

Assumption," " St. Bienventura and Bernardo," " St. John, the Virgin and Child," " St. Antonio," and " the Annunciation." The paintings in the hospital de la Caridad I have also mentioned as the efforts of Murillo's ripest genius. Several of these, particularly " the Prodigal Son," and " the Deliverance of St. Peter from Prison," are no longer to be found there; but " John of God," " Moses striking the Rock," and " the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes," have escaped the chances of war, and the dangers of covetousness.

In Seville there are several private collections of pictures,—one of these, the gallery of Mr. Williams, rich in the works of Murillo. Among these pictures I cannot help naming a few of the most remarkable. There is that delightful portrait of Murillo, by himself, which I have mentioned elsewhere; there is a Christ on the Cross, painted upon what was formerly the lid of a relic box, but now let into a frame,—a gem of great beauty and value. There is a passage in the life of St. Augustin, who, when washing the feet of some pilgrims, discovers that one of them is

our Saviour ; the expression of mingled love and fear, which the painter has thrown into the countenance of the Saint, when, having made the discovery, he raises his eyes towards Christ,—is most happily conceived and executed. But the true gem of this collection is a “Christ crowned with Thorns,” one of the happiest efforts of Murillo’s ripest genius. Besides these there are four sketches of “the Prodigal Son receiving his Inheritance,—setting out upon his journey,—devouring his living, and feeding swine ;” certain passages in the life of St. Thomas, a Virgin and Child, another Christ, a Madonna,—all of Murillo ; and several good pictures by Velasquez, Morales, and Españoletto.

There is also a collection of pictures in the house of Mr. Bravo. Among a great many indifferent pictures in this collection, there is an excellent “Magdalen,” that most difficult of all subjects,—in which the painter must represent human passions, and yet passions no longer triumphant,—heaven before, and yet earth still in sight. There is a curious picture here, of St. Anthony preach-

ing to the Fishes. The Saint, it seems, had preached to the people, who would not listen to him, and to convince them of his divine appointment, he went to the sea-shore and addressed the fishes, who are seen with their heads above water gasping for breath, and gaping for wisdom.

As the alcazar of Seville is far inferior as a Moorish remain, to the alhambra of Granada, I will not dwell upon its description; the building itself would indeed be difficult to describe. There are seventy-eight rooms, all communicating with each other,—most of the walls of carved wood-work, or of composition. The only really curious and splendid room, is the ambassador's hall. The garden is more curious and more interesting than the palace; and from its shade, its fountains, and the delightful fragrance of its trees, shrubs, and flowers, I found it at all times a delightful morning retreat. The hedges are of small-leaved myrtle; geraniums, and that delicious plant, *yerba Louisa*, cover the walls, and hang among the bushes; and through the whole there is a thick shade of orange and lemon-trees,—the various tinted fruit,

from the pale straw to the deep golden, beautifully mingling with the fresh and unfading green: every where around are seen fountains throwing out the clearest water; and by very simple machinery, a thousand minute pipes dispersed over the walks and beds, shower a thousand crystal streams upon the paths, and wake new fragrance from the drooping flowers. The garden is surrounded by a high wall, near the top of which there is a walk under an arcade, supported by innumerable pillars. From this walk there is a most enchanting prospect,—on one side the fine fertile plain, with its innumerable gardens and orangeries,—on another, the towers of the cathedral, and the numerous and more distant spires of the city; the old Roman aqueduct, with its four hundred arches,—the river seen gliding by the openings left between the orange groves,—the magnificent convent of the Carmelites on the opposite bank, with its deep surrounding shades and stately palm-trees; and below, encircled by the Moorish wall, the pleasure grounds of Moorish kings, with all their rich variety of beautiful and mellow fruit,—their

mingled fragrance of myrtle, and geranium, and orange, and their cool and sparkling fountains.

