

THE HELMET CASSOWARY.

The cassowary (Casuarius), of which not less than nine distinct species have been discovered, differs from the emu in having a somewhat more slender body and hair-like feathers. The helmet is quite remarkable, and is composed of a cellular bony substance. It is barely perceptible in the young bird, not reaching its full development until the bird arrives at adult age. The plumage of the body is hair-like, with a tuft of down at the root of each shaft. The short, thick foot has three toes. The height of the bird is about five feet. These birds are found in the Malaccas.

The helmet cassowary (Casuarius galeatus, Struthio casuarius), shown in the engraving, has been the longest known of this family. The plumage is black, the back part of the head green, the neck is colored with blue, violet, and red, the bill is black, and the foot a yellowish gray. The young birds are brown.

All travelers who tell us of the wild life of this bird agree that it inhabits the thickest forests, and leads a very retired life, and at the least appearance of danger it hastens away, and seeks to withdraw itself from the sight of men. How difficult it is to observe them may be seen from the fact that Miller never had the opportunity of seeing a cassowary, although he found their tracks and heard the noise of the bird fleeing through the thicket, and Wallace in Ceram could not make a single capture, although he sought for the bird in all its accustomed haunts. He says: "These birds wander through the great mountain forests of Ceram, and subsist chiefly on fallen fruits and herbage. The female lays from three to five large beautifully granulated green

through doors left ajar, follow the servants step by step, rummage in all the corners of the kitchen, spring upon the table and chairs, to the great disquiet of the cook. If any one attempted to catch them, they would run quickly around or creep under the furniture, defending themselves vigorously with bill and feet. If left free, they would go back of their own accord to their accustomed dwelling place. Sometimes, when the maid attempted to drive them away, they would strike out at her and tear her clothes. They would run into the stall between the horses and eat with them from the manger. Often they would push open the door of Dr. Bennett's study, run quietly around, look at everything, and go their way. Dr. Bennett says: "It was dangerous to leave any object around which was capable of being swallowed. The servant was starching some muslin cuffs, and hearing the bell ring she squeezed up the cuff, threw it into the starch, and attended to the summons. On her return the cuff was gone, and she discovered that the mooruk was the thief, its beak and head being covered with the starch. This occurred at eleven A. M., and at half past five P. M. the cuff was passed quite undigested and uninjured." The height of this bird is about five feet when standing erect.—From *Brehm's Animal Life*.

Are Trichinæ Killed by Salt?

The prohibition of the importation of American pork by the German Government, on account of the alleged presence of the microscopic worm known as trichinæ, has awakened a large degree of interest among pork raisers and shippers in this country. That trichinæ are sometimes found in

