Chicory Cultivation in Belgium (Continued)

Author(s): J. E. Whitby

Source: *All Ireland Review*, Vol. 3, No. 38 (Nov. 22, 1902), p. 625

Published by: All Ireland Review

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20546300>

Accessed: 28-06-2016 05:19 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

All Ireland Review is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *All Ireland Review*

purely Celtic, can easily be got from the neighbouring Claddagh, and perhaps even the ladies of that picturesque region might condescend to the office of stewardess. I have heard the ladies of the Claddagh talking to each other about fish, and felt that perhaps it was well that my knowledge of Irish was very limited. We have all been taught, however, to believe that Queenstown (not to speak of English harbours) is a very good harbour, and perhaps your Galway man can tell us how much nearer Galway is to New York than Queenstown. Possibly God Almighty, when he created Mutton Island, did not calculate on the latitude of New York? In fact there is no hint of that important city in the Book of Genesis. No doubt, however, the subscribers of the two millions will consider all these trifling objections before they order the first steamers.—Yours faithfully,

FIRBOLG.

P.S.—Why should the steamers be limited to 9,500 tons? The "Oceanic" is much larger, and these steamers are to be "first-class in every respect, even the third class?"

CHICORY CULTIVATION IN BELGIUM.

By J. E. WHITBY.
WHY NOT IN IRELAND?

(continued.)

For many years the top-growth has been much esteemed as a vegetable in Belgium; and as long ago as 1860 M. van Cutsem, of Evère, had the happy idea of crossing the chicory with the endive—to which, as has been said, it is allied—to secure larger plants. His example was generally followed, and the recognition of the chicory as a staple article of food has caused its cultivation to spread from Scharbeek, where it was first started, to Evère, Haren Woluwe St. Etienne, Crainhem, and recently to Dieghem and Melsbroek. It is the top-growth which, like seakale, serves as a dish for the table, and it is cultivated in much the same manner; though, instead of being raised from established roots, it is grown from fresh plants raised by seed every year. This is sown about April, and in October the chicory is plunged into long beds of a light, rich compost, which completely covers it. Hot stable refuse is superposed, which is protected in the usual way from the elements.

Development is extremely rapid, and in twelve days, if all goes well, the roots are ready for cutting; short, stocky, and beautifully blanched shoots growing thickly together, awaiting the sharp knife. It may be mentioned parenthetically that, as a set-off for the English ignorance of the value of chicory as a vegetable, may be put that of the Belgian gardeners as to the proper way to grow seakale, which is seldom seen in the markets, and always long, stringy, and to our idea valueless.

Chicory, which has a slightly bitter taste that is not disagreeable, is cooked in a similar fashion to seakale. It bears abundantly, the harvest lasting until April or even May, and the demand is ever increasing. Brussel's chicory has indeed of late years assumed so important a position as an article of trade that syndicates have been formed for its exportation, one of which numbers six hundred members. These men occupy themselves with the collection of the ready-packed baskets from the growers, and regulate the despatch, prices, &c. The best quality exported goes to the Paris markets, where the consumption is enormous, from sixty to eighty francs being paid per hundred kilos. Lille and the other northern towns of France take an inferior quality. The expenses of export to Paris by express train, including delivery and the various duties, works out at about twenty-five to thirty centimes per kilo, so there is a good profit. The best chicory is sold in Brussels at about thirty to sixty centimes a kilo; but much that looks good, and is as large in circum-

ference as the wrist, is hawked about in barrows at a much lower rate. There are but few travellers to Brussels in the winter-time who have not been tempted into eating it owing to its likeness to seakale, and most people like it extremely. Every day during the long season wagon-loads of *witloof*—to give the chicory its Flemish name—leave Brussels by road or rail; and some idea of the business done in this root, which is almost ignored by English market-gardeners, may be realised when it is known that, besides the enormous quantity consumed in the city and neighbourhood, from ten thousand to twenty thousand kilos is about the weight despatched daily.

Some of the young chicory-growers are making the experiment of heating the beds with hot-water pipes instead of by the old system. The new idea claims to have the advantage of economy, while the heat can be regulated; and as the plants are grown in long sheds, they are better protected against violent wind-storms or excessive cold. The installation in use is of the most simple kind, being only four iron pipes connected with a boiler and furnace, and running under the long beds of earth. The heat being evenly distributed, the plan is said to work admirably and to produce splendid plants; and as stable refuse is extremely dear in Brussels in winter, when the chicory-farmers most need it—as much as fifty francs (two pounds) being asked for a small cartload—the new system is likely to supersede the old, especially as the rainwater occasionally, even under the best management, filters through the stable refuse and discolours and spoils the plants for market.

The patriotic Englishman naturally wonders, on learning of the large trade done in Belgium by cultivating a vegetable that appears to give excellent results, why the market-gardeners in his own country do not attempt to raise chicory for the table. Many of them, perhaps, have not considered the matter, and some may have heard that for an unexplained reason chicory in this form is said not to be cultivable elsewhere; and the Bruxellois declare that even with their own growers in charge the plant will not give the same generous response as in its native land. Many such experiments have been made in France; but the bitter taste which is one of the characteristics of the chicory, and which connoisseurs enjoy, was quite lost, and only an insipid vegetable produced.

Even the chicory-plant has not escaped the microbe that haunts us all, waking or sleeping; and if grown too long in the same soil, develops a rotting disease of the roots. Become a lady of fashion (for in French it is '*la chicoree*') she, like the rest of her sex, requires that frequent change of surroundings which is the result of a very high state of cultivation.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO IRELAND.—(Continued.)

Nor should the last words of the preface in Muirchu maccu Machtheni's life of Patrick (*dictante Aiduo Slebtiensis civitatis episcopo*) be adduced as evidence of the existence of other than monastic bishops. There was no town of Slebte in Ireland. The Irish monasteries were large settlements of many small buildings, the whole surrounded by wall and rampart. *Civitas* (Ir. *cathair*) is a current term in Ireland for a monastery, both in the Annals and in the Lives of Saints. In the above passage, Aed is merely denoted as the *monastic bishop* of Slebte, and all the annals which record his death add "anchorite of Slebte." *The very nature and development of the sixth-century Irish Church are an emphatic protest against the legend which grew up in the following century concerning the introduction of Christianity into Ireland.*

Is it possible to substitute for this unhistoric legend a hypothesis which shall better satisfy the known conditions of the problem? Let us remember that in clear weather Ireland can be seen from numerous points on the

DUNLOPS.

SUPPORT

IRISH INDUSTRIES.

Are doing all that experience can suggest, and capital can command, to place before the Irish People the nicest range of Irish Novelties ever exhibited, and admittedly they have been eminently successful.

SUITS TO MEASURE, from 35s. - - - TROUSERS TO MEASURE, from 9s. 6d
Style, Durability, and Fit Guaranteed.

**Irish Tweed Specialists,
5 PARLIAMENT STREET, DUBLIN,**