I did not leave Seville without visiting the snuff manufactory—the most celebrated in Spain. The building in which the manufacture is carried on, is more like a fortified palace, than a house destined for the preparation of tobacco. It has four regular fronts; two of them six hundred feet long—the other two, four hundred and eighty feet. This manufactory is sadly on the decline; in other times, the complement of men and women used to exceed three thousand, and upwards of three hundred mules and horses were employed; forty years ago, that number was reduced to one thousand seven hundred workmen, and a hundred mules. When I visited it, no more than four hundred men were employed, and eleven mules; and in place of two hundred grindstones, which formerly were constantly at work, four only were in requisition. This falling off is to be attributed partly to the extensive contraband trade carried on through the free ports of Gibraltar and Cadiz; and

partly to the high price which government puts upon the manufactured article. The stock on hand at present exceeds two millions of arobas (fifty millions of pounds); forty years ago, the stock on hand amounted to five millions of pounds; of the snuff at present on hand, there are eight thousand canisters fifty years old. It is not likely, according to the present policy of the government, that this stock will diminish; the price was only lately raised from thirty-two to forty-eight reals, and the demand has constantly diminished. I have been speaking of what is called Seville snuff; there is another department, for the manufacture of rappee, which is now more in vogue, and does not accumulate in the same ratio as the other. Government derives a profit upon the manufacture and sale, of seventy per cent. before paying the expenses of the establishment. The workmen employed are paid six, seven, and eight reals per day, according to their ability—those who twist cigars, work by the piece. It happened to be the hour of dismissal when I visited the establishment, and I noticed that each workman was taken

into a little inclosed place, and underwent a rigorous search; they were even obliged to take off their shoes. Most of the workmen looked unhealthy. I learned that during the heats of summer, as many as twelve are sometimes carried to the hospital in a day; and that they almost invariably die of disease in the lungs at an early age.

Although the remains of the Moorish kingdom are most conspicuous in Seville, the empire of the Romans has also left many interesting traces behind: the most interesting of these, are the ruins of the city of Italica, which in past times, gave birth to Trajan, Adrian, and Theodosius. Little now remains except the traces of the amphitheatre; and the general features of a Roman amphitheatre are too well known to require description. There is little doubt that by digging, many interesting remains of this city might be discovered; stones, shewing Latin inscriptions, are occasionally laid bare; and it is evident that many traces of a city so large as to have been a bishop's see even in later times, must be concealed. It cannot have all crumbled away.

If a stranger wished to select a Spanish city as a residence, Seville would certainly be entitled to his preference. The climate, though not altogether faultless, is perhaps as near perfection as can be obtained. It is said, that there is not a day throughout the year that the sun does not shine upon Seville. Winter is scarcely felt; and if the heats of summer are oppressive, the streets, the houses, and the economy of life, are all adapted to the climate; and the demands of heat become, in fact, sources of luxury. The country around Seville is all that one could desire; and its delicious vines, and if possible, still more delicious fruits, ought not to be omitted in enumerating the advantages of Seville. As for another class of *agremens*,—excellent music is always within one's reach at Seville; for music is universally, and successfully cultivated; and some period of the year, there is generally a good Italian opera. Spanish society, too, is not unattainable in Seville; and there are several agreeable English and French families who exercise the hospitalities of their country. Let me not omit to name, among these, the house of Mr.

Wetherell, whose unbounded charities have long endeared him to the inhabitants of Seville,—and whose many attentions I gratefully and eagerly acknowledge; and I must not omit to add, that Seville is within a day's journey of Cadiz, the gayest and most hospitable city of Spain; and that by the aid of a friend at Cadiz, English newspapers and English publications received by the steamboat, may be smuggled up the river to Seville.

Before leaving Seville, I ascertained that the following are the prices of different articles of consumption.

Beef and mutton, twelve quartos the lb. of sixteen oz., or $3\frac{3}{4}d$. Pork, fifteen quartos; Veal, fourteen quartos; but the meat in Seville is indifferent, with the exception of pork.

Fowls, $2s. 4d.$ a pair. A turkey, from $3s.$ to $5s.$ or $6s.$, according to size.

Milk, $6d.$ a pint. Eggs, $10d.$ a dozen.

Fruit and vegetables excellent, and remarkably cheap.

The best bread, eight quartos per lb. The bread of Seville is generally reputed to be

the most excellent in Spain. I did not find it so; it is not leavened; it is too close in the grain, and tastes more like very white biscuit, than bread.

An arroba of small sherry costs fifty reals; the arroba runs to about twenty-one bottles; so that the wine is nearly 6*d.* per bottle; but this is far superior to the wine which is drank by the inhabitants generally.

Game of most descriptions is plentiful and reasonable. A pair of partridges costs 1*s.* 6*d.*; a hare, about 1*s.* 4*d.*

The wages of a female servant are about 5*l.*; a good cook has three times as much.

Clothing in Seville is reasonable. English calicos, and English printed muslins, may be bought as cheap as in England.