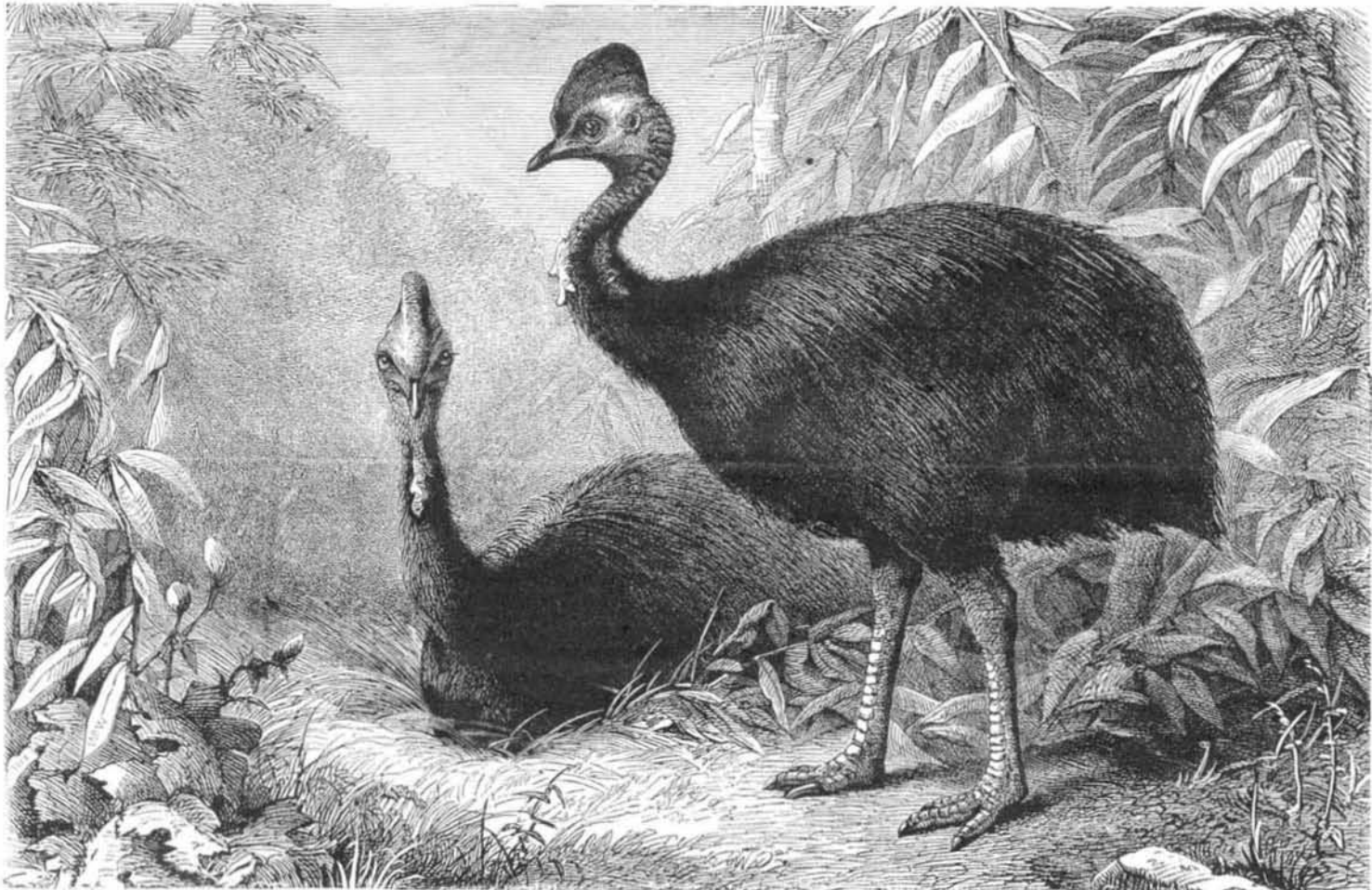
the most positive proof. The law governing parasitic existence in living tissue usually involves the speedy death of the parasite after the pabulum upon which it feeds has passed from under the domain of vital force; hence, unless this tiny worm constitutes an exception to this law, its life must be short after the organic structure upon which it feeds has ceased to live."

Consul Wilson very pertinently adds that "if salt really kills trichinæ, and of it I have scarcely a doubt, it is evidently an injustice on the part of foreign governments to lay an embargo on our pork product, which, of all others, in order to secure it against decomposition on a long journey to foreign markets, is better salted than that of any other country."

The Medicinal Value of Vegetables.

On the authority of the *Medical Record*, asparagus is a strong diuretic, and forms part of the cure for rheumatic patients at such health resorts as Aix-les-Bains. Sorrel is cooling, and forms the staple of that *soupe aux herbes* which a French lady will order for herself after a long and tiring journey. Carrots, as containing a quantity of sugar, are avoided by some people, while others complain of them as indigestible. With regard to the latter accusation, it may be remarked, in passing, that it is the yellow core of the carrot that is difficult of digestion—the outer, a red layer, is tender enough.

In Savoy the peasants have recourse to an infusion of carrots as a specific for jaundice. The large sweet onion is very rich in those alkaline elements which counteract the



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eggs, and male and female sit alternately upon them for the space of a month.

