REPORT

ON THE

POTATO CROP IN IRELAND,

FOR THE YEAR

1850.

By A. MONGREDIEN,

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London.

16th September, 1850.

On the 16th of August, I addressed a printed list of queries on the subject of the Potato Crop to 303 different persons residing in various districts of Ireland, with a request that they would annex answers to those queries in the blank spaces left against each for that purpose. These queries, twenty-six in number, were the following :—

1. Has the potato blight appeared in your neighbourhood, and if so, what proportion of the total crop do you consider infected?
2. What is the extent of the injury to the crop this season as compared with the last
3. Are the tubers affected, or only the leaves and haulm?
4. Do you consider the course of the disease to be, to attack the leaves and haulm first, and then invariably, after a certain time, to extend to the tubers? or does it occasionally infect the former without eventually affecting the latter?
5. Do you consider the wholesome properties of the tubers impaired when dug sound from plants of which the leaves and haulm have been tainted by the disease?
6. Do you consider that sound tubers so taken from diseased plants are likely to rot in the pits?
7. Is it considered that the potato disease, even when confined to the leaves and haulm, materially diminishes the productive power of the plant?
8. How much earlier is the potato crop this season than the last?
9. How much earlier did the potato disease manifest itself this season than the last?
10. Do you consider the disease likely to increase in virulence as the season advances?
11. What proportion does the land under potato cultivation this year bear to the average yearly plant before 1846?
12. How much more land is there uuder potato cultivation in your neighbourhood this year than last?
13. Do you consider that the greater extent of land planted this year with potatos will be counterbalanced by the greater probable ravages of the disease, as compared with last year?
14. Do you think it likely that the quantity of potatos expected to be ultimately saved this year, will be greater or smaller than the quantity saved out of the crop of 1849?
15. Is there any or much waste in consequence of potatos being prematurely pressed on the market in large quantities for fear of their spoiling?
16. What is the present price of potatos per ton in your district?
17. How long do you calculate the potatos, saved from this year's crop, will last in sufficient abundance and cheapness to be within the means of the poorer classes?
18. Do you think that the reappearance of the disease this year will deter farmers from henceforward cultivating the potato on a large scale?
19. Do you consider that Ireland would be benefitted by the relinquishment of potato cultivation on a large scale?
20. Is the breadth of land laid out this year in turnips much smaller than last?
21. If so, will not a proportionately increased weight of consumption be thrown on potatos?
22. What are the prospects of the wheat, oat and barley crops in your district?
23. Is foreign wheat likely to be much wanted in your locality between this and next harvest?
24. Is the use of Indian meal general with you, and is it liked?
25. What is the present stock of Indian corn in your district?

26. Is the number of Recipients of in and out-door relief, in your vicinity, greater or smaller than this time last year?

These 303 lists were addressed, and answers have been up to this day received as follows; viz.—

	Letters sent.	Answers received.
To Roman Catholic Clergymen	145	49
To Millers, Dealers, and other parties engaged in the Corn Trade	129	95
To Landholders, Public Functionaries, &c. chiefly through the kind medium of high official influence	29	19
	303	163

I am perfectly aware that a considerable interval must elapse before the *exact* result of the present Potato Crop can be positively known; but my object was to ascertain, as early as possible, the probable extent of the deficiency, if any, so as to afford to those parties whose business it was either to import or to distribute the food which would have to be substituted for the potato, timely notice how much might be wanted, and to enable them to shape their operations accordingly. In case of a large deficiency, to wait unprepared till the crop was gathered, and its exact yield ascertained, would, by the sudden rush of demand, enormously enhance the cost of the substituted article, besides occasioning severe suffering until an adequate supply could be provided. If two or three million quarters of Indian corn have to be imported, it is of immense importance to an impoverished country like Ireland whether the average cost of that supply be 50s. per quarter or only 30s. It was the suddenness of the demand in the disastrous season of 1846-7 which drove up the price of Indian corn at one period as high as 75s. per quarter. It is well for a country, as it is for a trader, to take stock occasionally, the more especially when there is danger lest its resources may have to be severely taxed.

