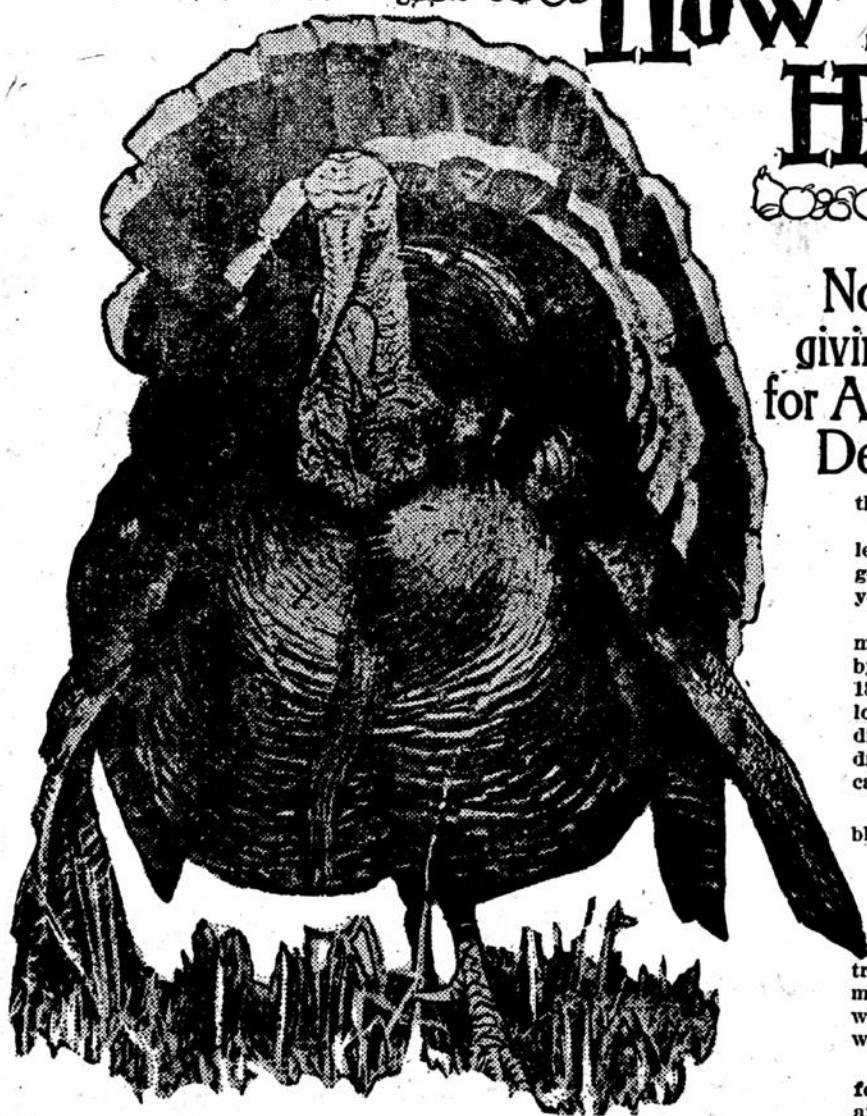


# How Turkey Redeems Himself as Food

None Should Blame Thanksgiving Bird for Mental Incapacity for All of His Efforts Go Toward the Development of Flavor



ENOR DON TURKEY played a brilliant part in history even before the Spaniards discovered him, along with Mexico, in 1518.

Long before that he had been worshiped by Aztecs. Later, when his religious vogue was past, he was given honorable mention as a bird of honor at the marriage banquet of a king. So superior a viand was he considered when first introduced to Europe that in a "constitution" set forth by Cranmer in 1541 turkey is named as one of the greater fowls, of which an ecclesiastic was to "have but one in a dish." But he speedily multiplied to such an extent that no later than 1555 two turkeys and four turkey chicks were served at a feast of the sergeants at arms in London.

