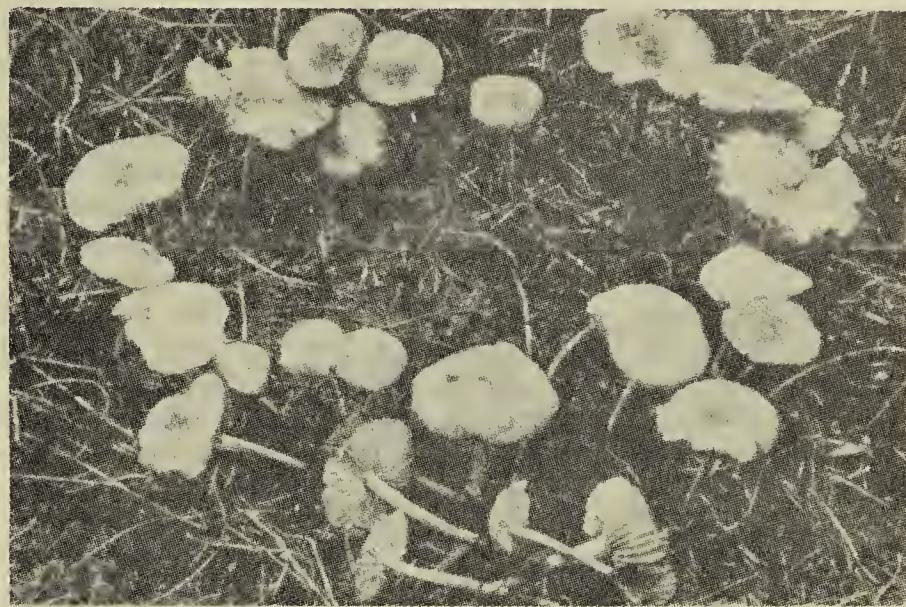


The Mystery of the Fairy Ring

RECENTLY we have had several enquiries as to why certain mushrooms grow in the ring in the meadow. The most recent was from Mr. Martinoviski of Gerald, Sask. "I am curious to know," he writes, "why a small variety of mushrooms grow in perfect circles. Some of the circles among the grass are larger than others, but in the inside there is always a darker green than the surrounding grass."

So regular and geometrical are these rings that it is not surprising that the superstitious and ignorant have thought they were planted by fairies. Science, however, has taught us better. The rings originate from a single fungus, which takes so much nourishment from the ground immediately round it as to render the soil unsuitable for further reproduction of fungus. The spawn, however, spreads, and in the second year a crop of these little mushrooms is produced in a circle. Again the same thing happens, and so the circle is an ever widening one.

Another feature of the fairy ring that has added to the superstitious



—Photo by Hugh M. Halliday
awe with which it is regarded is the exceptional greenness of the grass just inside the circle. This is due to the fact that the dead fungi have manured the soil and made it particularly suited to grass-growing. It is richer in this respect than the soil outside the ring.

The Fairy Ring Mushroom (*Marsmius oreades* Fr.) is an edible variety. It is said to be a good species to dry for winter use. The color of these mushrooms varies from brownish to tan, buff, or may fade to nearly white. The stem is one to three inches long and one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch thick.

A Good Turn

Mrs. A. Kryski, Yorkton

The Robins had returned. It was the nesting season. This particular morning, I happened to be looking out the kitchen window at the garden. I saw a Robin walking up and down and a short distance from him a Grackle was doing the same. It looked strange, for as a rule these birds are not too friendly. I decided to investigate. There I found a mother Robin snared in a piece of string I had used the summer before to tie up some plants. Evidently the Robin had tried to get the bit of string for her nest and had gotten the loop over her head and was not able to get away. Her

mate seeing her plight had kept constant watch. I released the bird and she flew to her mate in the tree.

Willows of Saskatchewan

Unfortunately the Key to the "Willows of Saskatchewan" which appeared in our last issue, was printed in such a way, without marginal indentations, as to render it useless. We are very sorry that this happened.

At his own expense, Mr. August J. Breitung, the author, has had the Key reprinted. A copy of this valuable reference is inserted in this issue.