The following is a List of the Places from which I have received Reports, and the number of Reports from each. It will be perceived that they represent very nearly every part of Ireland.

	County.	Names of Places.	Number of Places.	Number of Reports.
LEINSTER.	Dublin	Dublin 4, Balbriggan 1	2	5
	Louth	Louth 1, Dundalk 1, Drogheda 4	3	6
	Meath	Trim 1	1	1
	Wicklow	Wicklow 1, Baltinglass 2	2	3
	Wexford	New Ross 2, Ferns 1, Enniscorthy 2, Gorey 1, Wexford 1	5	7
	Longford	Longford 1	1	1
	Westmeath	Athlone 1	1	1
	King's County	Tullamore 1, Banagher 1	2	2
	Kildare	Edenderry 1	1	1
	Queen's Co.	Ballinakill 1	1	1
	Kilkenny	None	—	—
	Carlow	Carlow 2, Tullow 1, Bagenalstown 1	3	4
ULSTER.	Down	Newry 10, Portaferry 1, Castlewellan 1	3	12
	Antrim	Belfast 6, Larne 3, Ballycastle 1, Ballymena 1, Ballymoney 1	5	12
	Londonderry	Londonderry 8, Magherafelt 1, Coleraine 3, Kilrea 1, N. T. Limavady 1	5	14
	Donegal	Millford 2, Ramelton 1, Ballyshannon 1, Raphoe 1	4	5
	Fermanagh	Enniskillen 1	1	1
	Cavan	Ballyborough 1, Belturbet 1	2	2
	Monaghan	Castleblaney 1, Coolmain 1	2	2
	Armagh	Armagh 1, Portadown 1, Drumbanagher 1	3	3
	Tyrone	Dungannon 1, Ballygawley 1	2	2
MUNSTER.	Clare	Ennis 1, Kilrush 1, Killaloe 1	3	3
	Kerry	Tralee 2, Killarney 1, Cahirciveen 1, Ballyheigh 1	4	5
	Cork	Cork 12, Youghal 4, Cloyne 1, Charleville 1, Fermoy 1, Bantry 1, Middleton 1, Millstreet 1, Skibbereen 1, Kanturk 1	10	24
	Waterford	Waterford 4, Lismore 1	2	5
	Tipperary	Clonmel 2, Clogheen 1, Cahir 1, Roscrea 1. Nenagh 1, Carrick-on-Suir 1	6	7
	Limerick	Limerick 6, Bruff 1, Rathkeale 1	3	8
CONNAUGHT.	Leitrim	Ballinamore 1	1	1
	Sligo	Sligo 1, Collooney 1	2	2
	Mayo	Castlebar 2, Ballina 7, Westport 3, Foxford 1, Clanmorris 1, Crosmolina 1	6	15
	Galway	Galway 5, Eyrecourt 1, Tuam 1	3	7
	Roscommon	Elphin 1	1	1
			90	163

The general analysis of the 163 reports furnished me offers the following results :—

67 parties entertain *favorable* opinions of the net produce of the present crop, as compared with that of 1849.

50 parties entertain *unfavorable* opinions of it.

46 parties are either doubtful or think that the net produce will be about the same this year as last.

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As, however, from each of the larger towns more than one report has been sent me, and the above statement exhibits the opinion of each *individual*, I subjoin an analysis of the opinions emanating from *districts*, averaging the reports, when more than one from the same locality :—

In 31 districts opinion is *favorable* to the net results of the present crop, as compared with that of 1849.

In 34 districts opinion is *unfavorable* to it.

In 25 districts the comparative results are either a matter of doubt or are considered about similar.

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In no single instance out of the 90 districts from which reports have been received does it appear that the blight has been escaped. In the great majority of cases the whole of the crop has been attacked, at least in the leaves and haulm. The chief diversity consists in the proportion in which the tubers have been affected.

From 3 places the tubers are reported not to be affected at all.
From 20 ,, ,, to be *slightly* affected.
From 29 ,, ,, to be *partially* affected.
From 20 ,, ,, to be *much* affected.
From 18 ,, ,, to be *all* affected.

