



Published for the Department of Agriculture for the Province of Quebec, by EUSEBE SENEAL & FILS, 20, St. Vincent St. Montreal.

Vol. VI. No. 6.

MONTREAL, JUNE 1884.

\$1.00 per annum, in advance.

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POTATOES.

The cultivation of potatoes, so well carried out on the Island of Montreal, is not carried out at all in this neighbourhood, unless a harrowing and an earthing up can be called cultivation. The prevailing impression seems to be, that, on such light land as this, the less stirring the land gets the better. But the fact is, that the idea of hoeing for any other purpose than killing weeds never enters the mind of the farmers; they do not imagine for a moment that each stroke of hand-hoe or horse-hoe sets fresh surfaces free to the action of the air, and that in truth a well managed root crop is as nearly as possible equivalent to a summer fallow.

A hundred years ago the cultivation of potatoes was little understood, even in England: they were planted in any out of the way spot, and all the manuring they got was a little stable litter scattered over them. I have seen the grandson of the man who astonished the people of Glostershire by devoting three-quarters of an acre to this crop! It became a

matter of discussion what he intended to do with such a quantity of potatoes; and the old inhabitants used to tell me, some forty years ago, how people thronged from the neighbouring villages to see so many potatoes growing together.

Should ripe potatoes be used for seed or unripe ones? Doubtful, I think; but I know of many good crops that have been raised from unripe potatoes, and we see every day such conflicting statements about seed-potatoes, that I am almost induced to think that, if the preparation of the land and its cultivation is correct, the condition of the seed, whether ripe or unripe, derived from large or small tubers, with one eye to the set or several, is immaterial. One thing, however is clear: the sets should not be allowed to sprout in a dark cellar—the weak, etiolated look of such condemns the practice at once. If very early potatoes are desired, the best way is to spread the seed out thinly in a warm, well lighted room, when the tiny buds can sprout in a healthy natural way—they should be, at planting time, about an eighth of an inch long, and dark green in colour.

A great many people here still use the hoe in potatoe planting, but I fancy, after this season, the double-mould-board plough will be more largely employed. The one I have used, made by M Lamoureux of Sorel, does its work fairly, though not perfectly—at all events, it is better than the hoe.

As the manure here is never turned, but reaches the potatoe-field in its primitive condition, the crop is covered up with weeds immediately after its appearance. There seems to be no horse-hoe or scuffler used, the hand hoe being the only implement to be seen, and that mostly in the hands of women.

I was struck, the other day, with the appearance of a piece of potatoes, about four acres in extent, in front of a farmer's house about a mile or so from Sorel. They had just been harrowed, and the soil was in a lovely condition. Upon inquiry, I found that the piece had been planted with potatoes for four years in succession, and for two years previously with Indian corn, receiving a heavy coat of manure with each of the six crops! It might well carry a fine skin; but a few hundred yards further on, towards the other extremity of the