

with the sulphates of lime and potash. Large quantities of clarets are manufactured in this country from inferior French wine and rough cider; the colour being imparted to it by wormwood or cochineal. Madeira consists of Vidonia with a little Cape; to which are added bitter almonds and sugar; and Vidonia and Cape are adulterated with cider and rum, carbonate of soda being added to correct the acidity. Champagne is made from gooseberries, rhubarb stalks and sugar; the product being largely consumed at balls, races, and public dinners. And a great part of the wine of Germany and France has ceased to be the juice of the grape at all. The processes of blending, softening, fortifying, sweetening, plastering, &c., &c., are carried on to such an extent that it is hardly possible to obtain a sample of genuine wine even at first hand. Moreover, books are written on the subject, giving the plainest directions for the fabrication of every kind of wine. The materials for such fabrication are numerous, and among them we notice such delightful things as these—elderberry, logwood, Brazil-wood, red sanders-wood, cudbear, red beetroot—for colour; lime, litharge, carbonate of lime, carbonate of soda, carbonate of potash—to correct acidity; catechu, sloe leaves and oak bark—for astringency; sulphate of lime, gypsum or Spanish earth and alum—for removing colour; cane sugar—for giving sweetness and body; acetic ether—for giving bouquet or flavour.

These statements seem almost incredible; but we think that the authority on which we make them will command some respect, if not entire belief. What we have written above is condensed from, is almost word for word, an extract from, the article on Adulteration in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. I., published only the year before last. So that this is not an old story of old tricks and rascalities; it is not in a single instance does the writer of the article, when speaking of wines, use the verbs in the past tense; he does not say that champagne was at one time produced from rhubarb stalks and gooseberries, but that it is so produced now; and he declares that, at this time (at any rate, the year before last, and things have scarcely mended much since), "it is hardly possible to obtain a sample of genuine wine, even at first hand."

Will "the trade" remove our anxiety by telling us, assuring us, proving to us that the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is in error? Will "the trade" repudiate these dreadful charges? Will "the trade" guarantee the genuineness of what it sells for port, sherry, claret, &c.? On the assumption that such a standard authority as that from which we quote is correct, we make the remarks that follow, but shall really be delighted to find, that we are altogether wrong and that we have not been swindled, poisoned and defrauded as this writer tells us we have been.

If it be "hardly possible to obtain a sample of genuine wine even at first hand," what do we get when we dine at an inn or ask for a glass of wine at a restaurant or a railway refreshment room? What abominable messes and mixtures and middles those must be which are had from neither first nor second hand, but have gone through no one knows how many hands, all skilful in such rogues. Now, to call a spade a spade,—the proper thing to say at the counter of the restaurant would be, not—"let me have a glass of

sherry" but "bring me, if you please, a mixture of your best plaster of Paris, bitter almonds and blood." And at dinner, unless you have, and are sure that you have, "a sample of genuine wine at first hand," don't ask your friend to take port, but say—"Do help yourself to this fine old preparation of German bilberries, gum dragon, and salt of tartar." And when you have a wedding breakfast at your house, be honest with your guests and instead of cheating them into the absurd belief that they are drinking champagne, be outspoken enough to tell the waiters to take round the rhubarb stalks and gooseberries. And this might be a useful meditation for a gentleman on visiting his wine cellar—"Here is my choicest elderberry, and here my most divine Brazil wood; in this bin I have laid down my oak bark and sloe leaves, in that, my plaster of Paris, and above it is my pale, dry sherry, charged with the sulphates of lime and potash." The doctors know very well that not one in a thousand of their patients can obtain "a sample of genuine wine at first hand," and it would be only honest when they prescribe claret, to order it in this form—"take some rough cider, coloured with cochineal." And what a singular document might be made by faithfully translating the wine merchant's bill—

To the washings of brandy casks	£5 10 0
"Ginseng	9 10 0
"Spanish earth	5 4 0
"Lime and litharge	8 10 0
"Gooseberries and rhubarb	17 0 0
Total for making a fool of yourselves ..	£37 9 0

And are these the horrid beverages for which we are such simpletons as to pay from 3s. to 15s. a bottle, none of it obtained "at first hand," and therefore we may suppose none of it "genuine wine." With the witches in Macbeth, the makers of these drinks might sing, as they watch the process—

"For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble."