Labour, in Seville, is generally paid by the piece; but some kind of artisans are hired by the day. A stone-mason receives 3*s.* 6*d.*; a bricklayer, 2*s.* 6*d.*; and a white-washer, no less than a dollar. This is one of the most profitable trades in Seville; for almost every respectable house is white-washed three times in the year. The consumption of meat in Seville in the year 1819, was one million,

nine hundred and ninety-one thousand, three hundred and sixty lbs. A hundred years before, the consumption was nearly two millions of lbs. less. Seville has also increased in population. Forty years ago, it contained eighty thousand, two hundred and sixty persons. By the latest census, the population somewhat exceeded ninety thousand, exclusive of the religious orders, whose numbers amount to four thousand and forty,—two thousand eight hundred friars, and twelve hundred and forty nuns,—but this includes the convents beyond the walls.

A steam-boat leaves Seville every second day, for St. Lucar and Cadiz, alternately. It is a great convenience to the inhabitants of Seville, to be carried direct to Cadiz; because the journey over land from St. Lucar, is both tedious and dangerous; but as I was desirous of seeing the country, I preferred the steam-boat to St. Lucar. Between the city gate and the river side, I was obliged to pay three sets of custom-house officers, that I might escape the delay and inconvenience of having my baggage searched; and when I remonstrated the third time against the ex-

tortion, the officer candidly told me, it was all they had to depend upon. The boat started at nine; and so precise are its arrangements, that although it had not parted six yards from the shore, the master refused to take in four passengers who were running down the bank. Half a league from Seville, we passed an extensive line of Moorish walls and fortifications, crowning a height about a mile from the river; these now serve as the garden wall of the Franciscan convent, which is erected behind. The weather was, as usual, delightful, and the views from deck, were in the highest degree pleasing. The right bank of the river is covered with olive grounds, which slope upward to the adjoining elevations, covered with gardens and convents and villages. The left bank presents a constant succession of extensive orange groves; and on both sides, there is a carpet of the finest verdure. St. John's Hill, about two leagues from Seville, is another fine object; this is the highest ground near Seville, and is a famous resort of parties of pleasure: the handsome and extensive convent of Hieronimites, and many little chapels and her-

mitages,—among others, the chapel of the Virgin, who insisted upon dwelling here,—crown the elevation; and a subject village straggles down the hill, and nestles at its foot. The passengers were numerous; and among them, was a fair sprinkling of friars of the Franciscan and Capuchin orders. These persons never forget that they have the reputation of poverty to support; and a contribution is accordingly always attempted, to pay their fares; and it generally succeeds. Before reaching St. Lucar, the master of the boat asked me if I wished to pay any thing for the friars; but my interrogatory in return, whether he charged them less than other passengers, prevented a repetition of the question. One passenger, however, subscribed liberally; this was a young officer, who, from the employment of king's page, had been promoted to a commission in the army, and was on his way to join his regiment at Cadiz. Whether Ferdinand had presented his page with a purse at parting may be doubted; but the young officer produced a purse marvellously well loaded, and presented a small gold piece of the value of

two dollars, to the captain of the vessel, towards the expenses of the friars. Something, I think, may be gathered from this, as to the education of those who are brought up at court. The behaviour of this king's page afforded me much entertainment: he occupied four chairs; sitting upon one, his legs upon another, and the two others occupied by his arms. He had two soldiers to wait upon him, and their services were in constant requisition: one presented him with a cigar, another fetched a light; one he employed in polishing the hilt of his sword, the other held his watch open, while he looked into it. Sometimes he sent for his dressing-box, which was opened and held for him, while he examined its contents; and then he sent for a case of pistols, or a small portmanteau; and, in fact, made himself be served as he had served the king, his master.

Below St. John's Hill, the banks of the Guadalquivir become flat, and are covered with immense herds of horses. The country is here entirely pasture land, but the grass is coarse, and the soil apparently wet and poor. Scarcely any houses are to be seen, except-

ing where an orange grove, breaking the monotony of the view, fringes the river; and the house of the proprietor is generally embowered in his orangery. At every orange grove, there is a wheel and buckets to raise water from the river, and carry it to the trees. The horses and cattle had generally selected these shady spots, to shelter themselves from the sun; and standing, or lying in the river, they gave a character of picturesqueness to the landscape, which it would not otherwise have possessed. About six leagues below Seville, the banks again rise; and villages, and churches, and convents are scattered upon the heights which rise about a mile from the river; but soon after this, every elevation disappears, and the Guadalquivir flows through a boundless level, covered with scanty herbage, scattered with numerous herds of horses and cattle, and dotted here and there with long mud houses, meant as a shelter to the animals, from the noonday heats. I observed here for the first time in my life, that delusion of which I had often heard—leading the traveller of the desert to expect a lake, where there is only

