### THE CONDOR.

The condor is a native of the mountain chain of the Andes, and is one of the largest of the birds of prey. The average expanse of the condor's wings is from eight to nine feet, and the length of the body from the point of the beak to the extremity of the tail three feet and five or six inches.

The color of the condor is a grayish black; the wings are marked with white, and there is a collar of downy white feathers about the neck. The crest of the male is quite large. The internal structure of the condor presents some curious features; the "gizzard" is provided with longitudinal rows of horny spikes. which are supposed to assist the bird in the rapid digestion of its food.

These birds often attack cows, bulls, and deer, and as their assaults are chiefly directed upon the eyes, they blind their victims, and they soon fall by the blows which are inflicted upon them by the beaks of the birds.

The condor is very strong, and even when wounded a powerful man is no match for one of these creatures.

The Indians have a great dislike to these birds, and if they capture one of them alive they torture it very cruelly. Their mode of capture is as follows: They kill an animal and expose the body in the open air. The condors soon assemble in large numbers and feast upon the flesh. As soon as they are gorged to the full the Indians dash in among them and capture them with their lassos. When they feel the noose around their necks they endeavor to reject the meal which they have swallowed, but are made captives before they are able to rid themselves of the food.

The flight of these birdsis grand and beautiful; they seem to fly by moving the head and neck rather than the wings.

Although there have been condors in the Zoological Gardens at Dresden since 1874, it is only recently that anything has been found out in regard to the length of the brooding season, their habits at the time, their manner of feeding their young, etc.

Very little has been known of the habits of these birds until lately, as they live at a height of from 10,000 to 15,000 feet, and only come down to the lower points in search of prey. The Indians assert that the eggs are laid upon the bare rock, the bird making no nest whatever.

The condors in Dresden commenced laying in April, 1877, and, after that, laid from two to three eggs yearly in April or May, but unfortunately they crush their eggs immediately, or after playing with them several days. Last year a nest of dried branches, feathers, and wool was made in the top of the cage, about two meters from the ground, and it was thought that the birds would avail themselves of it. Loose material for nest-building was also put in the cage, but the female laid her eggs in the sand as before, and both the eggs were soon destroyed. The same thing happened this year in the middle of April. Shortly after the birds were removed into the large summer quarters of the birds of prey, and the female laid an egg on the 9th of May, in a dark corner of the cage. The next day the male commenced to brood. All the materials for a nest that the keeper laid under and about the egg were rejected and scratched away, and the brooding went on upon the gravel bottom of the cage. The male devoted himself to the brooding the greater part of the time, the indolent female only setting upon the egg about a third of the time.

On the seventh of July, after nearly eight weeks, the keeper announced that he had discovered life in the egg, and on the same day a rent was perceived in the shell. The next day the bird had almost escaped from the shell, only the head and neck remaining in, and on the following day the bird was entirely freed. Since then the old birds have been very busily employed in giving the little one the necessary warmth, and have manifested equal anxiety in feeding it with horse flesh and small pieces of cat and dog flesh. The little fellow, with its grayish feathers, looks something like a young owl. Its head and neck are quite black. If any one approaches, it commences already to utter angry cries, and the old birds are so ugly that the keeper can only enter the cage armed. The brooding continued for eight weeks less one day. Cassel says, in his "Natural History," that a condor's egg was hatched in six weeks and two days by a hen. This may be on account of the nest which the hen had.

The young bird, on the first day, measured ten centimeters in length, and on the twentieth day twenty-eight centimeters. The condors are fond of bathing, and often sit upon their eggs with their wet feathers.

