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ry labors at Athens, and the last ten years of his life in Caesarea, spent in delivering public lectures and daily homilies, and in writing his great work against Celsus, we shall look with intense interest. In the volume on which we have now commented, the author has shown much diligence and distinguished ability. Particularly does he excel in those minute microscopic details which are the charm of biography, and which alone can breathe the spirit of life and reality into general history. But he passes some judgments and advances some opinions with which we cannot agree. In his theology we have not entire confidence. He has too strong a sympathy with the philosophical and theological peculiarities of Origen. But the historical investigations are conducted with manifest integrity and candor.

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## ARTICLE VII.

### THE WINES OF MOUNT LEBANON.

By Rev. Eli Smith, Missionary in Syria.

THE following communication was written in Beirût in February, 1845. If the statements contained in it are not full in every point, it will be remembered, I trust, that the article was written in a country where it was very difficult to obtain authentic and exact information. I have selected such information as rests, I believe, upon good authority, and have preferred, where such cannot be found, to be silent. I may add, that having had very little to do with wines all my life, my knowledge on this subject was very vague, until I entered upon the present investigation for the purpose of writing the following Article. Some of my previous impressions I have now been obliged to correct. My information has been obtained from seven districts of Mt. Lebanon, viz. Bsherry, Kesrawân, the Katî'a, Metn, Jurd, Shelhâr, and Menâsîf, extending from Tripoli nearly to Sidon.

The methods of making wine in this region are numerous, but may be reduced to three classes.

1. *The simple juice of the grape is fermented, without desiccation or boiling.* The quantity thus made is small, and except in particular cases, where the soil or climate is favorable, it will not keep. Bhamdûn, a village in the Jurd, is the only place where I have seen this method of manufacture. There the average temperature of the air in August, has been found for two years, to be about 70°, and this winter one fall of snow has lain for a month on a part of the vineyards, before it entirely melted away. Yet, though the climate is so temperate, the wine I am speaking

of will not keep a year. It is made by treading the grapes in baskets, through which the juice runs, and is thus separated from the skins and seeds. The quantity of wine produced is in weight about half the weight of the grapes pressed. It is harsh and unwholesome, but possesses rather strong intoxicating powers.

2. *The juice of the grape is boiled down before fermentation.*—In this way it is made in much larger quantities, especially in places which manufacture it for sale. The must is first separated from the skins, and the boiling is done before fermentation. The effect is to clarify the must, by causing the crude substances to rise in the form of a scum, which is removed by a skimmer. As soon as this ceases to rise, the boiling is stopped, and the must set aside for fermentation. The quantity is usually diminished only four or five per cent. by boiling, and the wine is commonly sweet.

3. *The grapes are partially dried in the sun before being pressed.*—Wine is made in this way in nearly or quite as large quantities as the preceding. The most approved method is the following. The grapes, stems and all, are spread in the sun from five to ten days, until the stems are entirely dry. They are then pressed, and the must, with the skins and stems unseparated, is put into open jars. During fermentation, it is stirred every day in order that the scum which rises may sink to the bottom, and not by contact with the air contract a sourness which would spoil the wine. In this state it is left a month or so, after which it is strained off, and sealed up in close vessels. The object of leaving the wine upon the lees, or sediment of skins, seeds and stems, is to refine it. It acquires a richer color, and the dried stems absorb the sour and acrid particles. The longer it is left within a limited period, the better it becomes. Wine thus made is usually astringent, and keeps better than either of the kinds above mentioned. The superior of a convent in the Metn, which makes about 900 gallons a year, told me, that by boiling he had not been able for years to make wine that would keep a twelve-month, owing to something peculiar in the soil around his convent. He had now adopted the plan of sunning the grapes, and he found no difficulty in keeping it. His grapes, thus treated, yield about thirty per cent. their weight in wine. A man of my acquaintance at Bhamdûn made some wine this way last year, as an experiment. Fifty *rolles* of grapes, after being exposed seven or eight days to the sun, until their stems were quite dry, made  $16\frac{1}{2}$  *rolles* of wine. This wine was of the yellow astringent kind, had an almost aromatic flavor, and a good deal of strength. It should be remarked, that not near all the difference in quantity here mentioned as yielded, between the third and the first two methods, is owing to the drying of the grapes. In the instance last spoken of, the stems and skins left in the must, absorbed a large quantity, which was taken out with them and distilled into brandy. Different kinds of grapes, also, yield very different quantities of juice. Wine made in this way, will, I am told, sometimes burn, and even become thick.

