Whether the potatoe is a native of Virginia, as is generally supposed, or whether it was obtained from the Spaniards settled in South America, (possibly by way of Virginia,) it is certain that it exists at the present day in a state of nature on the west coast of South America from the latitude of Valparaiso to the Chunos Islands, lying to the south of the great Island of Chilse. The best observations on the wild potatoe with which I am acquainted, are those of Mr. Darwin, the naturalist of the Expedition round the World, made in the surveying ship Beagle, in the years 1833-4-5. In Mr. Darwin's account of the Islands of the Chunos Archipeligo, which he visited in the month of January, (the midsummer of those latitudes), of 1835, after describing the climate of the whole group as excessively bad, and stating that the rain falls there "every day in winter and almost every day in summer," he gives the following account of the wild potatoe, which appears to flourish on the sandy soils of that ungenial climate :—

"The wild potatoe grows in these islands in great abundance, on the sandy, shelly soil near the sea-beach. The tallest plant was four feet in height. The tubers were generally small, but I found one of an oval shape, two inches in diameter; they resembled in every respect and had the same smell as English potatoes; but when boiled they shrunk much, and were watery and insipid, without any bitter taste. They are undoubtedly here indigenous: they grow as far south, according to Mr. Low, as latitude 50 deg. and are called Aquinas by the wild Indians of that part; the Chilotan Indians have a different name for them. Professor Henslow, who has examined the dried specimens which I brought home, says that they are the same with those described by Mr. Sabine, from Valparaiso, but that they form a variety which by some botanists has been considered as specifically distinct. It is remarkable that the same plant should be found on the sterile mountains of central Chiloe, where a drop of rain does not fall for more than six months, and within the damp forests of these southern islands."

The chief points which result from the above account seem to be the following—First, that the potatoe, in a natural state, is capable of enduring almost any degree of wetness or dryness, when growing on a suitable, that is to say, on a sandy or open soil. Second, that its natural *habitat* is in a sandy light ground. And third, that its tubers, when in a state of nature, are exceedingly small, their enlargement being the result of cultivation. In its cultivated state, the potatoe seems to retain many of its original characteristics, and especially to like a sandy or otherwise open soil, and a moist climate. It seems, indeed, to be rather benefitted than injured by an abundant supply of moisture, provided it is not allowed to stagnate in the ground, as is proved by the great success with which it has been cultivated on the generally light soils of Ireland, on the decomposed red rock of South Lancashire, and on the arenaceous sea sands of the Lancashire coast, and of East and West Flanders.

The object of the present culture of the potatoe in Europe is to improve the tuber as much as possible both in size and quality, and the effect of that culture has been to increase that part of the plant to eight or ten times its original size. The consequence of this has been to throw the greater part of the strength of the plant into the tubers; in many instances to reduce leaves and stems to less than half the size of the wild potatoe described by Mr. Darwin; and in some to prevent the formation of potatoe apples, which are the proper seed of the plant. In the fine mealy potatoe so well known in Lancashire as the pink eye, and which the late Mr. Loudon described as the best potatoe ever eaten by him, the foliage has become so small that it has for several years been known by the name of the short top, whilst the apples have disappeared altogether. Contemporaneously with these changes, there has been constantly increasing difficulty in growing the pink eyes, which are rapidly becoming extinct. It is evident from this circumstance that the effect of cultivating the potatoe for the purpose of increasing the size of the tuber, is to diminish the vital energy of the plant, to render its growth more precarious, and in the end to destroy the variety altogether. Many varieties of potatoes formerly cultivated in England have thus been worn out, and I believe there are few kinds grown in this country at least, which are not giving unequivocal