Turkeys at that period were mentioned in connection with cranes and swans as important and rich items of a banquet. A little later, in 1573, turkeys were used on the tables of English husbands for the Christmas feast. In the meantime they were more than plentiful in their home land, where turkeys continued to sell for about six-cents apiece as late as the nineteenth century. For six cents in those good old days a turkey weighing about twelve pounds could be bought by a good shopper. If the family needed a turkey weighing twenty-five or thirty pounds it was necessary to pay as much as a quarter. But it must be remembered that six cents in those days counted a good deal more than it does in this.

The turkey that the Aztecs worshiped was probably either the Mexican wild turkey, which is known by the white touches on its tail covers and quills, or, more appropriately, the ocellated turkey of Honduras and other parts of South America, whose brilliant plumage, spotted almost as gloriously with vivid colors as a peacock, somehow allies it particularly with that vivid early people. The turkey which strolled out of the forests of New England and furnished so marvellous a banquet for our Puritan forefathers was a handsome bird than that of Mexico, in the opinion of some lovers of beauty, but not so brilliant a one as the Honduras turkey.

The American wild turkey, which really belongs to Thanksgiving, was the North American wild turkey found throughout the eastern United States and Canada. Scientifically it is known as the *Meleagris Americana*. Its plumage is black, shaded with bronze. In the rays of the sun the bird gleams in a beautiful harmony of black, copper, gold and bronze. And the turkey likes the rays of the sun. He hates damp weather, not alone because it is bad for his health, but because it obscures his beauty.

It is generally believed at present that all the turkeys of the world have descended from the three forms known as the North American bird, which has just been described; the Mexican bird and the ocellated bird.

The turkey which was first introduced into Europe may have been carried there by the Spaniards from Mexico or the Jesuits may have taken it back across the waters from one of their scattered stations in the great woods of Canada. In any event, one of its representatives figured at the marriage banquet of Charles IX and was regarded as of sufficient importance to be mentioned in the reports of that festivity.

The Mexican turkey is the wild bird of Mexico, which also came over the line into the southern part of the United States. *Meleagris Gallopaya* is the name that is generally employed to describe this turkey. It is somewhat shorter in the shank than the northern species. Its body color is a metallic black, shaded with bronze. This is thought to be the species that the early navigators first bore back to Spain and England. The white tips of its plumage also have suggested that it is to this bird rather than to the wild turkey of North America that most of the domestic fowls owe their origin.

The ocellated turkey, *Meleagris Ocellata*, which is smaller than the others, has a bare head and neck. Its body plumage is bronze and green, banded with gold bronze and varied with spots or eyes of brilliant colors—blue, red and brilliant black.

Why the turkey is called the turkey when its origin is admittedly purely occidental is a subject that has puzzled many persons. There are several reasons given by those who have delved deeply into this problem, and one is privileged to take his choice. In the first place, it is stated that the turkey was originally supposed to have come from Asia. Thus at a time when a great stretch of territory on the Asiatic continent was called "Turkey" the bird derived its name from its supposed origin. Another speculative chronicler records that the Indians called the bird "firkee" and that from this its common name was created. Then, again, it is somewhat generally believed that the bird named itself by its peculiar utterances, which are translated as "turk-turk-turkey." Again, still more subtle philosophers have traced the naming of the bird to its kinship in the matter of polygamous habits with the turkeys over the water. Certainly no turbaned subject of the sultan, even in the days when harems were considered an article of the true religion, was ever more tenacious of his privileges in this regard than the turkey cock of barnyard or forest. Turkeys were also at one time supposed to have come from Africa and they were confused with guineas. The errors in their scientific naming are due to this confusion.

When, in 1621, after making their first harvest, the pilgrims decreed that there should be a three days' festival, which was really the first Thanksgiving, wild turkeys already had become known as a delicious food, and they furnished the mainstay of the feast. The old pioneers weren't so badly off, is seems, in some ways as we have been led to imagine, for although they were deprived of the joys of tinned meats and vegetables and cold storage and similar blessings, turkeys were so plentiful that it is recorded it was customary to refer to them as bread. Another chronicler sets forth the fact that the breast of the wild turkey when cooked in butter was esteemed by the epicures among the explorers. But in spite of their abundance turkeys were regarded with favor even by the red men, if one is to judge by the following prayer which they uttered:

"O Great Being, I thank thee that I have obtained the use of my legs again so that I am able to walk about and kill turkeys."

