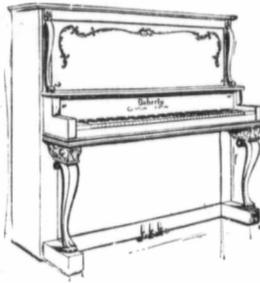


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or faces in existence. The population of the world living at any moment, be it remembered, amounts to a respectable number of hundreds of millions. If the number of human beings who have lived, let us say, in the past thousand years be considered, we arrive at figures so vast that the imagination cannot even grasp them. Certainly the number must far exceed any possible differences — or, rather, any difference perceptible to our gross senses—in an object so limited in size as a man's face. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that every person possesses or at any rate has possessed in the past at least one, probably several, doubles absolutely identical in every visible particular with himself. Uncanny as the notion is, its seems difficult to escape from the conviction that it is no mere fantastic freak of the imagination but a sober truth. Nor need the reader be reminded how effectively the fact—*for fact it may be called*—has been turned to account by writers of fiction in all ages, nor how frequently cases of mistaken identity are continually being exposed in courts of law.

"Charlie," said the visitor to a bright little five year old, "are you going to be a dentist, like your father, and pull people's teeth when you grow up?"
"No, sir," replied Charlie; "I am going to be a lawyer, like Uncle George, and pull people's legs."

A History of Potatoes.

The chronicle of one of the old Spanish travellers, published in 1553, says: "The people of Peur eat tuberous root, which they call papas." The Spaniards took this root to Spain, where it was grown as "the truffle root." The Italians very quickly adopted it into their gardens, and soon the Dutch were cultivating it with much the same zeal that they displayed for tulips. Of its introduction into England, all that we are sure of is that in 1586 Sir Walter Raleigh was growing potatoes in his Irish garden. Thomas Hariot, in his account of Virginia, names potatoes among the roots that were found growing there, saying that some of them were as big as a walnut, and others considerably larger. This Virginia potato seems to have been that which is now known as the Irish, while that grown in Peru is more likely to have been a sweet potato. Another writer describing the esculents of Virginia, says the potato root is thick, fat and tuberous, not differing much in shape from the sweet potato, except that the roots are not so great or long, while some of them are round as a ball, and others are oval, in the egg fashion, "of which the knoblike rooters are fastened with an infinite number of thredde strings," says the Independent.

Early in the seventeenth century Raleigh's plantation of potatoes had been repeated all

over Ireland; but the farmers of England, moved by the stubborn prejudice and possibly in part by jealousy, decided that they would have nothing to do with the tuber. Shakespeare makes Falstaff imagine that the heavens are raining potatoes upon him — an imagination which could hardly have been delightful, unless the potatoes retained their original small size. It was as late as the time of Charles II, certainly it was after the Cromwellian episode, before the potato got any fair hold in English soil.

Gilbert White, writing in 1778, says that potatoes had prevailed in his district for about twenty years, and that this had been brought about "only by means of premiums," but that potatoes were then much esteemed by the poorer people, who would scarcely have ventured to taste them in the previous reign. Another writer speaks of them as a rather questionable product — possibly to become human food, "although rather flatulent and acid for the human stomach." He recommends boiling them with dates, and thinks that such a combination would keep soul and body together, for those who are too poor to get anything better. It is probably true that left in the light after digging, they became continuously less and less suitable for food.

The story of the introduction of the potato into France has been often told. The country

people were so convinced of the poisonous nature of the tuber that they would not give it a trial. Its friends were actually mobbed for trying to introduce a food that would poison the people. The story goes in two ways. One of these tells us that King Louis XIV wore potato blossoms in his button-hole, and had potatoes on his royal table, until they became popular with the aristocratic classes. Another story recounts how a celebrated physician and philanthropist planted a field of potatoes, about which he placed a guard, with instructions to allow just as much thieving as possible. The poorer people, believing a vegetable that deserved such careful, watchful care, must be of great value, stole nearly the whole of them. In this way their prejudices were overcome, and a valuable esculent added to their dietary.

Silver and Black Foxes.

The collection of silver and black foxes has been getting less year after year, still we see them coming forward into Winnipeg from the remote northern districts. Possibly the most valuable skin so far to reach Winnipeg was received by the North-West Hide and Fur Co., of this city. The skin is pure black, good size, and well furred. This same firm has already handled two black foxes this season and three silver.