

wines which have suffered either from defective fermentation or through errors and neglects in their treatment.

We do not pretend to condemn all these methods, as many others do; but, while we consider it justifiable that the producer endeavour to improve his wine by an addition of pure sugar to the must, if it has been insufficiently developed in the grape, or to add a little pure spirits to the wine, to make it more durable, and while we cannot see anything reprehensible in the fact that wine-producers will try to extract from the pressed husk the large portion of wine-making properties which they still contain to make a very good, wholesome, and cheap domestic wine—especially as the revenue laws make their distillation impracticable—we do condemn the use of any and all foreign deleterious substances, and of all other so-called cellar mysteries. We would also warn the inexperienced against the use of any and all other attempts to improve or to add anything to their wine, as these manipulations require scientific accuracy and practical skill; otherwise the result will surely be no improvement—aye, will most likely prove ruinous. Moreover, the knowledge of the chemistry of wine is as yet very imperfect. Quite lately Adolph Reihlen, of Stuttgart, invented a process which upsets former scientific doctrines. He demonstrated that the fermenting properties exist exclusively in the grape-skins, and that old wines can be readily brought to a new fermentation and restored by the use of clean and pure grape-skins, and by the action of heat, applied to the wine. But his method is patented, and therefore cannot here be described. Neither is the manufacture of sweet wines, cordials, or liqueurs, nor that of sparkling wines, within the scope of this brief manual.

A natural wine, the pure juice of the grape, properly fermented and educated, will always be superior to any artificially improved wine; and the only necessary conditions to obtain such superior natural wine are,—

- (1.) Good ripe grapes :
- (2.) Clean vessels and utensils :
- (3.) A proper, uninterrupted, high temperature during fermentation :
- (4.) Drawing off, as herein described, in December or January :
- (5.) Drawing off again in March or April :
- (6.) Drawing off after second fermentation :
- (7.) Keeping the casks full, by refilling from time to time with good similar wine.

If these essential conditions are strictly complied with,—and they are neither many nor very difficult,—wine-making will be a success.

Some, however, say that American wines are very inferior, “scarcely fit to drink!” This was the preconceived opinion of foreigners, and of a great many Americans too. Also, most American hotels and restaurants kept none but foreign wines—or else native wines under foreign names and labels—and we are often asked whether we hope ever to produce as good wines here as in Europe. Now, while we are far from presuming that “we can make wines which will rival and surpass the best wines of France, Germany, and Spain,”* we do claim that we are producing some very good wines, and shall, before many years, by planting our best varieties, and by progressing in the art of wine-making, fully equal the average production of the wine-countries of Europe. This is no idle boast—no mere opinion of our own. The good qualities of American wines are now appreciated by the best and most impartial judges. Professor St.-Pierre, the late celebrated Director of the Agricultural School of Montpellier,† says in his “Memoir,”—

“The study of wines furnished by American varieties has engaged my whole attention since 1875. . . . The musts of the following varieties: Jacquez, Rulander, Cynthiana, Black July, Elvira, and many others, are found to be sweeter and richer than the musts of our best southern varieties. . . . The fine mountain wines of the South of France find their equivalents in the Black July, Jacquez, Norton, and Cynthiana; colour, alcohol, savour, body, and keeping qualities—none are missing, and their products are equal to the good wines of Provence or of Roussillon. . . . Trade will also find American wines for blending, similar to those of the Narbonne. The colour and richness of the Jacquez, Norton, Clinton, &c., do not yield in the least to the deep-colour wines of France. Of those named, none except the Clinton wines have a disagreeable taste; and even of the Clinton, we shall obtain, by blending, age, clarification, &c., a wine that is fit to enter into general consumption.

“In the category of white wines, some American varieties offer equally valuable types. The wines of Diana and Elvira remind us of our good Piquepouls; the Cunningham, made as a white wine, presents characteristics approaching our Grenache wine. . . . It is thus evident that, besides grafting, which enables us to obtain our French wines on American stocks, the direct cultivation of many American varieties can give us wines of true value. . . . I hope that the prejudice against these wines by persons who never tasted any others than Concord and Isabella wine will finally fall before the evidence of experience.”

May we not hope that the prejudice of our own American people will finally yield, and that they will rather trust to their own palates than to foreign labels and high prices?

But we are aware that there exists still another prejudice, one which condemns all wines, both native and foreign, from fear of their intoxicating effects.

INTRODUCING VINES FROM AMERICA.

In my interim report I pointed out the feasibility of Government introducing from America vines without any fear of bringing with them any of the diseases that have proved so harmful, such as the Phylloxera or Peronospora. I attach herewith a table by T. V. Munson, M.Sc., of Denison, Texas, who is recognised as the most eminent authority on the subject, showing what vines are proof against the different diseases, and these only I would recommend the Government to obtain

* “American Wine and Fruit Grower,” August, 1882, page 75.

† He died December, 1881.