

THE  
MUSHROOM AND CHAMPIGNON

ILLUSTRATED,

COMPARED WITH, AND DISTINGUISHED FROM,

THE

POISONOUS FUNGI

THAT RESEMBLE THEM.

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BY J. SOWERBY, JUN.

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....."Pratensibus optima fungis  
Natura est: aliis malè creditur".....  
HOR. LIB. II. SAT. 4.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE frequent occurrence of accidents, by mistaking the *Agaricus virosus* for the Champignon, has induced me to offer to the public this little work ; in which I hope the differences are so fully explained, that such mistakes may be prevented by those who peruse it.

As accidents are most likely to happen in the country, often at a distance from medical men, it will be of great utility to mention such symptoms as manifest themselves when Poisonous Fungi have been eaten, and the best manner to defeat their ill effects.

Pains in the stomach and bowels, and sickness, are the first symptoms ; soon afterwards a great heat in the bowels, languor, almost continual pain, cramp, convulsions, and an inextinguishable thirst follow.

When these symptoms have taken place some time,—giddiness, a dull delirium, and heaviness appear, which are only interrupted by pain and convulsions : with some, there is no delirium ; pain and convulsion exhaust their power, faintings and cold sweats take place, and death at last terminates a series of dreadful sufferings.

If it be suspected that Poisonous Fungi have been eaten, it is best to cleanse the stomach by copious draughts of warm milk, fat

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broth, or other liquid, avoiding salt, and any powerful emetic, as tartarized antimony: immediately follow the operation by a purgative; or if the stomach-pump can be obtained, it should be freely used: but when the symptoms appear, particularly if they have lasted some time, quick purgatives, such as castor oil or large doses of Epsom salts and senna, are most to be depended upon; the stomach-pump and enemas ought not however to be neglected.

Vinegar as well as salt, as they dissolve the poison and diffuse it over the coats of the stomach, are to be avoided; thick gruel or panada, with butter or oil, may, on the contrary, be used to engage the substance of the Fungus, and defend the stomach from its action until medicine can be obtained; such additions as melted butter with flour and other component parts of sauces, indeed, often delay the symptoms several hours.

There are several Poisonous Fungi which might have been introduced; but in a country where so few sorts are generally eaten, it is not at all probable that they would be collected for food, their resemblance being very slight, or their flavour unpleasant. We might also have enumerated two or three eatable ones; but not being wholesome, although not directly injurious, we would not recommend them. And our object, as before stated, being to point out the really dangerous kind, and to distinguish in a popular way the two sorts best fitted for the kitchen, we would not swell our work with what is foreign to our purpose and would add to its expense.





## PLATE I. & II.

### AGARICUS CAMPESTRIS.

#### *Mushroom.*

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THE Mushroom may often be found growing, in clusters so close as often to alter its shape, upon old dunghills and in meadows that are richly manured.

It is generally smaller than *Agaricus Georgii* (Plate III.): the pileus is of a light brown, and has a very floccose coat, which extends beyond the edge of the gills and is easily peeled off; the gills are very close, of a pretty pink colour when young, but gradually change to a dark brown as the plant attains its full size; the stem is whiter than the other parts of the plant, and nearly smooth; the annulus is at first attached to the pileus, but splits from it as the plant grows up; it is of the same colour as the stem when young, but when old it is coloured brown by the seeds, which fall upon it from the gills.

If the pileus be cut through, the fleshy part soon turns pink, and drops of pink juice may be squeezed out of it if young; but if old, the cut part as well as the juice are rather inclining to brown, but the *Agaricus Georgii* turns yellow. The whole plant is rather brittle, and has a fine scent peculiar to itself.

The root consists of compact woolly fibres, called by gardeners the spawn, upon which at short intervals are many very small round buds, which increase so as to form plants. This spawn is saved by gardeners, which they plant at the beginning of autumn upon long, high beds of dung, and cover it with straw, and in about two months the Mushrooms come up and increase rapidly.

It differs from the *Agaricus Georgii* in size, colour, number of gills, and quantity of juice, but most particularly in its turning pink when cut.

