

THE ONION—*ALLIUM CEPA*.

Why is it that the large markets of Upper Canada, Toronto, Hamilton, &c., are supplied with this useful vegetable from the United States? Surely onions can be grown as well, as cheaply, and as profitably on Canadian soil as elsewhere? We were surprised to see a dealer in our markets last fall from Rochester with immense quantities of onions, and to hear him say that he realized a ready sale and a handsome profit. It seems unaccountable that with all the gardeners, and small, as well as large farmers, in the vicinity of this city, we must go to a foreign country to purchase our onions. With a view to amend this state of things, let us attend to their cultivation in future. No crop pays a more steady and uniform profit than this. The market is never glutted, and as a good quality of the article keeps well, it always brings a remunerative price.

VARIETIES.

Though these are quite numerous, the sorts cultivated are principally the *Large Red* or *Wethersfield*, *White Silver skinned*, *Yellow Dutch* sometimes called *Strasburg* or *Flanders*, *Portugal* or *Madeira*, *Large Spanish*, *Potato* or *Under-ground Onion*, and the *Welsh* or *Tree Onion*. The first two are more generally raised than others, they being the best known and commanding the best price. The white Portugal grows to a large size, frequently reaching five, six, and sometimes eight inches in diameter, but does not yield so many bushels to the acre, and does not keep as well. For general purposes and for export, the red is the best variety to cultivate. For home use, and the supply of the city and village markets, the silver skin and the yellow are the best varieties. They usually bring a higher price.

PREPARATION OF SOIL.

No crop pays better for a thorough preparation, and for high manuring. As a large part of the expense is for weeding and tending, it should be the aim of the cultivator to get a maximum crop from every acre that he devotes to this purpose. The wants of the plants are a fine deep light soil, through which the roots may easily penetrate. Accordingly, when a piece of ground has once been broken up, and cleared of stones and roots for this crop, it is common to keep it in onions for a long series of years. Ten and fifteen years are common terms, and we are told that fields in Wethersfield have been cropped with onions for half a century.

Of course such constant cropping demands large supplies of manures, and where the aim is to raise six or eight hundred bushels to the acre, it will pay better than to have a succession of crops, the most of which will not pay a fourth part of the profit of onions. It is the best way to work in the manures in the fall, and to turn them in with the plow twelve inches deep. The quantity of manure to be applied, and the depth of the plowing must depend something upon the previous treatment of the land, and its previous condition. We would increase the depth of the plowing with the quantity of manure added. We have not so much faith in the application of special manures to this crop as some have. There is no difficulty in getting excellent crops with stable manure, and that of the pig sty, and such composts as you are to make upon your own premises. Any man who makes his own manures, is safe in plowing in thirty or forty cords of stable manure or compost, in the Fall, for every acre. In the Spring we would cross plow, not quite so deep, and harrow, so as to make the tilth as fine as possible. Now, the whole ground is to be raked over with garden rakes, and cleared of all small stones and clods. If top-dressings of ashes are used, we would put them on previous to harrowing.

SOWING THE SEED.

The old process of sowing by hand will not pay. The work is better done with a brush seed-sower, if you plant in drills, or with an onion planter, if you plant in hills. Where this crop is much cultivated, they have a machine for the purpose, which drops the seed with perfect uniformity, two rows of hills at the time, covering and rolling at the same time. With a brush seed-sower, a man can plant about as rapidly as he can walk. With