



Published for the Department of Agriculture for the Province of Quebec, (official part,) by  
EUSEBE SENECAI & FILS, 20, St. Vincent St. Montreal.

Vol. Vlt. No. 2.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 1886.

\$1.00 per annum, in advance.

OFFICIAL PART.

Table of Contents.

Potatoes.....	17
De Omnibus Rebus.....	21
Our Engravings.....	21
Competition of Farms.....	22
Analysis of Wood-ashes; Sugar beets, &c.....	23
Description of Mr. D. A. Jones' Apianian Establishment at Beeton.....	24
Foods for Stock.....	25
Silage Stack and Press.....	26
Competition of the best cultivated Farms.....	27
Storing Cabbage.....	28
The Chicago Show.....	28
City Milk Tests.....	29
The Poultry-Yard.....	29
Educated Farmers.....	30
A Famous Cheese-Maker.....	31

POTATOES.

Box 23, P. O. Sorel, P. Q., December 28th, 1885.

The potato, *solanum tuberosum*, belongs to the family *Solanaceæ* of Jussieu, *solanum* being used by Pliny as another word for *strychnos*, the *nightshade*. The family is a remarkable one; examples of it are found in most part of the world, especially within the tropics. At first sight, this order seems to offer an exception to that general correspondence in structure and qualities which is so generally characteristic of well defined natural orders, containing as it does the deadly *nightshade* and *henbane*, and the wholesome potato and tomato; but a little inquiry will explain this apparent anomaly. The leaves and seed-capsules of the potato are narcotic; the tubers are wholesome when cooked. De Candolle, the French agricultural chemist, remarks of this family in a passage, which I translate: "We must not lose sight of the fact that all our alimentary matters contain

a small proportion of a stimulating principle, which, if it were present in a larger quantity might be injurious to health, but which is necessary to them as serving as a natural seasoning." The leaves are all, in fact, narcotic and exciting, but in different degrees, from the *Atropa Belladonna*, which causes vertigo, convulsions, and vomiting, *tobacco*, which as all young smokers know, produces the first and last of these symptoms, *henbane*, and *stramonium*, &c. (1) If any one of my readers will crush a leaf of the potato or of the tomato, he will find that the smell is exactly the same as that of a crushed leaf of green tobacco.

"The wild potato," says the illustrious Darwin, "grows on these islands—off the coast of Chili—in sandy, shelly soil near the sea beach. The tallest plant was four feet in height. (2) The tubers were generally small, but I found one, of an oval shape, two inches in diameter; they resembled in every respect, and had the same smell as, the English potato; but when boiled they shrank much, and were watery and insipid, though without any bitter taste. It is remarkable that the same plant should flourish on the sterile mountains of Central Chili, where a drop of rain does not fall for six months, and within the damp forest of these southern islands."

The potato was generally cultivated in America at the time of its discovery, but it is only a few years since its native country, Chili, has been discovered with certainty. It is asserted that Sir Francis Drake introduced it into Europe in 1573, but this is mere tradition, as it appears probable that the Spaniards had established its cultivation in Europe before this time. It began to be grown in Ireland about 1610, and in France about the middle of the eighteenth century. The modern English name, potato, is evidently derived from the Indian *batata*, whence the vulgar French *patate*, commonly heard in Guernsey and Jersey, as well as in Canada, where a *k* is sometime substituted for the letter *t*.

(1) Vertigo, yes, and pretty severely, as I can testify, but the other I never experienced. JERNER FOST.

(2) I have seen the tops of the *Champion* potato exceed four feet in length. A. R. J. F.