*a.* The Pileus; *b.* Gills; *c.* Stem; *d.* Annulus; *e.* Button; *f.* Annulus splitting from the Pileus; *g.* Spawn.

PLATE II. represents what is commonly called a flap or full-grown Mushroom; such are used for stewing and ketchup. The buttons are used for flavouring soups and gravies.

It is advisable to peel off the woolly coat which covers the pileus before it is cooked. The pileus and gills are the best-flavoured and most wholesome parts.

## PLATE III.

### AGARICUS GEORGII.

*St. George's Mushroom; or, White Caps.*

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THIS grows in shape nearly the same as the true Mushroom, but much larger; it is generally very firm, and if bruised soon turns yellow where injured, which is a good distinction between it and the true Mushroom, as that does not turn yellow under any circumstances. The pileus and stem are usually nearly white and smooth, sometimes stained with blotches. The gills are exceedingly numerous, of a lighter and duller colour than in the true Mushroom. The annulus is nearly of the same colour as the stem. It is altogether a well-formed fleshy plant, but of scarcely any use, as it does not yield juice enough for ketchup; the little juice which it has is yellowish, not pink as it is in the true Mushroom.

It is by no means so wholesome as the true Mushroom, because of its dry and tough texture; but is not poisonous, as it has sometimes been thought.

It is called St. George's Mushroom because it is said "to grow up about St. George's Day."





*Plate 4.*



## PLATE IV.

### AGARICUS PRATENSIS.

#### *Champignon.*

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THE Champignon grows plentifully in meadows, heaths, &c., in most seasons after rain, always forming circles, or fairy-rings as they are called, which rings are from one to four yards in circumference.

Different plants vary a little in colour from a light to a deep buff. The pileus is rather darker than the gills; it is irregularly round, convex, most elevated in the centre, and blunt at the edges, the fleshy part inclining to a leathery texture quite different from the *Agaricus virosus*: if the pileus be cut through (Fig. a.), the gills will not be found to separate from it, but the fleshy part runs down the middle of each gill, which is covered by a continuation of the same buff-coloured coat that lines the under surface of the pileus between the gills,—a structure widely different from the poisonous one: the gills are waved at the edges, and often lacerated; it has no annulus; the stem is often slightly twisted, of the same colour as the gills, and readily divided into silky fibres (Fig. b.).

It is sometimes called the Scotch Bonnet; is used in sauces and made-dishes in many parts of England as well as on the Continent, for which purposes it is generally dried.

It differs from the *Agaricus virosus* in colour, in the formation and colour of the gills, in its texture, and fibrous stalk.

When used in sauces, it is advisable to powder it, to render it less heavy on the stomach.

# PLATE V.

## AGARICUS VIROSUS.

### *Poisonous Agaric.*

THIS little Agaric is common in almost every meadow or field in autumn, has too often been mistaken for the Champignon, and always when eaten has been found very injurious, and sometimes proved fatal. A poor family at Lambeth, in 1830, having eaten but few for supper, were taken very ill and continued so all night; but by means of the stomach-pump and medicines, were in a day or two recovered. There are several instances noticed in the *English Fungi* of its ill effects.

It varies very much in shape and colour, although it is never of the nankeen or buff colour of the Champignon, but always more yellow, and the pileus is of a different colour from the gills; in the Champignon they are the same; the gills are of a different texture from the pileus and easily separable from it: when young, it has a thin silky annulus, but it most commonly disappears when the plant has attained its full size: the stem is hollow and of the same colour as the pileus; the whole plant is smooth and brittle.

Fig. 1. represents a large plant with a thick stem, retaining its annulus, and resembling the Champignon in shape: 2. 3. and 4. are varieties, which are found covered with a sort of gluten in wet weather, therefore sometimes called *Agaricus glutinosus*: 5. and 6. resemble the Champignon very much in shape, but are of quite a different colour;—they are the same variety as nearly proved fatal to a whole family at Mitcham: 7. one cut in half, to show the inside. These are all equally poisonous.

