger and thirst in time of drought, but there is vast suffering and mortality among the lower animals, both wild and domesticated. In her vivid novel "The Wind," Dorothy Scarborough pictures this phase of a drought as witnessed on one of the old-time Texas cattle ranges where the water-holes had dried up and there was no railroad near to haul water.

"The plains in their terrible distinctness showed dead prairie dogs, dead jack-rabbits here and there. They had perished for lack of food and water. Only the coyotes remained, and they prowled night and day, for they lived on flesh and grew fat on the bodies of the dead. There were no song-birds left; only the buzzards -- carrion birds.

"Gaunt, cadaverous beasts staggered about, tortured by heel-flies that nagged them constantly, bawling in distress, searching everywhere for food and water. They had devoured every spear of the dried bunch grass and needle grass, every leaf and bean from the mesquite bushes, every stalk of last year's weeds, and now there was nothing! They came close to the house, as if making appeal to their masters not to abandon them to death.

"They pawed the ground, as if to find food deep-buried there, some greenness under the tricky sand, some water beneath the burning desert. Some of them threw their heads around to the side, as if the torture of thirst twisted the muscles. Their tongues swelled, turned black, protruded from their mouths. Some of them went mad from thirst and fought, goring each other to death."

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