All the cassowaries which have been taken to Europe were captured when young by the natives and brought up by them. This is perhaps the reason that many of them are tamed and appear to be gentle and confiding, although their original disposition is the reverse of this. They are naturally fierce, and take offense without any provocation. They are greatly excited by the sight of a scarlet cloth, and have a great antipathy toward ragged or unclean persons, sometimes attacking them.

They sometimes become ungovernable in captivity, and the keepers of zoological gardens say that one cannot be too cautious with the cassowary. "When irritated, they are formidable antagonists, turning rapidly about and launching a shower of kicks, which may do no small damage, their effect being heightened by the sharp claws with which the toes are armed." In confinement they often swallow whole apples and oranges. In the gardens they are given a mixture of bread, grain, cut up apples, etc., but it has been observed that young fowls or owls which come accidentally in their way are destroyed.

They often lay eggs in captivity, but it is very seldom that any young are raised. It is not often that a pair can be obtained that will live together in peace.

Another species of cassowary was discovered in the island of New Britain. Its native title is mooruk. A pair of these birds were purchased by Dr. Bennett in 1857 from Captain Devlin, and were sent to England. They were very tame, and ran around everywhere in the house and yard without fear. In time they became so obtrusive that they disturbed the servants in their work, for they would crowd

pork (and in some other food flesh) is not to be doubted. That proper cooking of meats for food destroys them is unquestionable. That all authenticated cases of injury to health arising from the presence of this microscopic worm were traced to the eating of uncooked or half raw meat is a fact. But that the salting of meat destroyed the parasite is still a matter of doubt, or, at least, it is a subject of dispute.

On this point United States Consul John Wilson, stationed at Brussels, makes some statements, based on his own observations. He says:

"I have myself been present when officially appointed microscopists at some of the abattoirs of this country have been engaged in examining American pork for trichinæ, and have been invited by these gentlemen to see for myself, through their microscopes, the peculiar cell and spiral coil of the animal; but on carefully examining them I have only observed, blended with the tissue and minute salt crystals, the entombed animal, evidently as destitute of life as the structure in which it was embedded.

"It is claimed by most trichinic observers that the process of generation and birth of this little animal invariably takes place in the stomach and intestinal canal, and that within a few days from its birth it has so matured as to penetrate the walls of the intestines and rapidly make its way through the various intervening structures to the remote muscular tissue of the animal it infects, there to be speedily encysted and endowed with a subsequent dormant existence of several years, during which time its presence occasions little or no inconvenience. Of this theory of the life and movements of this little worm I can only say that it involves an almost unparalleled exception to the law generally regarded as determining animal life, and ought not to be accepted but upon

poison of rheumatic gout. If slowly stewed in weak broth, and eaten with a little Nepal pepper, it will be found to be an admirable article of diet for patients of studious and sedentary habits. The stalks of cauliflower have the same sort of value, only too often the stalk of a cauliflower is so ill-boiled and unpalatable that few persons would thank you for proposing to them to make part of their meal consist of so uninviting an article.

Turnips, in the same way, are often thought to be indigestible, and better suited for cows and sheep than for delicate people; but here the fault lies with the cook quite as much as with the root. The cook boils the turnips badly, and then pours some butter over it, and the eater of such a dish is sure to be the worst for it. Try a better way. What shall be said about our lettuces? The plant has a slight narcotic action, of which a French old woman, like a French doctor, well knows the value, and when properly cooked is really very easy of digestion.

A Picture in the Heart of an Oak.

A correspondent of the Waterbury (Conn.) *American*, writing from Watertown, says that Mr. Benjamin Marvin, of that town, in splitting a log of black oak, observed a picture on the smooth grain in the heart of the tree. It is a landscape, or rather a clump of trees, with trunk and branches and twigs as clearly defined as though drawn with ink or photographed by the sun's rays. The trees form a picture about four inches square, showing like the open leaf of a book, and the same on the opposite page. Mr. Marvin says it is a pretty good portraiture of the clump of trees which he felled, the picture appearing in the heart of the largest one.