It was not alone in early New England that the bird was regarded with such favor as an edible. Isaac De Rasieres in 1627 writes a description of

the turkey and details the method of hunting them in the New Netherlands: "There are also very large turkeys running wild. They have very long legs and run so extraordinarily fast that generally we take savages when we go to hunt them, for when one has deprived them of the power of flying they yet run so fast that we cannot catch them unless their legs are hurt also."

Turkeys have been called the greatest game bird of this country, and the methods of taking them have been many. John Hunter, who was captured by the Indians and spent some time in captivity, in his memoirs, written in 1824, tells how the Indians made a decoy bird from the skin of a turkey, followed the turkey tracks until they came upon a flock and then partially displaying their decoy and imitating the gobbling noise made by the cock, drew off first one and then another of the flock, who being socially inclined, came along to investigate the newcomers.

Among the Indians the children were expected to kill turkeys with their blow guns. These were hollow reeds, in which arrows were placed and blown out with such force that, being directed at the eye of the creature, they often brought him down. Children as young as eight years were successful at this sort of shooting. Adrian Van der Donck says that turkeys were sometimes caught by dogs in the snow during the seventeenth century, but generally they were shot at night from trees. They slept in the trees in large flocks and often selected the same spot many nights in succession. At other times the Indians would lay roots of which the turkeys were fond in small streams and take the birds as they were in the act of getting these roots.

In Virginia the trap or pen was much used. This trap was built in the forest and leading to it was a long train of corn. The trap was a simple affair built of logs laid one upon another and having rough rails laid across the top. There was a trench dug under the lowest logs which fenced in the pen. In this trench corn was scattered and the turkey following the trail of this delicacy for some distance off would finally come to the trench, which seemed to be quite providentially strewn with an unusually rich supply. He followed the great bright path of rich food to his destruction. The turkey's lack of intelligence, when it comes to penning him up, is one of the reasons why a great many Americans have not been in accord with Benjamin Franklin's idea that the turkey and not the eagle should be the bird of our country.

A writer, describing the shooting of turkeys in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Michigan, speaks of the use of the hollow bone of the turkey's wing, which in the mouth of an expert can be made to reproduce perfectly the piping sound of the turkey hen. Sometimes also turkeys were hunted on horseback. In Virginia, according to an old writer, this was not uncommon. He says:

"Though we galloped our horses we could not overtake them [the turkeys], although they run nearly two hundred and twenty yards before they took flight." The constant practice of our forefathers in shooting game developed a great many fine turkey shots, and it is recorded that in the latter half of the seventeenth century "a man was thought a bad shot if he missed the very head of a wild turkey on top of the highest tree with a single ball."

To "pot hunting" and to the practice of luring the turkeys by imitating the call of the hen in the spring, Sylvester D. Judd of the biological survey of the United States department of agriculture largely attributes the extermination of the wild turkey in many parts of the United States where formerly it was especially abundant. Trapping the turkeys in pens also helped along the extermination.

Although the turkey is, generally speaking, not a particularly hardy bird, being subject to various forms of indigestion, etc., he is varied in his diet and usually has a good appetite. Some of the things which the wild turkey likes best and which the domesticated bird will by no means scorn are grasshoppers, crickets, locusts, tadpoles, small lizards, garden seeds and snails. One turkey which was examined by a scientist was found to have partaken of a meal including the following viands:

One harvest spider, one centipede, one thousand-legs, one ichneumon fly, two yellowjackets, one grasshopper, three katydids, wild cherries, grapes, berries of dogwood and the sorghum, two chestnuts, twenty-five whole acorns, a few elder culkins and five hundred seeds of tick trefoil. The domestic turkey's habit of hunting grasshoppers and worming tobacco shows that his delight in the primitive pleasures of the table has not altered in his more carefully provided for existence.

