



**Bird of Opulence**

➤ **THERE** is a movement among turkey raisers to develop a small bird more commensurate with the capacities of today's small families. The idea is to reduce the bird to the proportions of a more workaday menu, to remove roast turkey from the category of exclusively feast-day fare.

One bows to inevitable progress, but not without a sense of loss. The whole spirit of the traditional Thanksgiving turkey lies in its amplitude, its largesse. Turkey is more than an outsize chicken. When our forefathers cast about for the piece de resistance of the first Thanksgiving, there were no rival candidates.

Turkey was elected unanimously not alone because he was so abundant but also because his fleshly endowments perfectly suited him for the role. Not only was he palatable, he was big. A gentleman named William Wood, writing in Massachusetts about 1630, observed that "These Turkeys remaine all the yeare long, the price of a good Turkie cock is foure shillings; and he

is well worth it, for he may be in weight forty pound."

The turkey was unknown in the Old World. It was found by the explorers and colonists all the way from Central America to southern Maine. Flocks of the birds roved the forests in great numbers, being especially numerous in New England.

The feeding habits of the wild turkey were extremely adaptable, and this in large measure was his undoing. Hunters would lie in wait around cornfields and when the birds settled to feed would slaughter them in quantity. A common expedient was to lay out long lines of corn along the length of a ditch and then pour a fusillade into the flock of sitting birds.

By such indiscriminate killing, the wild turkey was wiped out in all but a few localities, notably the less inhabited areas of the Gulf States. The last recorded shooting of a wild turkey in Massachusetts was a year or two before the Civil War. This took place on a mountain fittingly called Mt. Tom. Today's table turkey is a domesticated bird, raised on a turkey farm.

The white man was by no means the first to appreciate the prime gustatory qualities of Tom Turkey. The Indians of

Mexico had already brought the bird under domestication when the Spaniards came. Cortez found them in the markets of Mexico. And it is through him, by a devious route, that the turkey gets its misleading name.

The Spaniards brought turkeys back to Europe with them. From Spain they were carried to the Near East, whence they were introduced into northern Europe. Like several other native American products, among them tobacco and corn, turkey was thought to have originated in Turkey, or even farther east, in India.

Benjamin Franklin wished to make turkey the American symbol, rather than the bald eagle. Both Franklin and the ornithologist Audubon pointed out that the eagle, a pirate and a thief, was not an especially flattering or fitting emblem. They both maintained that the turkey, which at least does not poach on his neighbors' preserves, was more appropriate.

The highest tribute we pay the turkey is to eat him with gusto. And this observance has a fitness all its own. It is certainly an honor we would never pay an eagle.

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#### MEDICINE

## Artery Hardening Aids

➤ **TWO** chemical weapons against arteriosclerosis, popularly known as hardening of the arteries, were announced at the meeting of the American Society for the Study of Arteriosclerosis in Chicago.

One of them is choline, already famous for its value in preventing fat deposits in the liver. This chemical has been cutting the death rate and saving lives in a serious form of heart disease, Dr. Lester M. Morrison and William F. Gonzalez of Los Angeles reported.

They gave it daily to 115 patients who had recovered from an acute attack of coronary thrombosis and myocardial infarction. This is the disease in which a blood clot forms in one of the arteries supplying the heart muscle with blood. Because the clot obstructs the artery, the part of the heart it should nourish dies.

Some of the patients, 52, got the choline for one year, another group of 35 got choline daily for two years and a third group of 28 were given it for three years.

Comparing these patients with another 115 who had the same kind of heart disease but did not get choline treatment showed that "the subsequent mortality rate of patients was significantly reduced under the choline treatment," the Los Angeles doctors reported.

They believe the chemical has value in the treatment of hardening of the heart's arteries and should be given further trial.

The second chemical weapon against hardening of the arteries is one of the B vitamins, inositol. Its value as "a potential

weapon" against one of the factors believed responsible for the most common variety of hardening of the arteries was reported by Drs. Irving Leinwand and Dan H. Moore of New York.

In this form of arteriosclerosis, fatty cysts form in the connective tissue of the artery walls and the tissue undergoes fatty degeneration. Faulty handling of fat by the body is believed to play some part in the development of the condition.

Drs. Leinwand and Moore gave inositol three times a day to patients suffering from some disorder of fat utilization. No special diet was ordered. The results as shown by studies of the blood serum led the doctors to believe the chemical would be useful in the special form of arteriosclerosis.

Headache and gastrointestinal upsets of diarrhea occurred as side reactions to inositol in a small percentage of cases.

Further evidence for the reasonableness of treating this kind of arteriosclerosis with diet, exercise and in some cases with pancreatic extract was reported by a group of researchers, headed by Dr. Joseph B. Wolfe, from the Wolfe Clinic and Temple University, Philadelphia.

They got their evidence from studies of geese and ducks. Wild ducks, they found, rarely developed the artery condition compared to its occurrence in domesticated ducks and geese. When the condition was brought on in the geese by forced feeding, it could be reversed and cleared up by diet, exercise and pancreatic extract.

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