burning sand. The whole interior of the plain appeared like an immense sea; I distinctly saw the shadows of trees and houses seemingly in the water; but this was entirely a delusion; —the interior of the plain is sand, partially covered with very coarse grass. This plain stretches more than two leagues upon either side of the river, and it was with no small satisfaction, that I saw before me, though still far distant, the spires and buildings of St. Lucar. Owing to the state of the tide, however, we could not proceed so far as St. Lucar, but stopped at Bonanza, which is a league short of it. It was now nearly eight o'clock, and quite dark, excepting the starlight, and it became a question whether, and how to proceed. It had been announced that next morning at seven o'clock, an escort would leave St. Lucar for Port St. Mary; for, in this neighbourhood, an escort is considered necessary; and my object, therefore, was to reach St. Lucar: but I had heard such bad reports of this part of the road, and the men who offered to conduct me to St. Lucar had so much the appearance of rogues, that I hesitated to put myself under

their guidance, especially as the other passengers seemed to consider it the safer plan to remain at Bonanza. Two merchants of Cadiz, however, who wished to transact business at St. Lucar that night, proposed to me to join them, after they had applied in vain to most of the other passengers,—the king's page among the rest,—who, with his two soldiers, declined running any risk. I agreed to accompany them, and we hired two *caleches* and set out,—mine in front, that, as the merchants said, they might be able to keep an eye upon me and my driver. There is no road from Bonanza to St. Lucar; there is only a track among wild sand-hills, along the side of the river,—here at least a mile broad,—and there is not a single habitation the whole way. The driver walked at the head of the horse, leading it sometimes through deep sand,—oftener knee-deep in water; and the wild desolate country, seen beneath the star-light,—the uncertain and dangerous road,—and the low rush of the wide river, altogether contributed to give a character of great impressiveness to the scene. Coming suddenly upon a deep creek, I was

startled by the bright glare of torches illuminating the barren shore, and falling upon a circle of strange-looking men, some seated, some standing upon the sand, close to the water; they were hauling a boat upon the beach, and the guide told me they were contrabandisters, — a very suspicious crew to meet at such an hour, and in such a place. “ Buenas Noches Señores,” passed between us, — “ Vayan ustedes con Dios,” — “ Go with God,” and we passed on; and soon after we descried the lights of St. Lucar, where we arrived about half-past nine. A good supper, — rum and hot-water, and a fresh lemon, were soon placed upon the table, and sound sleep succeeded.

Next morning at seven, I was seated in my caleche, anxious to reach Cadiz. It was a curious scene that presented itself, — upwards of twenty caleches were assembled, some from St. Lucar, some from Xeres, but the greater number, with the steam-boat passengers who had arrived the same morning, from Bonanza, — and all united for common security, and to take advantage of the escort. We set off soon after seven, the caleches fol-

lowing each other in a line, and five men armed with guns and sabres on horseback, galloping to and fro; but generally two in front, two in the rear, and one reconnoitring; and in this order we wound among the wild hills that lie between St. Lucar and Port St. Mary. At a small venta half way, all the travellers were obliged to stop, that the caleches might not be too far separated from each other; and again resuming close order, we continued our journey. It appears extraordinary that an armed escort should be considered necessary on a short journey like this,—every day taken by travellers from Seville and Cadiz; and yet it seems improbable that the Steam-boat Company should put itself to the expense of maintaining and paying five mounted and armed men, unless they considered an escort absolutely necessary. The country between St. Lucar and Port St. Mary is wild, and for the most part uncultivated; some part of it is, however, under tillage; and in one field I noticed no fewer than twenty-four ploughs at work, each with a pair of oxen. The uncultivated land is covered with furze and aromatic plants; and

the aloe and prickly pear grow spontaneously in great luxuriance and abundance. We arrived at Port St. Mary about mid-day, and immediately encountered the scene of confusion invariably found wherever there is a much frequented ferry. Scores of caleche-men, who wished us to go round by land to Cadiz, vociferated their offers in our ears, swearing by all the saints, that it was impossible to cross the bar; boatmen, in as great numbers, swore, by their own peculiar saints, that there was no necessity to go by land, and that they could carry us safely over the bar: and tempted by the hope of dining in Cadiz, which I saw across the bay, not a league distant, I entrusted myself to the boatmen. The passage, till we crossed the bar, was tedious; but when this difficulty was overcome, we bounded merrily over the waves. The city is extremely imposing from the bay; it appears to stand upon an island, which it entirely covers with an irregular line of white buildings and ramparts; but upon looking more narrowly, a long, and almost invisible line is seen to connect it with the main land. The wind blew fresh; and the

bay was animated by innumerable boats, scudding in every direction, looking, with their great white sails, like enormous sea fowl cleaving the waves. We dropped under the quay about two o'clock, and I immediately made my way to the Posada Inglesa,—an hotel equalled by none that I had seen since leaving England.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XIV.