The least favorable accounts on this head are from the counties of Antrim, Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, and Kerry. The most favorable from Louth, Dublin, Tipperary, Waterford, and Cork.

It is the general impression that the disease exhibits itself first on the leaves, then on the stem or haulm, and lastly on the tubers; and that it is sometimes arrested in its course without going through the whole of the above stages, especially with the early sorts of potatos, they having attained a certain stage of maturity before being attacked. There are, however, many exceptional cases on record. When the attack is very sudden and severe, the effect on all the parts of the plant appears to be almost simultaneous, and instances are also known

where the tuber was found to be diseased, whilst the stem and leaves were free from any morbid symptom. The interval which elapses between the attack on the leafy system and the tainting of the tubers (where it does eventually reach the latter) appears to depend partly on atmospheric causes and partly on the degree of maturity the plant had attained before being attacked.

With scarcely an exception it is thought that whenever a plant is stricken with the disease, even where the symptoms only extend to the leaves, the growth of the plant in all its parts, tubers included, is checked; and that when the haulm is much tainted, as well as the leaves, then the tuber ceases altogether to increase in size. The quantity of produce to be expected from each diseased plant will, therefore, vary in proportion to the more or less advanced stage of its growth when attacked. In some instances the tubers have been found, at the end of August, scarcely to exceed the size of hazel nuts, even from plants apparently but little diseased; hence it is clear, that independently of any rot in the tubers, the yield of an infected field must be but scanty. That the tuber is thus, without being positively diseased, acted on instantaneously by the morbific influences which affect the leafy system of the plant, seems to be clearly established; but this is scarcely compatible with the idea entertained by many, that the "wholesome properties of the tubers, when dug sound from plants, of which the leaves and haulm have been tainted by the disease," are not impaired. Of 163 opinions given on this latter point, 79 are to the effect that where the disease is not actually visible on the tuber, its wholesome properties are not impaired. I am decidedly inclined to think that, both from the germ of the disease existing in such tubers, though latent, and from the growth of tubers derived from diseased plants having been suddenly checked when immature, neither the same *quantity* nor the same *kind* of nutriment can be afforded by them.

As to how far sound tubers from diseased plants are liable to rot after being pitted, opinions are much divided. Of my 163 correspondents,

35 think there is little or no danger of rot in the pits.
34 think it will take place, but not to a great extent.
71 think that a large proportion of pitted potatos will be lost by rotting.
And 23 declined giving an opinion.

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No doubt the risk of premature decomposition will be enhanced or diminished by a variety of circumstances, such as the state of the weather,—the stage of maturity attained by the pitted tubers,—the care with which the operation of pitting is performed,—the vigilance exercised in keeping out every tainted or even suspicious tuber, &c. Some parties strongly recommend housing instead of pitting where there is convenience for it; others enjoin that the potatos should be left undug in the ground as long as possible;—but on the whole it may be doubted whether any precaution will entirely prevent the eventual development of the disease in

tubers taken from infected plants. The rapidity with which decomposition occasionally takes place is extraordinary. A lot of apparently sound potatos purchased one day has been known the next to become a mass of putridity. Happily such instances form the exception, but they tend to excite fears as to the preservation of the crop when gathered.

It has been surmised by many experienced persons that the period at which the potato blight makes its attacks depends in a very minor degree on the season of the year, or on any peculiar state of the atmosphere, but that it manifests itself at a particular stage in the growth of the plant; that it will therefore appear earlier on early plants, and later on those sown more forward in the season. It is clearly of importance to ascertain how far this theory is correct, for if it should prove so, the hope of eluding the disease by very early planting, or of thus meeting it with a vigorous and matured plant, would not be realised. I have minutely analyzed facts and opinions on this interesting subject, and the subjoined table shows, as far as the data furnished me go, how much earlier this year the potato crop was than last in the various localities, and how much earlier than last year the disease manifested itself in the same localities.

