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SWEDES.

Sorel, November 2nd, 1885.

I am sure I don't know whence the French-Canadians got their name for this plant Chou de Siam.—The old English term for it is *ruta-baga*; a real botanical appellation, still used in the United States and in the Eastern Townships. It is not, properly speaking, a turnip at all, though, from its form, often called the Swedish turnip. The leaves are smooth, like a cabbage, which it is, as the French name, *Chou de Lapone*, indicates; though what Lapland can have to do with its origin I cannot see. It was first introduced into Scotland, in 1781, on the recommendation of Mr. Knowles, who brought it from Göttenberg. The full botanical name is *Brassica campestris, napo brassica, rutabaga; De Candolle*; which designates its origin, as *brassica*, in Latin, is a cabbage, and *napus* is used by Pliny to signify a sort of turnip. Stephens gives *Navoni de Naponia*, as the Italian name, which is grammatically incorrect; the real Italian is *Navone di Svezia*.

As will be seen by the illustrations, the swede is of an oblong form; the colour underground is of a deepish yellow, and the upper part of a dusky purple. The leaves vary from a foot to fifteen inches in length, growing nearly upright, from a firm conical crown, which forms the head of the bulb. In choosing swedes to set out for seed, none should be kept except those having no depression round the neck, and for this reason: any depression in that part of the bulb is apt to collect water, which causes the whole to rot. I mention this, because one of those who are good enough to think my advice worth listening to brought me a swede weighing twelve pounds to ask if it would not be well to plant it for seed-bearing purposes. As all defects in the parent stock are liable to crop out in the progeny, I told my friend to select a perfectly shaped bulb, irrespective entirely of weight, if he wished to have perfectly shaped bulbs in his future crop: cultivation and manure would do the rest.

After storing, the swede, like all roots, loses water, and becomes specifically heavier, until it begins to send out leaves. Hence the advisability of preventing all heating in the cellars where roots are kept. Johnston gives the proportion of nutriment in swedes as 74½ parts in the 1,000, but his samples were probably taken from the North, where all roots are of better quality than those grown in our Southern counties, as I see Sir Humphrey Davy only gives 64 per 1,000 of nutriment from swedes grown in the neighbourhood of London.

Stephens says, speaking of the girth and weight of swedes: 'Picked specimens have exhibited a girth of from twenty-eight inches, varying in weight from seven pounds to nine and a half pounds, but the weight varies in a different proportion to the bulk, as one of twenty-five inches gave nine and a half pounds, whilst another of twenty-six inches only weighed seven pounds. It is no uncommon thing to see swedes from eight pounds to ten and a half pounds." Exposed on my window side for the last fortnight, are three swedes that weigh respectively eleven, eleven and a half, and twelve pounds, girthing twenty five and a half, twenty-seven and a half, and twenty-seven and three-quarter inches, and as for the quality, no white-turnip could be more tender and succulent. These swedes are those I spoke of in the November