The chicks both of the wild and the domestic turkey are delicate and especially must they be protected during the damp weather. Audubon says that the mother bird among the wild turkeys thoroughly understands the delicacy of her offspring and that when it is wet she feeds the chicks buds from the spice bush with medicinal intent exactly as the mother of a brood of youngsters prescribes doses of quinine when influenza has taken the family in its clutches. As soon as the young birds can fly well enough to take their place on the roost with their mothers the most delicate period of childhood, what might be called the teething stage, is thought to be over.

But, according to a successful turkey farmer, the poult is three months old before they can be taught anything. They are then taught that they should roost high so as to keep out of the way of night prowlers. Turkeys retain so much of their wild nature that they do not like roosting inside a house, and, indeed, they do not care even for artificial perches. When possible they greatly prefer tall trees as a roosting place to any roost that has been especially constructed for them. This characteristic renders them especially easy victims for night raiders. In addition to the human desperadoes of this description there are the coyotes and hawks always to be guarded against in some parts of the country.

In addition to illnesses which come from digestive disorders, colds, the terrible scourge of blackheads, etc., and the depredations of the night raider, the turkey farmer always has to consider also the feuds among the members of his flock, which frequently rage high. Nevertheless, the careful turkey rancher has found it possible to conserve his birds and make a large profit from them. A woman turkey rancher, who has had good experience in the business, lost in one season only twelve birds out of a flock of 1,500.

At first the young turkeys are fed on bread and milk, hard-boiled yolk of egg and perhaps some chopped alfalfa. Later they are fed cracked grain, but as soon as they are able to take to the range it is no longer necessary to feed them. The range supplies all that they need, both green and dry, and happy is the householder who is able to purchase for his table turkeys whose habitat has been an oak forest. Nothing is more delicious than a turkey which has fed freely on acorns.

Although there are many great turkey ranches and whole communities which live principally upon the raising of turkeys for market, such as Cyren, Tex., whose annual turkey trade preceding Thanksgiving includes thousands of turkeys bound for the New York markets, as a rule turkeys are raised in small groups on farms which are interested in other commodities. They are often the sole dependence of the farmer's wife for pocket money throughout the year, and many a farmer's daughter also has been able to make a shining appearance in her world of fashion principally through the successful marketing of the turkey brood.

On the 5,000,000 farms of the United States there were, according to careful statistics taken some years ago, only 6,500,000 turkeys. Texas led among the states, producing 650,000. The other states which were large producers were Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Indiana. The state of Rhode Island, noted as it is for its turkeys, produced only 5,000. But the quality of the Rhode Island turkeys always has been excellent and they usually bring prices vastly in excess of those from other parts of the country.

And that ought to be enough about turkeys to get up a pretty good appetite for Thursday's dinner!

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"He wanted to get into the army, but made a mistake in his questionaire."  
"How was that?"  
"He waived exemption on the ground of domestic infelicity and the exemption board couldn't see it that way."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

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"That is a bald sort of statement."

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those stiffened joints, that backache, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, gall stones, gravel, "brick dust," etc. They are an effective remedy for all diseases of the bladder, kidney, liver, stomach and allied organs.

GOLD MEDAL Haarem Oil Capsules cleanse the kidneys and purify the blood. They frequently ward off attacks of the dangerous and fatal diseases of the kidneys. They have a beneficial effect, and often completely cure the diseases of the bodily organs, allied with the bladder and kidneys.

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Thousands upon thousands of people who are subject to attacks of indigestion and biliousness; who are nervous, melancholy, mentally depressed; who suffer from rheumatism, lumbago or sciatica—yes, even many of those who have catarrh, ulcer or cancer of the stomach or if the trouble is traced to its source, it will often be found to be just acid-stomach. For these are only some of the ailments that are caused by what the doctors call superacidity, which is another name for sour or acid-stomach.

What you need to know about all else is how to quickly rid yourself of excess acid. A wonderful modern remedy called BANTONIC literally wipes it out. It does the work easily, speedily and naturally. It makes the stomach pure, sweet, cool and comfortable. It helps you get full strength out of every mouthful of good food you eat; and unless you DO get full strength from your food you cannot enjoy robust, vigorous health.

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