This year as compared with 1849.				The disease appeared as compared with 1849.						
				6 weeks sooner	5 weeks sooner	4 weeks sooner	3 weeks sooner	2 weeks sooner	at same time	later
Crop 6 weeks earlier	in 3	cases	in which	1	..	1	..	1	..	..
„ 5 „	in 4	„	„	..	2	..	1	..	..	1
„ 4 „	in 42	„	„	4	1	18	5	6	5	3
„ 3 „	in 23	„	„	..	..	3	7	5	4	4
„ 2 „	in 35	„	„	..	..	7	6	16	3	3
„ same as 1849	in 31	„	„	..	..	5	7	7	11	1
„ later than 1849	in 8	„	„	..	..	3	2	..	3	..
	146									
from	17	parties no definite information on this subject was received—								
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The inference to which we are led on a cursory examination of the foregoing tabular view seems strongly corroborative of the theory before alluded to. To generalize the above data, I have struck an average of the 146 cases we have before us, and the result is that throughout Ireland the crop was on the average 16 days earlier, and that the Potato blight set in, on an average, exactly the same number of days sooner, than last year. Several facts tend to confirm the theory to which the above data seem to lead. R. F. Saunders, Esq., of Saunders Grove, Baltinglass (county Wicklow), writes—"I am convinced, from experience, that the disease attacks the crop at a certain stage of its growth. I sowed a field five beds

at a time, and continued doing so at intervals of a week. The first sown was first attacked, the next a week after, and so on, week after week, till all were attacked." A correspondent from Ballinamore is of opinion that the particular period in the plant's growth at which the disease sets in is "immediately, or very soon, after flowering." If this were universally true, the time of sowing would probably be a matter of indifference. But there are too many facts and opinions tending the other way, to come to any positive conclusion on the subject. In many cases the early kinds are reported to withstand the disease better than others; and so strong is this opinion with many growers, that some intend planting before winter, placing the sets sufficiently deep to be beyond the reach of the frost. We also hear of many cases in which the red potatos remain untainted in the tubers, whilst the white in the same locality are infected. In a report from Coolmain (county Monaghan), it is stated that "about 5 per cent, of all the potatos planted in February and March, 15 per cent. of those planted in April, and nearly 50 per cent. of all planted after the 1st May, are infected and going to decay."

As to the probability of the disease increasing in virulence as the season advances, it is so purely a matter of opinion that unanimity cannot be expected. The following is an abstract of the answers I received to this inquiry :—

76	consider that the disease will increase in virulence.
22	consider that it will not.
13	consider that it will, if weather prove wet.
6	consider that it will not, if weather prove dry.
32	consider that it may, probably to some extent.
And 14	returned no answer on this point.
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Assuming the accuracy of the estimates (for they can be but estimates) made of the quantity of land under potato cultivation this year, as compared both with 1849 and with the average of the years previous to 1846, we arrive at the following results :—

As compared with last year,

In 3	districts	the extent of land is the same.
In 10	,,	it is 25 per cent. greater this year.
In 21	,,	it is 33 per cent. ,,
In 19	,,	it is 50 per cent. ,,
In 32	,,	it is doubly ,,
In 5	,,	it is trebly. ,,

The average for the whole of Ireland gives an increase of potato cultivation, this year, of 109 per cent. (or upwards of double) as compared with 1849.

As compared with the years immediately preceding 1846,

In 19 districts it is 50 per cent. less this year.
In 23 „ it is 33 per cent. „
In 19 „ it is 25 per cent. „
In 29 „ it is about the same.

The average of which scale exhibits an extent of potato cultivation only 24 per cent. smaller than the average before 1846. These results are only approximative, as, besides the fallibility of the reports, the districts taken vary in extent, fertility and population. It is also to be noticed, that in comparing the breadth of land sown with potatos with the years preceding 1846, the diminution of the population has been taken into account; so that in stating that in 29 districts the extent is as great, it is not meant that there is the same acreage, but that it is equal, making allowance for the lesser number of persons now depending on the crop.

