

OUR OUT-DOOR GRAPES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE NATIVE SPECIES OF NORTH AMERICA.



AS far as limits will permit, it will be our purpose to take a retrospective course along the pathway of the development of the Grape, from the period of the discovery of this continent, to the present day. The first colonist of North America found wild grapes in profusion and distinguished the species as the Fox and Frost grape. As early as 1564 wine was made of them. An early writer on the subject tells us, the Rev. F. Higginson of the Massachusetts Colony wrote home in 1629, "Excellent vines are here up and down the woods, our Governor has already planted a vineyard with great hope of increase."

Grapes were found by the first settlers of Canada along the St. Lawrence as far north as the Isle of Orleans, and we conclude that they were in abundance from the fact of its being called by Jacques Cartier "Isle de Bacchus." Indeed from early accounts our ancestors showed equally as much enthusiasm over the grapes found indigenous to the country, as that evinced by us in this last half of our century over the descendants of the same given us by nature and art.

The late Prof. Asa Gray arranges the genus *Vitis* of North America into four divisions, viz.: *Vitis Labrusca*, or Fox grape; *Vitis cordifolia*, or Frost grape; *Vitis vulpina*, Muscadine, or Southern Fox grape; and *Vitis aestivalis*, or Summer grape. The great array of varieties now in cultivation are the result of either spontaneous or of artificial hybridizing.

Except in California and Mexico attempts on this continent to introduce the European species of grapes have ultimately proved failures. While one of our native species, from the resistant power of its roots to the Phylloxera, has given the European vineyardist valuable stock for grafting upon, that have saved their vineyards from total destruction.

To the *Vitis Labrusca* of Linnæus we owe the greater number of our present varieties. Its native home is east of the Alleghany Mountains, from South Carolina extending north to Canada. It adapts itself to varied soils and conditions, attaining the greatest size in the granitic soil of New England. From the class known as the Northern *Labrusca* our most valuable hybrids have been obtained.

The persistence of this type is so marked that where its existence as forming one of the parents of an hybrid has been in doubt, the question has been determined by planting the seeds and the reversion of some of the seedlings settled the point.

The first variety of this species that obtained wide celebrity was introduced by Mr. R. Prince of Flushing, Long Island, about 1820. He obtained it from Mrs. Isabella Gibbs, who discovered it growing wild in North Carolina in 1816