

ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
CASSOWARY (*CASUARIUS AUSTRALIS*, Wall).

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(Plates viii-ix.)

*Casuarius australis* was the only avi-faunal type secured during Kennedy's ill-fated expedition in 1848, from Rockingham Bay to Cape York, when so many valuable lives were lost. Singularly enough its early history is associated with the second, third and fourth Curators of the Australian Museum,<sup>1</sup> which was the first Institution to receive a specimen.

For my purpose it will be necessary to transcribe the following extracts relating to *Casuarius australis*.

The existence of a Cassowary inhabiting Australia was first made known in 1849 by the late Mr. Wm. Carron, Botanist to the Kennedy Expedition, who remarks in his "Narrative" <sup>1a</sup> November 4th (1848):—"This morning Jackey went to examine a scrub through which we wanted to pass, and while out, shot a fine Cassowary; it was very dark and heavy, not so long in the leg as the common Emu, and had a larger body, shorter neck, with a large red, stiff, horny comb on its head; Mr. Wall skinned it, but from the many difficulties with which he had to contend, the skin was spoiled before it could be properly preserved."

Referring to this specimen the following is the gist of Gould's remarks in his "Handbook to the Birds of Australia"<sup>2</sup> under the name of *Casuarius australis*, Wall. "All that we at present know on the subject is comprised in the following extract from the 'Illustrated Sydney Herald' of the 3rd June,

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<sup>1</sup>—The first Curator of the Australian Museum, 1838-45 was the Rev. William Branthwaite Clarke, M.A., the "Father of Australian Geology," Rector of St. Thomas Church of England, North Sydney, 1846-70 and Elective Trustee of the Australian Museum, 1853-74. (R.E.)

<sup>1a</sup> Carron—Narrative of an Expedition undertaken under the direction of the late Mr. Assistant Surveyor E. B. Kennedy for the Exploration of the Country lying between Rockingham Bay and Cape York, 1849, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Gould—Handbook Bds. Austr., 1865, ii., p. 206.