The quantity which it is probable may be saved from the present crop to serve for human food, must of necessity be a matter of conjecture. The breadth of land planted being fully double that of last year, the produce, were the blight of this season no more malignant than in 1849, would be in the same proportion. The following statement of opinions on this branch of the subject exhibits simply the estimate formed by the parties of the probable effect of the ravages of the disease, between this time and the digging of the crop, in counterbalancing the increased cultivation:—

42 consider that the probable quantity of sound potatos saved this year, will be *much larger* than it was in 1849.
57 consider that it will be *larger*.
16 consider that it will be about the *same*.
36 consider that it will be *smaller*.
12 decline giving an opinion.

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In the following table, instead of individual opinions, I have recorded the average opinions reported from the various districts:—

From 16 districts the probable crop of sound potatos is reported as *much larger* than in 1849.
From 30 „ it is reported *larger*.
From 16 „ it is reported about *the same*.
From 24 „ it is reported *smaller*.
From 4 „ there is no report.

It may hence be collected that, on the whole, it is believed that the quantity of potatos that may ultimately be saved this year for human food will be larger

than that saved in 1849. This result is, however, looked for only on the two following conditions :—1st. That the progress of the disease between the present time and the final digging and storing of the crop will not be more rapid or destructive than during the same interval last year. 2nd. That after pitting, as large a proportion will be preserved sound as in 1849.

The alarm excited by the appearance of the potato disease at an earlier period, and in a more violent form than the last two or three years, caused a considerable waste, especially in the localities most severely visited, by inducing the growers prematurely to dig and bring to market considerably more potatos than were required for immediate consumption. Large quantities rotted, and were used for feeding pigs and poultry; and of the sound ones, the price being in many parts much depressed by the profuse supply, less economy was exercised in using them. The panic, however, having now partially subsided, the waste from the above causes has considerably diminished.

The present price of potatos varies greatly in different parts of Ireland. As a general rule, the price is lowest where the disease is most rife, and *vice versâ*. In some of the rural districts, it is quoted as low as 25s and even 20s per ton. Computing, from the quotations of prices given in all the districts, I find that—

51s 4d is the average price per ton of 20 cwt. in the large towns throughout Ireland.

44s 6d is the average price per ton in the second class towns.

42s 4d is the average price per ton in the small towns and rural districts.

The above prices are for untainted potatos. Unsound ones are sold for a mere trifle, and in many cases even mixed ones will barely cover the expense of carriage.

In making an abstract of the various estimates forwarded to me of the length of time potatos will last in sufficient abundance and cheapness to be within the reach of the poorer classes, I have taken separately each district from which I have received reports, averaging such reports when more than one has been sent from the same district.

In	6	districts the estimate is, that there will be a cheap and abundant supply for 9 months, commencing from the 1st September.
In	7	districts the estimate is 8 months.
In	2	,, the estimate is 7 ,,
In	11	,, the estimate is 6 ,,
In	14	,, the estimate is 5 ,,
In	17	,, the estimate is 4 ,,
In	9	,, the estimate is 3 ,,
In	5	,, the estimate is 2 ,,
In	3	,, the price is stated to be already beyond the reach of the poor.
From	16	,, there are no returns under this head.
	90	

Taking the average of the above, the period thus assigned for the duration of the present crop as food for the masses, is a fraction under 5 months. Last year's crop did not, it is calculated, hold out for much more than 4 months as an article of food for the poor; but as, this year, the consumption of the crop commenced two or three weeks earlier, the average date at which the potato will cease to be used by the bulk of the population will probably be nearly the same both years, viz., the end of January. I need not, however, point out how liable such calculations, founded as they are on probabilities, are to errors, owing to the course of events varying from the direction anticipated at the time they are made. All we can do is to reason from the most accurate data which, under the circumstances, we can collect.