XERES, AND ITS WINES.

Journey to Xeres; the Vineyards, and their Produce; Amount of Export, and Official Tables for Ten Years; average Export and Price; Increase in the Trade; the Xeres Grape; Details respecting the Manufacture of Sherry; Pale Sherry and Brown Sherry; a curious Sherry; Amontillado; Adulterated Sherries, Inferior Sherries, and Low-priced Sherries; the Xeres Cellars; Varieties in Taste of Sherries; Knowledge of the Merchants; Management of the Vineyards; Wine Houses in Xeres and in Port St. Mary; Price of Sherry in Cadiz; Port St. Mary; the Theatre, and Liberal Opinions; Strength of the Liberal Party in this Neighbourhood; Return to Cadiz by Land; Isla; the Tongue of Cadiz.

I of course proposed visiting Xeres, the famous nursery of sherries, before finally leaving Cadiz for the eastern provinces; but learning accidentally, the day I arrived in Cadiz, that two of the gentlemen to whom I carried letters, were about to leave home in a

few days, I resolved to lose no time in visiting Xeres, and to defer, until my return, any inquiries respecting Cadiz and its neighbourhood. Accordingly, the morning after my arrival, I walked down to the quay, to take my place in some boat for Puerto de Santa Maria. It blew so hard, that no boat had crossed the bay that morning; and the boat that agreed to carry me across for about five times the usual fare, had no sooner cleared the harbour, that we saw the signal hoisted, declaring the port shut, owing to the dangerous state of the weather. We had a very rough and a very quick run, reaching Port St. Mary in little more than half an hour. From Port St. Mary to Xeres, it is about three leagues; and I immediately hired a caleche to carry me thither: the driver wished me to take an escort; but I had brought a light purse from Cadiz, and was resolved to risk it, rather than part with a couple of dollars. There is nothing interesting in the road between Port St. Mary and Xeres. The country is much the same as that which lies between St. Lucar and Port St. Mary,—wild,

badly cultivated, and thinly peopled. Nothing occurred on the road worthy of recording; and I reached Xeres about mid-day. I was provided with letters to the three principal houses,—those of Gordon, Penmartin, and Domecq,—and immediately hastened to present myself. In place of detailing the visits which I made to the different cellars, and the information I received in different quarters, in which there would necessarily be much repetition, I shall throw together, as connectedly as I can, the results of my inquiries and observations respecting the growth, preparation, and commerce of sherries.

The vineyards of Xeres lie scattered; but supposing them to be all concentrated, they might occupy about six miles square. They are mostly planted upon slopes; and the nearest vineyard to the city, is distant from it about half a league. It is impossible to approach to any thing like precision, in estimating the produce of these vineyards; all that can be known of this, must be gathered from the amount of export; but even the export tables do not indicate the quantity produced in the vineyards of Xeres; for, besides the

difficulty arising from ignorance as to the yearly accumulation or diminution of stock in the cellars of the different merchants, the wine growers import from the country lying to the right of the Guadalquivir, a quantity of wine called *Moquer*,—a cheap, light wine, which they mix with the Xeres before it comes into the hands of the grower: wines, so mixed, are called inferior sherries; they are quite well known to the Xeres merchants as mixed wines, and pass as low-priced sherries into the English markets, swelling the table of sherries exported from Cadiz. But although it is impossible to fix accurately the quantity of sherry produced, the export tables, of course, afford some data, and are interesting, as shewing the changes in taste and fashion, and as throwing light upon the general state of the trade.

The following note of exports I obtained through the kindness of Mr. Brackenbury, his Majesty's consul at Cadiz.

“The export of sherry wine and of others under the same denomination, from Xeres, and Port St. Mary, has been for the years following, as under :

“ In the year 1821, there were exported 1499 butts.