There is often a combination of the processes above described. Sometimes in the *first*, the juice is not separated from the stems and skins, until after fermentation; as described under the third process. When the

grapes come to unusual maturity, wine thus made is said sometimes to keep well. Indeed, it should be remarked, that the ripest grapes are always preferred for wine; and for this reason the leaves are often picked from the vines in order to expose the grapes more fully to the sun. Hence, also, a larger portion of the grapes that grow low down on the mountains, is made into wine, than of those that are cultivated near their summits. An acquaintance at Bhamdûn made some wine last year in the manner just described. It was of the same kind with that of his neighbor who dried his grapes, but its color was lighter, its taste harsher, and it had much less body. Sometimes, in the *second* process, the grapes are first sunned. In the *third*, also, the must is sometimes boiled a little with the stems and skins in it, so as to separate a part of the scum. It is thus made to partake of the taste of both the sweet and astringent wines, and is said to keep better than the latter. It will exhilarate as much as the astringent, but will not intoxicate so soon.

I have not been able to learn that sour wines are made in any part of the country.

According to statements I have received from the distillers at Beirût, the yellow astringent wines usually yield the most brandy; though some sweet wines are equal to them. The quantity depends upon the body, or what they call the *thickness* of the wine; and that depends a good deal upon the nature of the soil on which the grapes grow. Whether the wine is made by drying the grapes or boiling the must, is, they say, a matter of indifference. The same quantity of grapes, I am assured, made into wine in either of the three processes above described, will yield the same quantity of brandy. *The best wines yield 33 per cent. of what is called good brandy.* Whether it is equal to proof spirit, I do not know.

I have no means of ascertaining how much wine is made in Syria, or in Mount Lebanon. It is not the most important, but rather the least so, of all the objects for which the vine is cultivated. The principal vine-growing regions, are the more elevated parts of the mountains. The vineyards of Bhamdûn, which is nearly 4000 feet above the sea, cover an unbroken space, about two miles long by half a mile wide. The vines are trained on the ground. During the season of grapes which lasts about three months, they form the principal food of the inhabitants. Besides what is thus consumed, the village makes about 180,000 lbs. of raisins, one third of which is for home consumption, and about 24,000 lbs. of *dibs*, all of which is also for domestic use. The wine made is an item of no consideration; it amounts only to a few gallons. The grapes, when dried into raisins, yield about 30 per cent. their weight, and about 25 per cent. when made into *dibs*. The surplus raisins are carried to the city markets, where they are manufactured into a species of candy, call *heldweck*, which is much eaten by all classes; or steeped in water for a drink, which is much used, especially by the Mohammedans during Ramadân; or a small portion of them is distilled into brandy. In many places, the proportion of wine made, is greater than at Bhamdûn; and in a few it is the principal object for which the vine is cultivated.

Wine in Syria is not an article of exportation. Small quantities pass

through the custom-house annually, but they are chiefly shipped as presents to friends in other countries. An English house, some years ago, shipped six cases to London for trial. It lay there in the custom-house two years for want of a market, which it would not command because of its having too little body. When it was finally about to be sold by the government for the duties, the owners ordered it to be reshipped. They finally drank it at their own tables in Beirut, where it arrived in a good state of preservation. It was of the ordinary strength, and not brandied. Before leaving Beirut, it had only been filtered through paper on being bottled, and that chiefly to clarify its color. In 1835, I sent a bottle of unstrained, unbranded Mt. Lebanon wine to a friend in the United States as a curiosity. It had then been in the cellar of the British consul here, more than a year, and in 1840 I found that my friend had some of it still on hand. It was in a good state of preservation, having no acetous taste whatever. I do not certainly know in what way either of these wines was made, but I believe it was in the third mentioned above. I cannot learn that there is any particular difficulty in preserving Mt. Lebanon wines that have been properly made, even in the warm climate of Beirut. An acquaintance has just told me, that he has now on hand wines that are six or seven years old, unfiltered and unbranded, and they are still good.—The price of good wine is about 3 cts. the pint.

The process of filtering through paper, mentioned above, and indeed that of straining in any way, after the wine is first separated from the skins of the grapes, seems to be hardly practised at all by the natives. Only one individual has told me that they ever filter through paper. He said it was done by some connoisseurs, not to make the wine less exhilarating, but to remove the gross particles, which injure the stomach and brain. It exhilarates as much, but will not so soon make a man dead drunk. I have been told that the same result is sometimes obtained, by putting a few drops of olive oil in a bottle of wine.

The habit of enforcing wines, by adding brandy, is here, so far as I have been able to learn, entirely unknown. I am always answered, "brandy is dearer than wine; how can it, therefore, be used for purposes of adulteration?" Equally unknown are drugged wines of any kind.—On the other hand, unintoxicating wines, I have not been able to hear of. All wines, they say, will intoxicate more or less. So in regard to fermentation, when inquiring if there exists any such thing as unfermented wine, I have uniformly been met with a stare of surprise. The very idea seems to be regarded as an absurdity. The name for wine in Arabic (خمر), the same as the Hebrew (יַיִן) is derived from the word that means to ferment. It is cognate with the word for leaven, and itself signifies also fermentation. I have not been able to learn, even, that any process is ever adopted for arresting the vinous fermentation before it is completed.

In regard to the wine used at the sacrament, I have questioned both papal and Greek priests, and received the same answer. It must, they say, be perfect, pure wine. If unfermented, it will not answer, nor will it if the acetous fermentation be commenced. The acknowledgment of

the necessity of fermentation by the papists, is worthy of special notice, inasmuch as they reject fermented bread. This rejection is owing to their belief that our Saviour used unleavened bread at the institution of the ordinance; and their admission of fermented wine, consequently, indicates a belief that he used fermented wine, notwithstanding it was the feast of unleavened bread. To this, so far as I have observed, the custom of the Jews in Palestine now corresponds. In 1835, I called on the chief Rabbi of the Spanish Jews in Hebron, during the feast, and was treated with unleavened bread and wine. Finding the wine was fermented, I asked him how he could consistently use it, or have it in his house. He replied, that as the vinous fermentation was completed, and there was no tendency to the acetous, it did not come within the prohibition of the law; and that if any wine was found at the beginning of the feast, in danger of running into the acetous fermentation, it was in that case removed.

The only form in which the unfermented juice of the grape is preserved, is that of *dibs*, which may be called grape molasses. The juice, immediately on being expressed from the grape, is mixed with a small quantity of clay, and then boiled down about one half or until there remains about 25 per cent. of the weight of the grapes. The people say the object of the clay is to clarify the juice; but it seems also to have an influence on its sweetness. A friend of mine last year made some grape syrup, by simply boiling the juice without the clay, and it retained the acidulous taste of the grape; whereas *dibs* has nothing of it, but is a pure sweet. In its ordinary state it has the consistency of molasses; but in some places where the best is made, it is beaten after it becomes cold, until it assumes a bright yellow color, and the consistency of ice cream; in which state it remains until the next summer. It enters so largely, as I have mentioned above, into the family stores in some parts, that at Bhamdún, for example, a place containing not over 600 souls, about 24,000 lbs. are made and laid up, which requires about a quarter of the grapes of the village. It is classed among the eatables, and not among the articles to be drunken. I am told that it is sometimes used to sweeten water for drink, but I do not remember that I have ever seen it. It is generally eaten in its simple state with bread, or used in cooking. As found in the city markets, this article is very often adulterated with the juice of the *kharâmûb*, a sweet pod which is generally supposed to be the husks with which the prodigal son fed the swine, and is considered the lowest kind of human nourishment. I do not see how there should be any more difficulty in exporting *dibs*, than there is in exporting molasses. I once sent a quantity to a friend in England, which I believe arrived safe. Others have been equally successful in sending it to the United States. The price of the best is about 3½ cts. the pound.