



AGRICULTURAL

WINE-MAKING.

The preparation of wine from the Catawba Grape is an exceedingly simple process, yet it is one which requires great care and discriminating judgment. The period of the ripening of the grape varies very much—a difference of several weeks, or even a month, occurring at times—and being the result of an early or late spring, or the nature of the season which has prevailed. If cold and rainy it will delay the maturity of the fruit and render the wine thin, and inclined to acidity; if warm, with occasional showers in May and June, and hot, dry weather in July and the first week or two in August, the fruit will, in all probability, escape the "rot," and become fully matured and possessed of the requisite degree of saccharine matter in time to commence the vintage by the 20th of September. The grape should be allowed to become fully ripe for wine-making; the period for deciding this condition of the fruit is when the small stem to which the grape itself is attached, is observed to be quite matured, or even dried, and the fruit of a dark claret tint, and parting easily from the stem.

The best and ripest fruit is picked first, by men, women and children, furnished each with a knife or pair of scissors, who carefully clip or cut off the bunches and deposit them in baskets which are carried by another set of hands to the wine-house, where they are spread upon tables, forming a kind of shelf about three feet wide, around the sides of the building. Here they are picked over by women and children, whose duty it is to select out all the green, imperfect, and decayed grapes from each bunch, and place the perfect fruit in baskets to be carried to the "stemming machine."

This apparatus is in the sole possession of Cormeau & Son—many others having attempted the construction of a machine of this kind, but failing in rendering it available for the purpose desired. This apparatus has been, for many generations, and still is used by the grape-growers of the vicinity of Tours, in France, and other parts of Europe, and is regarded as indispensable to the production of a fine wine.

After the grapes have been deprived of their stems, they are immediately passed through a pair of wooden rollers, made with diagonal projections around, and upon their surface, and which turn near enough to effectually mash or break every grape, but never to break a seed, (which would spoil the wine if done.)

After passing through the rollers, the pulp is carried in tubs to the press. Here it is subjected to pressure, and the wine passes from the press into vessels prepared to receive it, and from thence to casks; or if the wine cellar is immediately under the pressing room, it may be conveyed directly to the casks by means of pipes. The first pressing is regarded as the best wine. After the wine ceases to run, it is removed and put into a separate cask, the pressure taken off, the must is stirred up, the timber are replaced, and the screw is again applied. This gives the second quality of wine. After all is pressed out that can be obtained, the marc or cheese, as it is sometimes termed, is removed and the press is ready for a fresh lot of grapes. The newly-expressed juice is termed must. The skins and seed, which form the cheese or marc, are useful as a manure for the vineyard or for distillation for making brandy, or by mingling it with water and subjecting it to a fermenting process, it is converted into a basis for an intensely black and very fine ink, for copper-plate printing.

In a very few hours after the casks are filled with the expressed juice, the process of fermentation commences; the casks should be nearly but not quite full—and the bungs left out until the fermentation has entirely subsided; the casks should then be filled quite up to be hung—which should remain until the latter part of February or middle of March—with frequent examination, however, to see that the casks are kept full, in order that no air may remain and the wine becomes flat. The action of fermentation is violent, and may be easily detected by the appearance of a skin of a mucky, sticky, sweet taste. No unfermented substance can be healthfully used; or gather, that in which the operation of nature is violently interrupted by means of a drug. Yet, a few drops of wine are injurious to the system, as a strong drinker.

If you have no wine to mix up with, some green pebbles, or sand, make the cask, until you have the wine up to the top.

In February or March, the wine must be racked off into clean casks—and the same care exercised in keeping them always full.

Wines of this kind (light wines as they are termed) should be kept in a shaded as possible—never bottle them until obliged to do so. In April, May and June, a second fermentation will take place in the wine in the cask, during the period of the blossoming and leafing of the vines, the depth of course, is the depth of germination.

This causes sympathy and plausiveness will occur in a diminished degree for several successive years. The wine is then said to be a "dry" wine. The term "still" is applied to the same wine, but is used in contradistinction to the term, sparkling," or "Sparkling Catawba."

Between the period of the first fermentation and the racking, the wine becomes very clear, or "fine," as we term it; but when the second fermentation takes place, it becomes milky, and has a "rougher" taste than before; this, in turn, subsides—when the wine is, or should be, better than at first.

Catawba wine should never be bottled until it is at least fifteen months old, otherwise it will form a sediment in the bottle, and have an unpleasant flavor. If it could be kept three years in wood before bottling, it would be so much the better. When it is bottled it should be in "fine" condition—and done in cool or clear cold weather. The bottles should be carefully cleaned, and, when filled, as carefully corked, and placed upon their sides in a cold cellar.

The preparation of the casks, for containing the wine at the vintage, and subsequently, is a matter of the very first importance. Under no circumstances whatever, use a cask that has had anything in it—unless it has been Catawba wine. If new casks are to be used, they should be made of well seasoned white oak—and may be of any size from 40 to 50,000 gallons. They should be very strong, and painted or varnished. Previous to using, they should be sealed for several weeks, by being filled with pure water, changed occasionally, and then just previous to using them should be rinsed out with hot water, and fumigated with sulphur. This latter process is accomplished by dipping a strip of muslin rag about two inches in width, of any length, into a pan of melted sulphur, and when dry, tearing it off into lengths of about ten or twelve inches. Use one of these pieces for each cask, by attaching it to a bit of wire made fast to the under side of the bung, setting fire to it, and suspending it in the casks—until entirely consumed; when the wire with the tinder attached should be carefully withdrawn. Casks which have had the same kind of wine in previously, should also be carefully washed out and fumigated. If new wine has stood in them for a long time, the sides will become encrusted with the deposit of *wine-stain*—or tartar of potash; in order to remove which, effectually, the heads will have to be taken out, and replaced after cleansing. Many persists in using whiskey, brandy, or foreign wine casks, for putting Catawba wine in. They might as well use a fish-barrel. No scalding or cleansing will remove the flavor from the wood which has become saturated with the liquor it previously contained.

There is no more sensitive wine made or known than the Catawba, and much of the bad-flavored wine that is found is caused by this violation of common sense. A brandy cask might be used, after sacrificing its contents two or three times, by ruining that quantity of otherwise good wine, but not until then. It would be far better economy to buy new casks at once. As no means of adulteration exist but what may readily be detected, no motive, it is hoped, will ever induce the attempt to make or offer any but a pure wine—the universal introduction of which is the surest step towards obtaining a temperate instead of an intemperate population.

These are made in Cincinnati what are termed *saccharine*. The only true sweet Catawba is that made by adding sugar in considerable quantities before fermentation. This is at least honest—if people will have a sweet wine—through the pure, simple, fermented juice—should be preferred; but there are those who make and offer for sale a "sweet Catawba," as the unfermented juice of the grape. This is not wine; the wine is too undiluted juice of the grape, not sugar, or else. The article just referred to is made by the introduction of potash, dead spirits, mortars, sugar, which extract and dilute the pulp, and subject it to a fermenting process, it is converted into a basis for an intensely black and very fine ink, for copper-plate printing.

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