—	1822	—	11,508 $\frac{1}{2}$
—	1823	—	12,476 $\frac{1}{2}$
—	1824	—	15,059 $\frac{1}{2}$
—	1825	—	21,297 $\frac{3}{4}$
—	1826	—	no return.
—	1827	—	20,150
—	1828	—	26,901
—	1829	—	17,839.”

I expected to have received the note of the first half-year's export of 1830 ; but I could not obtain it before leaving Cadiz. I may state, however, that the export of 1830 was expected to fall below fourteen thousand butts.

Taking the average of the last eight years from the foregoing table, presuming the export of 1830 to be fourteen thousand butts, the average export will be seventeen thousand four hundred butts. The price varies much, from 15%. up to 65%. ; but as the lower priced sherries form the bulk of the export, the average must be stated low ; taking the result of the opinions of the most competent judges, the price of the export overhead, may be stated at 26%. per butt. The value of the sherries exported is therefore 452,000%. sterling—the duty upon the

export is 504,600/.; so that if freight and the profit of the merchant in London be added, the consumption of sherries exceeds one million sterling yearly. It will also be observed from the table, that the export for the years 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1830, has exceeded that of 1822, 1823, 1824; and 1825, by seventeen thousand five hundred and fifty butts, though the export of the last two years, has fallen under that of the two years immediately preceding them.

The grape that produces the wine of Xeres, is a green grape; it is allowed to become perfectly ripe, being plucked just before it begins to shrivel: this, in average years, is on the 9th of September,—a day marked in Catholic countries, by being the day before the feast of the immaculate Conception; but in less forward years, the plucking is deferred until the 15th of September, beyond which day it is never protracted. After the plucking, those growers who are the most attentive to their wines, place the grapes in baskets, exposed to the sun for forty-eight hours,—turning and sorting them all the

while, according as they appear to require this attention.

It has often been said that sherry is a compound wine; but this is a mistake. The best pale and light golden sherries are made from the pure Xeres grape, with only the addition of two bottles of brandy to a butt, which is no more than one two-hundred-and-fiftieth part. This brandy is of an excellent quality; it is imported from Catalonia, and seemed to me scarcely inferior to the best and purest cogniac. Neither are the deep golden and brown sherries of the best quality, compound wines, though they may be called mixed wines. The difference is thus produced:—If a butt of brown sherry be wanted, a butt of light sherry is boiled down to one-fifth part of its bulk, till it acquire a deep brown colour; and one half of this quantity is added to a butt of the best pale sherry, of course removing from it as much as makes room for this additional tenth-part of a butt of boiled wine. When it is said that a butt of light sherry is boiled down, it is not to be understood that this is wine of an inferior kind; it is wine

produced from the Xeres grape, planted upon a lighter soil, near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, and producing a somewhat lighter wine. To make a butt of brown sherry, a butt and a half is therefore required, deducting a tenth part; but the brown sherry is not more expensive, because the grape from which the boiled wine is made, is more abundant than the other grape, and consequently cheaper. This boiled wine is also mixed, in the proportion of one half, with unboiled wine,—not to be drank, but to be added in smaller or larger quantities to other sherries, for the mere purpose of giving them colour, should this be desired by the English merchant. It is evident, therefore, from these details, that although brown sherry cannot be said to be a compound wine, inasmuch as it is all the wine of Xeres,—the pale sherries are nevertheless the purest; and all the gradations of colour upon which so much stress is laid, have nothing to do with the quality of the wine, but depend entirely upon the greater or smaller quantity of boiled wine used for colouring it. Taste in wines is one of the most capricious things in the world.

I tasted, in the cellar of a merchant in Port St. Mary, a butt of sherry, more than one half of which was boiled wine,—not used for drinking, or meant for sale; but kept merely as colouring matter, and which came off as dark coloured as porter; and I found it delicious. I told the merchant to make an experiment of it, as curious sherry, and to send it to the English market; but he said no one would give the price at which he could afford to sell it: for, to prepare this single butt, three butts had been required—nearly half a butt of the unboiled wine, and more than two butts and a half of the boiled wine, reduced to one-fifth.

Amontillado, the produce also of the Xeres grape, is made either intentionally or accidentally: if it be intended to produce amontillado, the fruit is plucked a fortnight sooner than for sherry. But it is an extraordinary fact, that if a hundred butts of wine be taken from a Xeres vineyard, and treated in precisely the same way, several of them will, in all probability, turn out amontillado, without the grower or the merchant being able to assign any reason for this. Amontillado is