

quite a number of them blossomed,—many of the tubers were as large as the medium size of the parent tubers; and one plant produced a cluster of balls—an event I did not expect until the next planting. I may here observe that on looking over the fields on which I have planted the parent stock of those seedlings, when cut into sets, every plant, almost without exception, blossoms; but all do not produce seed; but when a single large potato is planted in a hill without being cut, they invariably produced seed. When a large potato, containing 15 or 20 eyes is cut into as many sets, every eye produces a plant; but when a large potato, containing as many eyes as the one that was cut, is planted whole, I have seldom found, that more than three or four eyes put up stalks; these grow much more vigorously, and of course more capable of performing all the natural functions of the plant. It may be thought economy and wisdom to get twenty plants instead of four; but if we are violating an organic law in cutting the potato to pieces, before planting, and by that means rendering it incapable of continuing its species—which I think I see good reason to believe we have been doing—we may find after all that our economy is but waste, and our wisdom folly.

It was found by experience, in Scotland, that out of the same potato it was possible to take sets that will, and others that will not produce the curl. I saw several fields last season that were completely destroyed by this disease. The sets taken from the end of the tuber nearest to the cord by which it is fastened to the plant would produce the curl, while those taken from the top of the tuber would be free from the disease. When planted whole the eyes nearest the cord, or root end of the tuber remain dormant. The three or four stalks that grow from the top of the tuber, which always start first, rob the germs at the other end of the element necessary to start them into active life—the stronger germs having appropriated all the nutriment the tuber contained to themselves.

In the spring of 1865 I sowed seed saved from the crop of 1864; the balls were dried in the fall to keep through winter. They were steeped in water until the pulp became soft like jelly; the seeds were washed out, dried, and sown on the 24th of May. They came up, and produced a crop of small potatoes. On a portion of a field on which potatoes grew in 1864, and

on which carrots were sowed in 1865, I observed that potato seed had come up; I told the hands that thinned the carrots not to disturb the growth of any of the seedlings that were in the rows with the carrots. I gathered up those and showed them at the Provincial Exhibition, in September last, along with some of the parent stock, and seedlings of the second year, as also a quantity of seed balls. I was rather disappointed that the judges of the root crops did not notice them in their report—(I was perhaps silly in thinking they deserved attention more than any thing presented there)—convinced as I am that it is only by raising them in the natural way, that is, from the seed, that the potato can be regenerated and continued in cultivation for any great length of time, without weakening and breaking down its natural constitution.

History of the Potato Plant.

It would be interesting and instructive to know what is the natural age of the potato plant. It is evident that it is not intended to live for ever; if so, there was no necessity for the seed. It may be said they have only been recently brought into cultivation, and appears to have been introduced into almost every civilized country in Europe and America about the same time, —having been treated almost universally in the same way; disease and death also came upon them at the same time and in the same way. If there had been no regeneration by the seed, the cultivated varieties might have been, and certainly will become extinct.

It appears that the name of the plant was known in Scotland in 1683, and perhaps planted in some of the gardens about Edinburgh as a curiosity. It was not made the object of useful culture, among the Scotch, until the year 1728: and they were then indebted to a cottager for first attempting its culture. This man's name was Thomas Prentice, a day laborer, living near Tilisyth, in Stirlingshire, and drawing his subsistence partly from his little plot of ground. This crop proved very valuable, and was almost instantly in demand for the propagation of other crops, first, among the cottagers, and then among the farmers. Prentice continued to cultivate this root very carefully, and to supply his neighbours with the produce of his crop. In a few years he found himself in possession of what he considered a fortune. He sank his capital in an annuity at good interest, upon which he lived independently