As far as wine is concerned, nothing can be more calculated to make men abstainers than the consideration of such facts as we have noted above. Gentlemen, sipping their port and claret after dinner and talking, as at such times they often do, of the intemperance of the working classes, are apt to wax indignant when they speak of the detestable things with which the poor man's beer is adulterated; little supposing that the stuff they themselves are drinking, and for which they pay such a price, is made up of things far worse. Well might Solomon say, "wine is a mocker." This it was even in his time, and this it is much more in ours. For they did not know everything down in Judea. The wine merchants of Solomon's day were not acquainted with plaster of Paris, nor can we suppose that gooseberries or logwood were much in their line of business, to say nothing of Spanish earth or catechu. Wine, as we have it—not "genuine at first hand"—is a mocker. It mocks us with every kind of false pretence as to its character and its value; it mocks us with a promise of health and strength, which it is not in its vile nature to afford; it mocks us with a gratification that often ends in suffering; it mocks us by stealing away our brains and making us talk and act like idiots; to the pocket, to the stomach, to the head and to the heart, it is a mockery altogether, and as

Solomon very truly observes, "whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise; . . . at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."—*Plain Talk*.

For the Young.

DESPAIRING DICK AND ROBIN READY.

Richard and Robin Broadax were the sons of a well-to-do miller, and I cannot better describe the difference between them than by quoting the old nursery rhyme—

"Richard and Robin were two pretty men,
They lay to bed till the clock struck ten;
Robin starts up and looks at the sky,
"Oh ho! brother Richard, the sun's very high!
I'll go before on little Jack Nag,
And do you follow after with basket and bag."

This was the usual mode of procedure with my two heroes. Robin always had his eyes open first, and was ready to seize upon any advantage which offered. He rode forward on any little Jack Nag of an opportunity there was going, while poor Dick brought up the rear, under all the heat and burthens of the day.

When they were boys, and had a hard task to learn, Robin put his mind to it; and though he was not more gifted than Dick, he accomplished it first, because Dick always thought, "I can never get that; it is too hard! I can't possibly learn it, so it is no use to try," until at last he had to be made to do it, with the ruler and rattan!

Richard was always saying, "Never borrow trouble," which he interpreted to mean, "Never do anything you can help doing, and until all exertion until you are forced to it." Robin's favourite maxim was, "Drive your work—don't let your work drive you!"

So, when they grew up, Richard always fancied everything too much for him, and never made any effort till pushed to extremity by necessity—like a dog by an unavoidable bull, whom he only tries to run away from until he gets pinned to some wall by the pursuing animal. Now Robin, in a dilemma, was ready to take it by the horns and overturn it, which is the easiest way of escape, if one can only have the courage and promptness to do it.

Richard let everything overcome him from faint-heartedness. Robin considered himself a match for whatever might turn up. So Richard got the name of Despairing Dick, and Robin was called Robin Ready.

Just before their father died, he said to his sons, "I leave Richard my mill, because all he has to do is to put the corn in and let it come out flour, and there is no risk or danger about it. And to Robin I leave my farm. It is a poor bit of land, not worth half so much as the mill. But Robin inherits my energy and hopeful temper, and they are treasures in themselves. So boys, you will soon be equally rich, and I don't know how I could do more fairly by you."

When the old man was dead, his two sons separated—one went to his mill, the other to his farm.

It was winter, the time for improvements and fencing. Robin went heartily to work, and by the labour of his hands he put up substantial stone walls, trenched a meadow, built a spring-house, and hauled off stones that cumbered his fields. He repaired the house