How far "the re-appearance of the disease this year will deter farmers from henceforward cultivating the potato on a large scale," is a question on which the utmost diversity of opinion prevails. The opinions which have been communicated to me on this head may be classed as follows :—

50	are to the effect that it		*will not*.
6	,,	,,	that it will not unless the failure this year should prove much more extensive than is at present anticipated.
57	,,	,,	that it *will*.
14	,,	,,	that it will if potatos should not keep well in the pits.
18	,,	,,	that some diminution will take place in the breadth of land devoted to potatos, but not to any considerable extent.
5	,,	,,	that for a year or two less will be planted, but that the cultivation will, after that, become as extensive as ever.
13	parties declined giving an opinion.		
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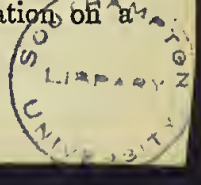
No doubt the discrepancies exhibited in the foregoing statement are in a great measure attributable to the ravages of the disease varying so much in extent in different localities. Where the devastation is comparatively small, the grower is, by the greater value which the general scarcity imparts to his crop, encouraged to plant again. Even where the loss by disease is considerable, the smaller farmers will cling to the potato, for it is pretty generally considered that "half a crop of potatos pays better than a full crop of most other produce." But in many localities, the disease this year has presented so malignant a type, that the success of the potato is despaired of, and, on the whole, there can be no doubt, that there will next year be a greatly diminished cultivation, especially amongst the larger farmers.

On summing up the opinions conveyed to me on the *vexata quæstio* "whether Ireland would be benefitted by the relinquishment of potato cultivation on a large scale," I find the following result :—



54 persons are for the affirmative.

42 ,, are for the negative.

24 ,, are for the affirmative, if the potato disease should continue permanently to affect the plant; but think that, if the plant were to recover its pristine vigor and fertility, the cultivation need not be diminished.

30 ,, incline to the affirmative provided certain changes which they enumerate take place. These changes are chiefly political and connected with the Landlord question, but partly fiscal and commercial.

13 ,, declined giving an opinion.

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It does not fall within my province to offer any opinion of my own on this prolific and interesting topic, and I shall confine myself to the task of recording those of others. As instances of the very opposite views entertained on this point, I will quote two of the replies I have received. One (from Drogheda) says "The value of the Potato is hardly to be told. It is wholesome food for the people,—for horned cattle as well as for pigs and poultry; even the skins are eaten by the pigs, and the quantity of fowls and eggs in the country is abundant when Potatos are plenty." The other (from Charleville) runs thus: "The prosperity and propagation of that vile root the potato has, with many other inauspicious causes, contributed in no small degree to the misery of Ireland and the degradation of her people; and I shall rejoice at its total failure and extinction."—It is evident, however, that the prevalence of the blight, in conjunction, probably, with other causes, has shaken the faith which the great majority of Irish agriculturists heretofore reposed in the potato as a crop. Some years ago, had opinions been canvassed, they would have been found nearly unanimous in favour of the culture of that plant.

The breadth of land in Ireland sown with turnips in 1850 was, with the exception of a few localities, considerably smaller than in 1849. No doubt this was caused by the great increase of acreage devoted this year to potatos. This deficiency in the yield of turnips will have in no small measure to be supplied out of the forthcoming potato crop, not only for the purpose of cattle feeding, but also for human food in some of the more impoverished districts, where turnips mixed with meal have been used to some extent by the more destitute part of the population.

The following is a summary of the reports on the Wheat, Oat, and Barley crops:

	Districts.	Districts.	Districts.
Wheat reported deficient in	62,	Oats in 5,	Barley in 6
,, fair average in..	14	,, in 19	,, in 24
,, good average in	6	,, in 45	,, in 42
,, abundant in ..	—	,, in 14	,, in 6
,, not reported from	8	,, from 7	,, from 12
	90	90	90

The deficiency in the Wheat crop is reported to be fully 50 per cent. in many localities, and on an average throughout Ireland, I estimate that the yield will barely reach three-fifths of last year's crop, as besides the injury the plant has sustained, there was less sown than in 1849. On the other hand the quality is stated to be decidedly better than that of last season. More foreign wheat will be required by the Irish millers than in 1849, but last year, Irish wheat being of indifferent quality, foreign was largely required immediately after harvest for mixing: whereas, this year, native wheat being of better quality, less foreign will be required at once for mixing, and it will be principally wanted for supplying the deficiency of the home growth at a later period, when Irish wheat becomes scarce and dear.