### New Zealand Fungus Trade.

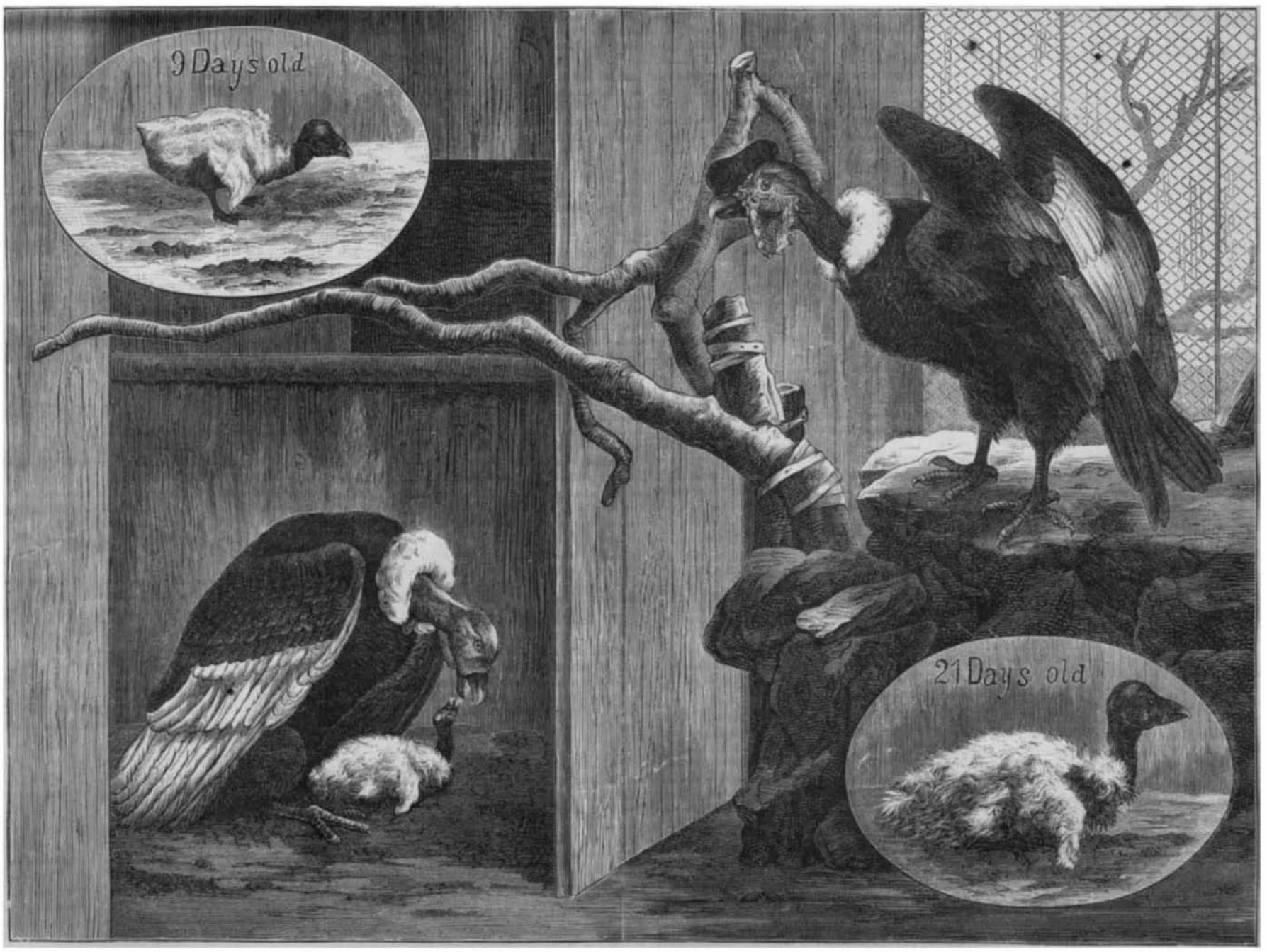
During recent years the exportation of the edible fungus. *Hirneola polytrichia*, has become an important industry in New Zealand. This fungus is saucer-shaped, three to seven inches in diameter, dark reddish brown on the inside when dried, and gray on the outside. It is said that the odor of these plants distinguishes them for botanists, but their chief peculiarity is their growth. They spring up, it is believed, by hundreds and thousands in a night, being produced, not from seed, but by a spawn which bears organs of fructification. Another peculiarity is that they absorb oxygen and give out carbonic acid, like animals, while other plants absorb the latter and give out the former. The commercial fungus of New Zealand is found in the North Island, on various kinds of decayed timber, all the fungi, as is well known, favoring damp situations. Nine-tenths of the Province of Taranaki, 80 miles by 70 in extent, where it is found, is densely wooded. The plant is found in what are called new bush settlements, made by laboriously clearing. The branches are lopped off and burned, the trunks, resting on their own spurs and sometimes on scaffolds built for them to fall on, begin to decay—not lying prone on the ground—and the fungus grows. It is prepared simply by letting it dry. China is its market, and it was at first bought up by collectors for a cent per pound, and sold in San Francisco for fifteen and in Hong Kong for twenty-three. According to the Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong, the fungus is much prized there as a medicine, administered in the form of a decoction, to purify the blood; it has also been reported to be in use in China and Japan as a dye for silks. But its principal use among the Chinese is as an article of food; it forms the principal ingredient in their favorite soup, for which it is highly regarded on account of its gelatinous qualities and its rich flavor.

### Peanuts.

Although the peanut merchant, with roasting mill, may be seen on almost every block in American commercial centers, but few of those who pay their nickel for a heaping measure of these hot ground nuts have any idea of the extent of the trade in bushels or its value in dollars. According to the Cincinnati *Price Current*, the crop this year will be less than half what it was last year. It then amounted to 2,370,000 bushels, valued at $2,150,000, about two-thirds of which came from Virginia. Of the balance, 750,000 bushels came from Tennessee, and 120,000 bushels from North Carolina.

### Nickel Plating.

A simple process of nickel plating by boiling has been described by Dr. Kaiser. A bath of pure granulated tin tartar and water is prepared, and after being heated to the boiling point, has added to it a small quantity of pure red-hot nickel oxide. A portion of the nickel will soon dissolve and give a green color to the liquid over the grains of tin. Articles of copper or brass plunged into this bath acquire in a few minutes a bright metallic coating of almost pure nickel. If a little carbonate or tartrate of cobalt is added to the bath a bluish shade, either light or dark, may be given to the coating, which becomes very brilliant when it is properly polished with chalk or dry sawdust.




THE CONDORS AND THEIR YOUNG IN THE DRESDEN ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN.