

**W. HAMILTON
GIBSON**



**OUR EDIBLE
TOADSTOOLS AND
MUSHROOMS AND HOW
TO DISTINGUISH THEM**

**W. HAMILTON
GIBSON**



**OUR EDIBLE
TOADSTOOLS AND
MUSHROOMS AND HOW
TO DISTINGUISH THEM**

W. Hamilton Gibson

Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms and How to Distinguish Them

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Quinn Theodore

EAN 8596547042495

Edited and published by DigiCat, 2022



Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Historical Context](#)

[Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms and How to Distinguish Them](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Reflection](#)

[Memorable Quotes](#)

[Notes](#)

Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

Between the bright allure of the table and the shadowed ambiguity of the forest floor, *Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms and How to Distinguish Them* insists that the journey from curiosity to cuisine must be guided by disciplined observation, so that desire yields to knowledge and pleasure is earned by caution; under a naturalist's calm temperament and a teacher's steady method, the book frames every specimen as a problem to be solved rather than a prize to be seized, making safety the precondition of taste and elevating the simple act of gathering into a respectful study of form, habitat, season, and difference.

Composed in the late nineteenth century United States, this volume belongs to the popular natural history and field-guide tradition, presenting practical instruction for lay readers amid the expanding public appetite for scientific knowledge. Gibson, an American naturalist and writer, situates his counsel in familiar woods, pastures, and orchard edges, the everyday landscapes where edible fungi appear after rain. Rather than a technical monograph, the work functions as an approachable handbook grounded in observation, crafted for readers who might carry its lessons to the hedgerow or kitchen table, where careful identification promises a wholesome meal and careless guessing can invite harm.

The premise is straightforward: to acquaint the reader with a selection of edible mushrooms and to explain, with equal emphasis, how to avoid their hazardous counterparts. The

voice is patient and companionable, attentive to detail without pedantry, and the tone blends encouragement with firm caution. Descriptions proceed systematically, noting shape, color, context, and characteristic habits, and are reinforced by comparisons that fix distinguishing marks in memory. The narrative movement is less a linear story than a guided walk, pausing at each specimen to model what to look for and what to doubt, so that confidence accrues from method rather than bravado.

At its core the book advances an ethic of attention, arguing by example that accurate seeing is a moral as well as practical safeguard. It challenges folk-lore shortcuts and encourages readers to test claims against observable structure and habitat, cultivating a habit of measured skepticism. Safety is never an afterthought; rules are framed not to alarm but to discipline perception, so that the novice learns to linger on gills, ring, volva, texture, and growth site before drawing conclusions. Beyond the table, the work celebrates a respectful intimacy with the living world, where knowledge arises from patient contact rather than haste.

For contemporary readers, the book's counsel remains pertinent amid renewed interest in foraging, local foods, and citizen science. Its method—a calm, criteria-based approach that privileges distinctive marks over excitement or rumor—offers a durable template for safe practice in the field. Equally, it models how amateurs can participate responsibly in natural history, balancing enthusiasm with restraint and respect for habitats. Even where modern taxonomy has advanced, the habits of careful comparison, note-taking, and humility it promotes translate readily to current guides and apps, reminding us that technology supplements but does not replace disciplined observation and a conservative approach to what we bring home.

The reading experience is notably tactile, full of cues that train the eye and hand to register pattern, contrast, and context. Gibson lingers on the ordinary—where a cap breaks, how a stem meets the soil, what odors or stains suggest—and builds mnemonic links that help novices retain distinctions without jargon. His pacing evokes a quiet ramble, attentive to weather and season, yet always circling back to first principles before drawing any inference. That combination of calm pedagogy and sensory precision makes the book both instructive and pleasurable, an invitation to cultivate steadiness in a realm where impatience can carry real consequence.

Read today, this work stands as both a historical artifact of American natural history and a living primer in the ethics of attention. It equips readers to approach the fungal world with curiosity tempered by care, urging a pace that honors complexity and a standard of proof suited to the stakes. In doing so, it aligns appetite with responsibility, turning identification into a civic skill as much as a culinary one. Whether taken into the field or read at home, its steady counsel offers what enduring guides always provide: a method, a mindset, and a durable confidence underwritten by respect for nature's particulars.

Synopsis

[Table of Contents](#)

In this late-nineteenth-century field manual, American naturalist and illustrator W. Hamilton Gibson sets out to make wild mushrooms both approachable and safe for general readers. *Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms and How to Distinguish Them* presents a carefully chosen group of native edible kinds and explains how to recognize them without ambiguity. Gibson's dual emphasis on clarity and caution shapes the book's structure: lucid descriptions are paired with detailed drawings made by the author. The volume's stated aim is practical—enabling confident identification in the field—yet it is also corrective, challenging lingering cultural suspicion of fungi by replacing folklore with observable, repeatable criteria.

He begins with an accessible overview of fungal biology and form, distinguishing mushrooms from flowering plants and anchoring identification in structure rather than anecdote. Readers are introduced to the parts of the fruiting body, the ways spores are borne and released, and the diversity of surfaces—gills, pores, and other textures—that define major groups. Habitat, substrate, and season are framed as essential context, not afterthoughts. Gibson links these fundamentals to a simple taxonomy usable by nonspecialists, stressing that consistent, external characters are more reliable than variable traits like size alone. This primer sets the methodical tone that governs the pages that follow.

With foundations laid, the book sets out practical rules for distinguishing edible from dangerous species, always from observable evidence. The approach is incremental: examine the cap and spore-bearing surface, note color and firmness changes with age, study the stalk and its base, and consider where and when the specimen appears. Recurrent warnings underscore that no single character is sufficient and that uncertainty warrants abstention. Folkloric tests and kitchen superstitions are dismissed as unsafe. By teaching readers to assemble a constellation of traits rather than rely on shortcuts, Gibson offers a repeatable framework designed to minimize avoidable error.

Against this methodological backdrop, Gibson profiles a selection of edible mushrooms whose distinctive features make them suitable for novices. Each account foregrounds key marks that separate a species from its common look-alikes, reinforced by plates that capture posture, surface, and proportion. Notes on typical habitats and seasons accompany the portraits, encouraging readers to connect recognition with place and time. Discussions of texture and culinary suitability are present but subordinate to identification, reflecting the book's safety-first ethos. The cumulative effect is to build a small, dependable repertoire rather than an exhaustive catalog, prioritizing certainty over breadth.

Complementing the edible roster, the author devotes sustained attention to poisonous and suspect forms, highlighting patterns that mislead the unwary. Certain families recur as cautionary examples, and Gibson emphasizes base-of-stem structures, transitions in the spore-bearing surface, and other decisive details that can be overlooked in a hurried glance. He maps typical confusions between edible and harmful kinds, clarifying where resemblance ends and what must be verified before

any consumption. Throughout, the tone remains firm but instructive: the pleasures of foraging are real, yet they depend upon disciplined observation and a willingness to reject ambiguous specimens.

Practical fieldcraft rounds out the manual. Readers are advised on how to collect without obscuring diagnostic features, how to keep different finds separate until identified, and how to assess condition and maturity. Basic preparation guidance accompanies the entries, emphasizing cleanliness and appropriate cooking so that texture and flavor are preserved without masking warning signs during identification. Gibson stresses habit-building—taking careful note of locations, associated trees, and seasonal timing—so that confidence grows from experience rather than chance. The overall message pairs curiosity with method, encouraging steady progress while maintaining conservative limits.

The book closes by returning to its broader cultural project: cultivating a thoughtful appreciation for native mushrooms grounded in evidence and restraint. By uniting precise illustration with a clear, teachable method, Gibson supplies an accessible pathway for newcomers and a touchstone for more experienced amateurs. Its lasting resonance lies less in sheer coverage than in the model it sets for observing, comparing, and concluding only when the facts are sufficient. In presenting a small canon of unmistakable edibles alongside unwavering cautions, the work contributes a durable template for safe foraging and for the everyday practice of natural history.

Historical Context

[Table of Contents](#)

Published in New York by Harper & Brothers in 1895, *Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms and How to Distinguish Them* emerged from the late Victorian American enthusiasm for accessible natural history. Its author, William Hamilton Gibson (1850–1896), was a widely read illustrator-naturalist whose essays and engravings appeared in Harper’s periodicals. The book belongs to a wave of American field manuals that paired plain language with precise images to guide lay observers. Advances in wood engraving and chromolithography made such identification works both reliable and attractive, and publishers in New York and Boston marketed them to a growing, educated middle-class readership.

American mycology was consolidating in the 1870s–1890s through state and academic institutions. In Albany, New York State Botanist Charles Horton Peck issued detailed annual reports on fungi, shaping regional knowledge and nomenclature. At Harvard, William Gilson Farlow advanced cryptogamic botany and trained specialists who would professionalize the field. The Torrey Botanical Club, founded in 1867, fostered correspondence, collecting, and publication through its *Bulletin*. The New York Botanical Garden, chartered in 1891, signaled a new era of large, public research herbaria. Gibson’s manual stands amid this maturing infrastructure, translating specialist insights for an audience beyond laboratories and societies.

Late nineteenth-century Americans read frequent newspaper notices of “toadstool poisoning,” and public health authorities increasingly urged caution in wild-food gathering. As germ theory and toxicology gained traction, municipalities created health boards and universities expanded chemistry and medical instruction, encouraging scientific standards in everyday life. Yet culinary curiosity also grew, spurred by immigrant traditions that treated mushrooms as ordinary fare. Gibson’s emphasis on distinguishing edible species from deadly *Amanitas* answered this tension, offering clear diagnostic traits, warnings about look-alikes, and guidance on preparation—an approach consistent with the era’s effort to prevent household tragedies through practical, verified information.

The agricultural sciences expanded rapidly after the Morrill Act (1862) and the Hatch Act (1887) funded land-grant colleges and experiment stations. Within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Division of Vegetable Pathology established in 1890 advanced fungal research related to crops and diseases. Popular and official bulletins on mushroom culture began appearing in the 1890s, and commercial production in Pennsylvania gathered momentum; by 1896, Kennett Square growers such as William Swayne adapted European methods for *Agaricus* cultivation. Gibson’s book arrived as both foraging and cultivation were becoming organized practices, framing fungi as legitimate foods rather than purely botanical curiosities.

Concurrently, a burgeoning nature-study ethos encouraged city and suburban readers to explore nearby woods and meadows. Parks and preserves created since the 1850s supplied accessible terrain, while organizations like the Appalachian Mountain Club (1876) popularized field excursions. Educators associated with land-grant colleges

and experiment stations promoted direct observation as a civic and moral good. That culture favored portable, image-rich guides written in an instructive but conversational style. Gibson, already celebrated for Pastoral Days and other illustrated essays, adapted his pedagogy to fungi, arranging practical keys and field notes that a lay collector could use on a Sunday ramble or school outing.

Taxonomically, the book participates in a transatlantic framework shaped by Elias Magnus Fries and refined by nineteenth-century British and American authors. English mycologist M. C. Cooke produced accessible manuals on edible and poisonous mushrooms, and American botanists exchanged specimens and names through clubs and herbaria. Latin binomials, spore-print characters, and macroscopic field marks—cap, gills, ring, volva—constituted a shared descriptive vocabulary. Gibson's carefully labeled plates and attention to diagnostic structures made contemporary taxonomic practice intelligible to general readers, even as professional systematics was beginning to incorporate microscopy and, soon after, more formal rules of nomenclature.

Harper & Brothers excelled at illustrated nonfiction, and Gibson's training in wood engraving and pen-and-ink drawing served the house style. The 1890s saw widespread adoption of halftone photoengraving alongside chromolithographic plates, allowing detailed textures and tonal shading in affordable books. Visual precision was essential in mycology, where small distinctions carry high stakes. The volume's combination of instructive prose and exacting plates fit middle-class tastes for tasteful, edifying objects—works to read, display, and consult. In that milieu, identification manuals were not merely reference tools but emblems of cultured engagement with the natural world.

Appearing just a year before Gibson's death in 1896, the book condenses a career devoted to making field science legible to non-specialists. It channels the Progressive impulse toward public instruction and safety, acknowledges the authority of emerging botanical institutions, and answers the American ambivalence toward wild mushrooms with clarity rather than alarm. By coupling trustworthy taxonomy with culinary pragmatics, the volume exemplifies late nineteenth-century confidence that careful observation could domesticate risk. Its enduring appeal lies in that synthesis: a work that mirrors its era's blend of scientific professionalization and citizen naturalist enthusiasm.

OUR EDIBLE TOADSTOOLS AND MUSHROOMS AND HOW TO DISTINGUISH THEM

[Main Table of Contents](#)

Introduction

POPULAR TESTS REFUTED

"A POISONOUS MUSHROOM"

RULES FOR THE VENTURESOME

MUSHROOM POISONING

The Deadly Amanita

THE POISONOUS FLY-MUSHROOM

THE POISONOUS ALKALOID

Agarics

CLASSIFICATION OF FUNGI

AGARICINI

EDIBLE AGARICS

MEADOW MUSHROOM

HORSE-MUSHROOM

ST. GEORGE'S MUSHROOM

TRUE FAIRY-RING CHAMPIGNON

FALSE OR POISON CHAMPIGNON

THE PASTURE MUSHROOM

THE RUSSULA GROUP

THE GREEN RUSSULA

PURPLE RUSSULA

YELLOW-GILLED RUSSULA

VARIOUS-GILLED RUSSULA

POISONOUS OR EMETIC MUSHROOM

THE OYSTER MUSHROOM

THE ELM MUSHROOM

SHAGGY-MANE MUSHROOM

INKY MUSHROOM

MILKY MUSHROOM

[THE CHANTARELLE](#)

[Polyporei](#)

[THE BOLETI](#)

[EDIBLE TUBE MUSHROOM](#)

[ROUGH-STEMMED BOLETUS](#)

[THE YELLOW-CRACKED BOLETUS](#)

[YELLOW-FLESHED BOLETUS](#)

[CONE-LIKE BOLETUS](#)

[SUSPICIOUS BOLETI](#)

[THE VEGETABLE BEEFSTEAK](#)

[THE SULPHUROUS POLYPORUS](#)

[Miscellaneous Fungi](#)

[THE HEDGEHOG MUSHROOM](#)

[THE MEDUSA HYDNUM](#)

[THE CORAL OR CLUB FUNGUS](#)

[THE MOREL](#)

[HELVELLA](#)

[PUFF-BALLS](#)

[Mushroom Spore-prints](#)

[Recipes](#)

[1 Mushroom Soup](#)

[2 Purée of Mushrooms](#)

[3 Mushroom Stew](#)

[4 Broiled Mushrooms on Toast](#)

[5 Mushrooms à la Provençal](#)

[6 Mushrooms à la Crème](#)

[7 Mushroom Ragoût](#)

[8 Stewed Mushrooms on Toast](#)

[9 Champignon](#)

[10 Chantarelle Stew](#)

[11 Hydnum Stew](#)

[12 Roast Mushrooms](#)

[13 Baked Russula](#)

[14 Baked Procerus](#)

[15 Cottagers' Procerus Pie](#)

[16 Baked Gambosus](#)

[17 Fried Mushrooms on Toast](#)

[18 Mushrooms with Bacon](#)

[19 Mushrooms en Caisse](#)

[20 Hungarian Soup of Boleti](#)

[21 Boletus Fritters](#)

[22 Beefsteak Mushroom](#)

[23 The Oyster Mushroom](#)

[24 Polyporus Stew](#)

[25 Ragoût of Morels or Helvella](#)

[26 Stuffed Morels](#)

[27 Morelles à la Italienne](#)

[28 Clavaria Stew](#)

[29 Fried Clavaria](#)

[30 Puff-ball Fritters, Omelettes, Sweetbreads, and Soufflé](#)

[31 Mushroom Salad](#)

[32 Pickled Mushrooms](#)

[33 Mushroom Catsup](#)

[34 Dried Mushrooms](#)

[Menu](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[AMERICAN](#)

[ENGLISH](#)

FRENCH
INDEX

[Table of Contents](#)



A prominent botanical authority connected with one of our universities, upon learning of my intention of perpetrating a popular work on our edible mushrooms and toadstools, was inclined to take issue with me on the wisdom of such publication, giving as his reasons that, owing to the extreme difficulty of imparting exact scientific knowledge to the "general reader," such a work, in its presumably imperfect interpretation by the very individuals it is intended to benefit, would only result, in many instances, in supplanting the popular wholesome distrust of all mushrooms with a rash over-confidence which would tend to increase the labors of the family physician and the coroner. And, to a certain extent, in its appreciation of the difficulty of imparting exact science to the lay mind, his criticism was entirely reasonable, and would certainly apply to any treatise on edible mushrooms for popular circulation which contemplated a too extensive field, involving subtle botanical analysis and nice differentiation between species.

Identification of fatal species

But when we realize the fact—now generally conceded—that most of the fatalities consequent upon mushroom-eating are directly traceable to one particular tempting group of fungi, and that this group is moreover so distinctly marked that a *tyro*^[1] could *learn* to distinguish it, might not such a popular work, in its emphasis by careful portraiture and pictorial analysis of this deadly genus—placarding it so clearly and unmistakably as to make it readily recognizable—might not such a work, to that extent at least, accomplish a public service?

Conservative mycology

Moreover, even the most conservative mycologist will certainly admit that out of the hundred and fifty of our admittedly esculent species of fungi there might be segregated a few which bear such conspicuous characters of outward form and other unique individual features—such as color of spores, gills, and tubes, taste, odor, surface character, color of milky juice, etc.—as to render them easily recognizable even by the "general reader."

It is in the positive, affirmative assumption of these premises that the present work is prepared, comprising as it does a selection of a score or more, as it were, self-placarded esculent species of fungi, while putting the reader safely on guard against the fatal species and a few other more or less poisonous or suspicious varieties which remote possibility might confound with them.

Popular interest in mushrooms

Since the publication of a recent magazine article on this topic, and which became the basis of the present elaboration, I have been favored with a numerous and almost continuous correspondence upon mushrooms, including letters from every State in the Union, to say

nothing of Canada and New Mexico, evincing the widespread interest in the fungus from the gustatory point of view. The cautious tone of most of these letters, in the main from neophyte mycologists, is gratifying in its demonstration of the wisdom of my position in this volume, or, as one of my correspondents puts it, "the frightening of one to death at the outset while extending an invitation to the feast[1q]." "Death was often a consequence of toadstool eating," my friend continued, "but I never before realized that it was a *certain* result with *any* particular mushroom, and to the extent of this information I am profoundly thankful."

Caution at the threshold

While, then, from the point of view of desired popularity of my book, the grim greeting of a death's-head upon the frontispiece might be considered as something of a handicap, the author confesses that this attitude is the result of "malice prepense" and deliberation, realizing that he is not offering to the "lay public," for mere intellectual profit, this scientific analysis of certain fungus species. Were this alone the *raison d'être* or the logical outcome of the work—mere *identification* of edible and poisonous species—the grewsome symbol which is so conspicuous on two of my pages might have been spared. But when it is remembered that with the selected list of esculent mushrooms herein offered is implied also an invitation and a recommendation to the feast thereof, with the author as the host—that the digestive functions of his confiding friends or guests are to be made the final arbiters of the correctness of his botanical identification—the ban of bane may as well be pronounced at the threshold. Let the too eager epicurean be "scared to death at the outset," on the general principle *pro bono publico*, and to the conciliation of the author's conscience.

To correspondents

The oft-repeated queries of other correspondents suggest the wisdom of a clearer definition of the limitations of the present work. Several individuals have written in surprise of their discovery of a new toadstool which I "did not include in my pictured magazine list," with accompaniment of more or less inadequate description and somewhat enigmatical sketches, and desiring the name of the species and judgment upon its esculent qualities. Such correspondence is a pleasing tribute to an author, and is herewith gratefully acknowledged as to the past and, with some mental reservations, welcomed as to the future. The number of these communications—occasionally several in a day, and with consequent rapid accumulation—renders it absolutely impossible for a busy man to give them the prompt personal attention which courtesy would dictate. My "mushroom" pigeon-hole, therefore, is still plethoric with the unhonored correspondence of many weeks; and inasmuch as the continual accession more than balances the number of my responses, a fulfilment of my obligations in this direction seems hopeless in contemplation. I would therefore beg the indulgence of such of my friends as have awaited in vain for my reply to their kind communications, even though the future should bring no tidings from me. All of these letters have been received, and are herewith acknowledged: many of them, too, if I may be pardoned what would seem to be a most ungracious comment, for which the "dead-letter" office would have been the more appropriate destination.

Consider the recipient

I refer to the correspondence "with accompanying specimens," the letter occasionally enclosed in the same box with the said specimens, which, upon its arrival, arouses a protest from the local postal authorities, and calls for a liberal use of disinfectants—a disreputable-looking parcel, which, indeed, would appear more consistently referable to the health-board than to the mycologist. So frequent did this

embarrassing episode become that it finally necessitated the establishment of a morgue for the benefit of my mushroom correspondents, or rather for their "specimens," usually accompanied with the queries, "What is the name of this mushroom? Is it edible?" I have been obliged to write to several of my friends that identification of the remains was impossible, that the remnant was more interesting entomologically than botanically, and begging that in the future all such similar tokens shall be forwarded in alcohol or packed in ice.

Rapid decay

"First impressions are lasting" and "a word to the wise is sufficient." I would suggest that correspondents hereafter consider the hazard of an introduction under such questionable auspices. Most species of mushrooms are extremely perishable, and their "animal" character, chemically considered, and their tendency to rapid decomposition, render them unfit for transportation for any distance, unless hermetically sealed, or their decay otherwise anticipated.

In the possibility of a continuance of this correspondence, consequent upon the publication of this present book, the writer, in order to forefend a presumably generous proportion of such correspondence, would here emphasize the fact that he is by no means the authority on mycology, or the science of fungi, which the attitude of his inquiring friends would imply. Indeed, his knowledge of species is quite limited. An early fascination, it is true, was humored with considerable zeal to the accumulation of a portfolio of water-colors and other drawings of various fungi—microscopic, curious, edible, and poisonous—and this collection has been subsequently added to at intervals during his regular professional work.

More than one of the originals of the accompanying colored plates have been hidden in this portfolio for over twenty years, and a larger number for ten or fifteen years, awaiting the further accumulation of that knowledge and experience, especially with reference to the edibility of species, which should warrant the utterance of the long-contemplated book.

Number of mushroom species

The reader will therefore kindly remember that out of the approximate 1000 odd species of fungi entitled by their dimensions to the dignity of "toadstools" or "mushrooms"—after separating the 2000 moulds, mildews, rusts, smuts, blights, yeasts, "mother," and other microscopic species—and out of the 150 recommended edible species, the present work includes only about thirty. This selection has *direct reference to popular utility*, only such species having been included as offer some striking or other individual peculiarity by which they may be simply identified, even without so-called scientific knowledge.

The addition of color to the present list enables its extension somewhat beyond the scope of a series printed only in black and white, as in the distinction of mere form alone an uncolored drawing of a certain species might serve to the popular eye as a common portrait of a number of allied species, possibly including a poisonous variety.

Mycology and mycophagy

Need of a practical work

While the study of "fungi" has a host of devotees, the mysteries which involve the origin of life in this great order of the *cryptogamia* having had fascinating attractions to microscopical students and specialists, the study of *economic mycology* has been almost without a champion in the United States. Thus we have many learned treatises on

13q "None of the group is accounted poisonous, though some of them are too tough to be acceptable as food."

14q "Dried mushrooms"

15q "A detailed discrimination of the Puff-balls is hardly necessary here, and I will therefore omit it."