Subjoined is a statement of the present stock of Indian corn at the principal depôts in Ireland as well as at Liverpool, and of the stock that existed at the same places at the commencement of this year.

Stock of Indian Corn at	On the 1st Jan. 1850.		On the 1st Sept. 1850.
Drogheda	Qrs. 2,200	....	Qrs. 1,500
Dublin	45,000	....	10,000
Enniscorthy	1,500	....	2,000
New Ross.....	2,000	....	3,000
Wexford	2,000	....	3,000
Waterford.....	30,000	....	8,000
Clonmel.....	2,500	....	1,000
Youghal	400	....	500
Cork	115,000	....	30,000
Skibbereen	2,500	....	800
Limerick	22,000	....	10,000
Galway.....	19,000	....	11,000
Westport	16,000	....	6,000
Ballina	1,700	....	3,500
Sligo and vicinity....	13,000	....	25,000
Londonderry.....	45,000	....	25,000
Coleraine	2,200	....	2,500
Belfast	37,500	....	20,000
Newry	6,000	....	3,500
	365,500		166,300
Other places in Ireland	35,300	....	22,000
Liverpool, &c.	227,200	....	110,000
	Qrs. 628,000		Qrs. 298,300

This diminution of stock is very considerable, but is less than might have been expected from the still more considerable diminution of Imports this year as compared with last, and it has only been kept within bounds by the decreased consumption this year, as I shall proceed to show. From the calculations which I have appended in a note,* we derive the following results:—

1°. That a very marked difference exists between the average weekly consumption of Indian Corn from January to August and that from August to December. The reasons for this difference are too obvious to require mention.

2°. That, whereas the average weekly consumption during the whole of 1849 was (as shown in my Report on Indian Corn under date of 11th January last) 38,400 qrs.; the average weekly consumption between 1st January and 5th August, 1849, was 48,900 qrs.; and between the 5th August and 31st December, 1849, was 22,800 qrs.

3°. That, the average weekly consumption this year between the 1st January and 5th August was 42,000 qrs.

On the above data, a few observations may be deemed not out of place. The weekly consumption of Indian Corn for the first 31 weeks of this year has been 6900 qrs. short of that of the corresponding period of 1849, making a total of 213,900 qrs. Had there not been this falling off in the consumption, the stock on hand by this time would have been nearly exhausted; or, to take another view of the matter, had the imports this year up to the 5th August not fallen off by 544,000 qrs. as compared with 1849, our stock would now have been

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* The following are the calculations alluded to in the text:—

Stock 1st January, 1849 (vide my Report on Indian Corn issued 11th January last)	qrs.	398,500
Imports from 1st January to 5th August, 1849, as returned by the Board of Trade		1,518,720
		1,917,220
Deduct estimated stock on the 5th August, 1849		400,000
	qrs.	1,517,220

which, divided by 31, gives the weekly average of 48,900 qrs.

Stock (as above) on the 5th August, 1849	qrs.	400,000
Imported (as per Board of Trade returns) between the 5th Aug. and 31st Dec. 1849		707,000
		1,107,000
Deduct stock on the 31st January, 1850		628,000
	qrs.	479,000

which, divided by 21, gives a weekly average of 22,800 qrs.

Stock on the 1st January, 1850	qrs.	628,000
Imported from 1st January to 5th August, 1850, as given in the returns from the Board of Trade		974,713
		1,602,713
Deduct stock on the 5th August, 1850		300,000
	qrs.	1,302,713

which, divided by 31, gives a weekly average of 42,000 qrs.

It will be observed that the Imports of Indian Corn this year have been much smaller than the last; viz.—

Between the 1st January and 5th August, 1849	qrs.	1,518,721
Between the 1st January and 5th August, 1850		974,713

about 850,000 qrs. As it is, the decrease of imports having considerably exceeded the decrease of consumption, the stock has been reduced, and the range of prices kept up from 2s. to 3s. per qr. above the level of those of last year at the corresponding period.

In 1849, the average weekly consumption of the five last months of the year bore to that of the seven first months the ratio of 7 to 15. If we adopted the same ratio for 1850, we should infer that, whereas the weekly consumption up to the 5th August was 42,000 qrs., it would, for the remainder of the year, range at 19,600 qrs. For various reasons, however, I do not deem the ratio of last year applicable to this. More potatos by far are now being used by the bulk of the population than this time last year;—the very increased severity of the blight will throw them more profusely on the different markets for some time to come, probably to the end of the year. The poor-law unions too, which are at all times large consumers of Indian Corn, are less burthened with demands on them than in 1849. There will, however, still be a steady, though diminished, consumption of Indian Corn, even whilst potatos are in large supply. It must be borne in mind, also, that judging by the greatly decreased imports up to this date, there will be a proportionate falling off in them throughout the remainder of the year. The imports during the last five months of the year 1849 amounted to 700,000 qrs. I expect, this year, they will not exceed 400,000 qrs, for the same period, of which one month has now elapsed. If so, however low an estimate may be formed of the consumption henceforward up to the end of the year, the stock on the 1st January, 1851, cannot fail to be considerably smaller than it was on the 1st January, 1850. If I were called on to form an estimate, I should assess it at probably from 450,000 to 500,000 qrs. against the 628,000 qrs. with which we entered on the present year.

The decrease of consumption during the seven first months of this year, as compared with last, I attribute chiefly to the decrease in the population, and to the diminished numbers in receipt of relief from the Poor Law Unions.

The use of Indian meal, although of comparatively recent introduction, appears to be universal throughout Ireland, and is generally well liked. It is preferred to oatmeal as long as it is about 30s per ton cheaper, and, taking the year round, has become, owing to the failure of the potato crops, the general diet of the mass of the population.

It is gratifying to have to report that the pressure of pauperism on the Poor Law Unions of Ireland is very materially diminished: with few exceptions out-door relief is entirely discontinued, and the inmates of the workhouses are almost every where considerably fewer. The great decrease of population through mortality and emigration is no doubt indicative of severe suffering, but it may be hoped that other and more acceptable agencies have also contributed to the above result. The following is an abstract of the information sent me from each district in reply to my query as to the number of recipients of in and out-door relief as compared with the corresponding period in 1849:—

Recipients much fewer than in 1849		in 10	districts
,,	fewer	in 24	,,
,,	about the same number	in 10	,,
,,	more numerous	in 2	,,
,, of out-door relief none ,, of in-door relief fewer		in 29	,,
,, of out-door relief none ,, of in-door relief same as in 1849		in 7	,,
,, of out-door relief none ,, of in-door relief more numerous		in 4	,,
,, of out-door relief fewer ,, of in-door relief more numerous		in 2	,,
No report		from 2	,,
		90	

The general impressions I have derived from a minute examination of the mass of materials that has come before me may be thus summed up:—

The potato blight is almost universal as to the leaves and stem, but at present only partial as to the tubers.

The yield, even where sound, will not be abundant, and will probably be diminished by premature decomposition when pitted.

Whilst the crop generally was two to three weeks earlier than in 1849, the disease also appeared in the same proportion earlier than before.

The quantity of land under cultivation this year was double that of last year, and nearly as great in proportion to the population as before 1846.

The quantity likely to be ultimately saved out of the present crop will not be much greater than the net produce of last year, and will last in cheapness and abundance till about the same period, viz. January.

The breadth of land that will be devoted to potato cultivation next year will be considerably smaller than this year, and probably smaller than in 1849.

The wheat crop in Ireland will barely be three-fifths of an average; the barley crop a full average; the oat crop more than average.

In conclusion I beg to tender my best thanks to the parties who have so kindly returned answers to my queries, and thus afforded me the information which has enabled me to draw up this report;—and I may also add that, being anxious to know what aspect the potato crop may present between the 5th and 10th of next month, I shall feel obliged for any communication with which I may be favoured on that subject at about that period.

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