

ENTOZOA.

BEING AN ESSAY READ BEFORE THE OTTAWA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, ON FRIDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 1865. BY EDWARD VAN CORTLANDT.

The heaven of poisonous power to us
First moves remote, its hostile effluence creeps
Slow, like a mist or vapour; all around
Transforming as it passes, till at length,
Reach'd our own region, it the total scene
Taints, and assimilates, and loads with death.
[J. M. Good's translation of Lucretius.]

It is not many months since the whole of civilized Europe was startled from its propriety, on learning the sad tidings consequent upon a festive banquet which took place at Hettstadt, a small country town near the Harz mountains in Germany. The following is an abridged account of its very "strange and eventful history":—

The large number of one hundred and three persons, chiefly peasants, sat down to a sumptuous dinner. They were all in good health and vigor. After having enjoyed themselves *more majorem*, to use the words of the chroniclers of the frightful fact, they separated and went to their homes. Of this number, within a few weeks, eighty three men were in their graves. They had all partaken of a poison, not a poison administered either by design or negligence, but a poison unknown to all concerned, which was eaten with the meat in which it was contained, and of which it formed a living constituent. As is usual in these parts of Germany, the third course consisted of *Rostewurst und Gemuse*. The former was therefore ordered the necessary number of days beforehand, in order to allow of its being properly *smoked*! On this occasion a measly pig was sold to the butcher—killed and worked up into Sausages. On the day after the festival, several persons who had participated of the dinner, were attacked with irritation of the intestines, loss of appetite, great prostration and fever. The number of persons attacked rapidly increased,

and poisoning was suspected. Every article of food and material was subjected to a most rigid examination, without any result in the first instance; but when the symptoms in some of the cases invaded the muscles of the leg, particularly the calves of some of the sufferers, the description which Zenker had given of the fatal case of *trichinous* disease was remembered. The remnants of sausages and of pork, employed in its manufacture in the Hettstadt case, were examined with the microscope, and found to be literally swarming with encapsuled trichina, in all stages of development. It could not be doubted any longer that as many of the one hundred and three as had partaken of *Rostewurst* had been infected with trichinous disease, by eating of trichinous pork.

Since the occurrence of the above tragical event, this disease has been met with on this continent. Several fatal cases have been recorded of its development at New York and Buffalo. To the above facts are referable the circumstances which led to the reading of this Essay, of which the following is a summary:

Were there no other more inviting associations in connection with the Entozoa than the nature of their habitations, the study of their history would not be likely to be prosecuted with much ardor. But when we reflect upon the very direful effects which follow in the wake of some of them, when they have become the inmates, whether of our own bodies or of the carcasses of our domestic animals, and consider the great and lamentable uncertainty and even entire ignorance which in many instances still exists in relation to them and their natural history—an ignorance and uncertainty of all vital moment in the economy of Man—we cannot