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OFFICIAL PART.

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MUSHROOMS.

Sorel, June 1st, 1887.

If there is a fault of any sort in our way of living in Canada, it is that our dishes generally are wanting in flavour. Boiled pork is a capital thing, but one gets tired even of boiled pork. Even roast beef palls occasionally on the appetite, and then how few people know how to present it hashed on the following day! Lumps of the meat, swimming in a greasy liquid, and flavoured with rank onions, is about the form in which we usually see it; while the addition of a few herbs, and half a dozen mashrooms would make all the difference in the world.

Now, growing mushrooms is not a difficult thing. There are several ways of doing it: putting the spawn immediately below the surface of the dung; putting it upon the top of the dung; and placing it in the mould by which the beds

have been previously covered. In all these methods, the beds must be afterwards earthed or moulded over in a neat, even manner, with finely reduced rich, loamy, dry earth, so as to perfectly cover in the spawn, this being done in the two first methods of planting to a much greater depth than in the last method, where an earthy coat has been previously applied; an inch and a half or two inches in depth of mould being necessary in the former cases, while an inch or less may be sufficient in the last. The spawn is properly divided into pieces and put into the beds in a regular manner, at narrow distances, both as the rows and the spaces between them: six inches each way, will do. There is little difference in these modes of spawning the beds, except that in the two former, and especially in the second, the spawn can be laid in more closely than in the last, by which method of treatment a more forward and more plentiful supply of mushrooms is often produced.

After the earthing has been properly done, the beds are ready for the covering, which should be of straw, and made thick enough to entirely exclude the light. These coverings should be invariably applied as soon as possible after the spawning of the beds; as soon, that is, as their state, in regard to the heat they produce, will permit. The straw should be laid on to a considerable thickness, especially where the beds are not under sheds, but exposed to the weather, in order to afford the spawn a proper degree of power to retain heat and a proper protection against drying winds. The light litter shaken out of the dung with which the beds are made answers for the coverings. It must be lightly and regularly shaken on over the whole bed, to remain constantly, having, in outdoor work, a mat or other sort of cover laid over the straw, as no sort of moisture must, in these cases, come near the spawn.