

## POTATOES—MOST VALUABLE IN NEW YORK MARKET.

We condense from an interesting article in the *New York Weekly Tribune*, the following remarks on the potatoe. The varieties most largely cultivated in the State of New York, by market gardeners, are named and described. As the season for planting early varieties is near at hand, and as so many of the common varieties have failed to reward the cultivator, we advise our readers to supply themselves with the most promising of the new varieties within their reach. We shall be able to spare a few bushels of the new varieties which we have grown for three seasons. Last year they yielded well, and were free from rot, while all the common varieties in the same field were badly affected. Their qualities as table potatoes are not yet fully known, as new varieties generally improve in that respect by cultivation. They are white-fleshed, prolific, good-shape, fair size, hardy, and so far, free from rot. New varieties possessing these qualities should not be rejected, if not so agreeable in flavour as pink-eyes and cups, for a few seasons.

## ORIGIN OF THE POTATO.

Historically, we are told that this most important of all vegetables originated in South America, where it grows wild, and where it was first discovered by Europeans, probably within the limits of the torrid zone.

It was introduced into Europe by Sir Walter Raleigh about the year 1586, and its culture was confined to the gardens of the nobility of England during the succeeding century. In 1613, the price of potatoes is stated, in the household expenses of Queen Anne, at 1s. per pound.

Sir Walter Raleigh introduced potatoes into Ireland in 1610.\* Their culture, as a field crop, commenced in Scotland in 1728.

English writers estimate that twice as much food is produced from an acre of potatoes as from an acre of wheat. Its character is anomalous.

No theory of climate, soil or culture can as yet explain the phenomena of its growth, or the nature and cause of the disease, which of late years has reduced it from the most certain to the most uncertain of crops.

Though a native of the torrid zone, it grows most luxuriantly in the Northern States and British Provinces of this continent, while in Ireland its culture attained the highest relative importance. In Sweden it is cultivated as far north as the sixty-fourth degree.

## VARIETIES.

The varieties are innumerable and ever-changing. Whether different sorts may be crossed or mixed by contiguous planting or not, is an open question.

New varieties are constantly obtained from the seed-balls of the vine, which usually have little resemblance to the parent root, and mature or attain full size about the third year. Very few varieties ever attain a standard character, and enterprising cultivators are constantly on the alert for something new.

Every section and almost every neighbourhood must rely upon its own experience; nothing can be taken on trust or from distant report.

Some varieties are improved in quality and yield by change of climate or locality; others degenerate from the same cause. Some sorts become acclimated at once, and attain a standard character in new locations; others flourish well at first, but require a yearly renewal of seed from the parent soil; and a knowledge of these peculiar characteristics is attained only by experiment.

We have noticed some facts, which we offer for the benefit of cultivators. As a general rule, yellow potatoes are rank and strong—white ones, good-flavoured.

The *Mercer* has been for many years the standard variety, having continued to succeed longer and attained a wider culture than any other. It is said to have originated in Pennsylvania