16q "A number of species of the Puff-ball, and none of them is known to be poisonous."

17q "Every fresh species experimented with will yield its surprise in the markings and color of the prints."

18q "Care should be taken that the spice is not so abundant as to overpower the true flavor of the mushrooms."

Notes

[Table of Contents](#)

[1](#) An old-fashioned term meaning a novice or beginner; originally from Latin 'tiro' (a recruit) and commonly used in 19th-century English to denote an inexperienced person.

[2](#) Likely refers to Dr. Charles David Badham (1805–c.1857), a 19th-century British physician and writer who published essays and observations on fungi and their culinary use; he was commonly cited in popular mycological writing of that era.

[3](#) An older classification referring to a white Amanita species usually equated with Amanita verna or closely related white Amanitas; these 'white Amanitas' are historically noted as highly poisonous and responsible for fatal mushroom poisonings.

[4](#) Tertullian (c. 155–c. 240 AD) was an early Christian Latin author and apologetist whose writings—often moral and theological—are sometimes quoted for proverbial or natural-history remarks dating from late antiquity.

[5](#) A French culinary term meaning roughly “mushroom hash” or a mushroom ragout; it denotes a prepared dish in which mushrooms are stewed or chopped and mixed with other ingredients for serving.

[6](#) Refers to Captain Charles McIlvaine, a late 19th-century American authority on edible fungi who published widely on mushroom identification and culinary use and is frequently cited in period mycological literature.

7 The botanical name for deadly nightshade, a historically known poisonous plant that contains the alkaloid atropine, which has both toxic and medicinal properties.

8 Miles Joseph Berkeley (1803–1889) was an English clergyman and pioneering mycologist whose publications and species descriptions helped establish modern British fungal taxonomy.

9 The volva is the cup- or sac-like structure at the base of some mushrooms, a remnant of the universal veil, and is a key identifying feature of many *Amanita* species.

10 Fly-agaric is the common name for *Amanita muscaria*, a conspicuous red-and-white mushroom that contains toxic and psychoactive compounds (notably ibotenic acid and muscimol) and has a long ethnographic record in northern Eurasia.

11 A French word for 'mushroom' historically used in English to denote the common edible market mushrooms (the so-called 'true champignon'), i.e., the familiar *Agaricus*-type fungi eaten in Europe.

12 A French common name for the large parasol mushroom (the species here called *Agaricus procerus*), typically applied to *Macrolepiota procera* or similar parasol *Agarics* in continental Europe.

13 A 19th-century American army officer and amateur mycologist noted for his practical experiments and writings on edible fungi; his published tastes and tests influenced popular opinions about which mushrooms are safe to eat.

14 Delmonico's was a famous upscale New York City restaurant and dining house popular in the 19th century,

known for introducing luxury continental dining to American patrons.

15 'Corrosive sublimate' is an older name for mercury(II) chloride, historically used as a disinfectant and preservative; it is highly toxic and is no longer used for food or ink preservation.

16 In mycology, the 'hymenium' is the spore-bearing tissue layer of a fungus (the surface of gills, pores, ridges, or teeth) from which spores are produced and released.

17 An old term for the bluish-green phosphorescent glow produced by some decaying wood and certain fungi; the phenomenon is biological bioluminescence caused by enzymes in fungal and bacterial decay organisms lighting up damp wood.

18 The scientific name for the 'beefsteak' or 'oak/chestnut tongue' fungus, a fleshy, edible polypore that grows on living or dead oaks and chestnuts and is noted for its meat-like, reddish flesh.

19 Plural of ascus; sac-like microscopic structures in Ascomycete fungi (the group including morels) that typically enclose the spores — often about eight per ascus in many species.

20 Common name for edible species in the genus *Morchella* (here cited as *Morchella esculenta*), a widely prized spring mushroom with a honeycomb-like, pitted cap and a long history of culinary use in Europe and North America.

21 A genus of ascomycete fungi (including *Helvella crispa*) with irregular, often saddle-shaped or lobed caps; some species are eaten like morels, but modern sources advise