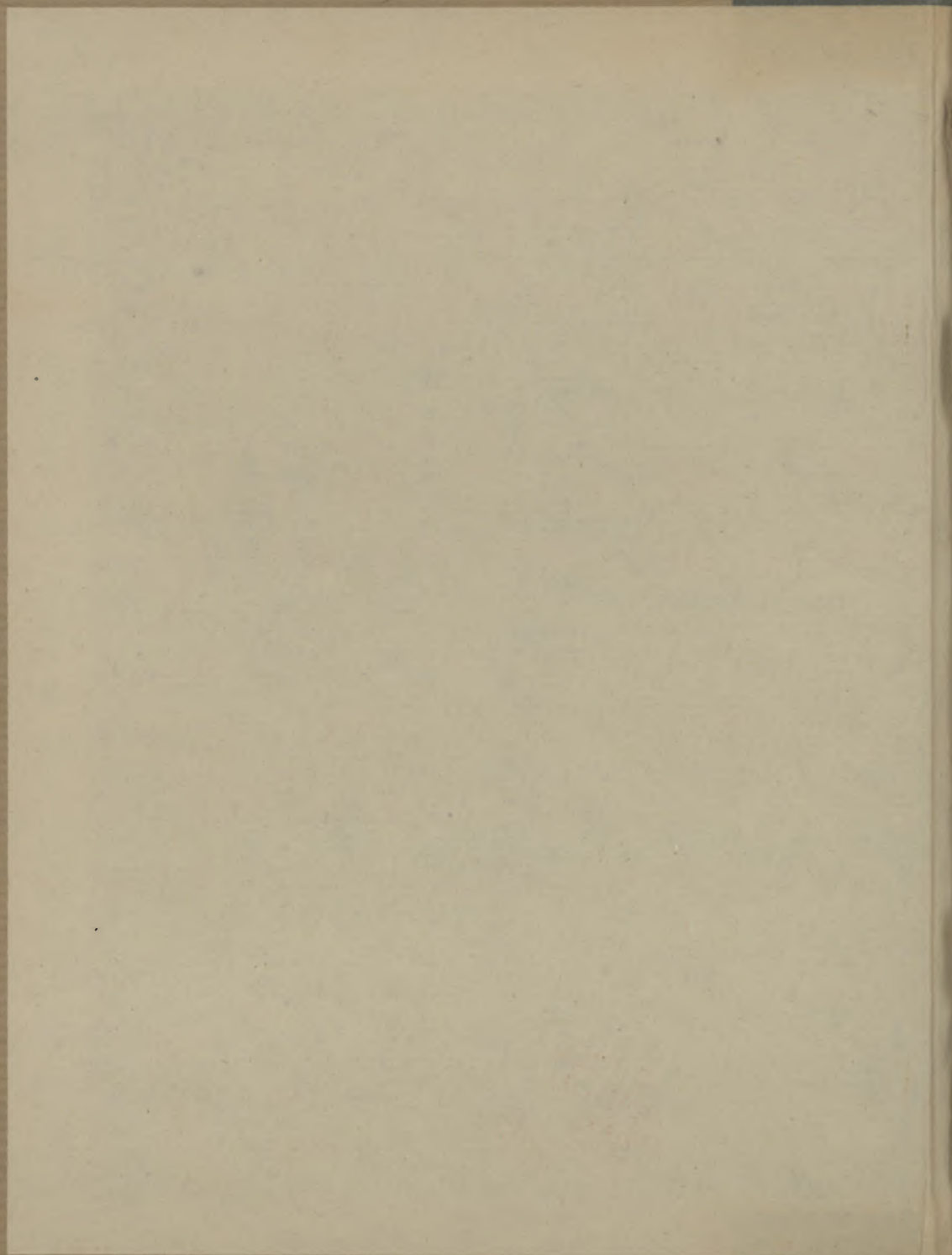


B. N. L.

30676

S. A.



WINE TRADE OF PORTUGAL

SPEECH

DELIVERED AT THE REUNIÃO

OF

WINE PROPRIETORS AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES OF
THE WINE DISTRICT OF THE ALTO DOURO,

CONVENED AT PEZO DA REGOA,

8th October, 1844;

BY

JOSEPH JAMES FORRESTER.

Translated in London.

Si bene floruerit vinea, Bacchus erit.

"If good Wine were made John Bull would buy it."

Morning Chronicle. 4th November, 1844

LONDON:

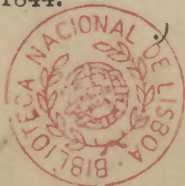
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY

ROYSTON & BROWN, 40 & 41, OLD BROAD STREET.

1844.

(Price



COMPRA
205587

SA
30676

LONDON :
Royston & Brown, Printers,
40 & 41, Old Broad Street.

[Extract from the "Periodico dos Pobres" of Porto.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. Editor,

During the present crisis of commerce in general, and the apathy which reigns especially in that of the wines of the Douro, I feel certain that you will be glad to possess an account of what passed at the interesting Reuuião, convened by my friend Mr. Joseph James Forrester, and which took place at his Quinta in Pezo da Regoa, on the 8th instant. Knowing as I did beforehand, that Mr. Forrester intended to give us his ideas on the subjects above noticed, I requested my friend, and comrade in the peninsula war, Colonel Hugh Owen, to take notes of what passed, copy of which I now have much pleasure in sending you.

I am, with great consideration and esteem,

Your obedient humble servant,

VISCOUNT SANTA MARTHA.

SANTA MARTHA, OF PENAGUIAO,
16th October, 1844.

To the Editor of the "Periodico dos Pobres."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

1910

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

1910

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

THE SPEECH,

ETC.

On the 8th instant, Mr. Joseph James Forrester gave a dinner at his Quinta, in Pezo da Regoa, to several authorities and proprietors of the Douro, for the purpose of explaining to them his system of making wines.

The company consisted of the Viscount Santa Martha, Lieutenant General Lacerda, the President of the Association of the Agriculturalists of the Douro, Colonel Owen, the Presidents of the Camaras of Santa Martha and Sabroza, and the Directors of the Councils of Santa Martha and Pezo, with several other civil authorities and persons of consideration in the province; and what flattered them most was, that the only wine introduced at table was Douro wine, made after the ancient system.

Dinner being concluded, Viscount Santa Martha rose, and addressed the company in the following manner:—

“Gentlemen,—Having bespoken the toast which I am about to propose, it is necessary that I should give some information as to the motives which have

actuated me. None of the gentlemen, now here present, will be ignorant of the fallen condition of the commerce of our Douro wines. For ten years that of this district (this country, if I may be allowed the expression,) has exhibited itself without life, and notwithstanding, it has dragged on a wasting and consuming existence.

“ Various causes have doubtless contributed to paralyze our commerce—the most important, the most valuable, not only for us proprietors of vineyards, but also for the publick revenue,—for if the discredit into which the wines of Portugal have fallen in the British market, continue much longer, the exportation to that country will fall away to almost nothing, and then what a calamity for the revenues of the treasury, for us proprietors, and for the whole commercial body of the city of Oporto !

“ Ought we then to be discouraged : to suffer ourselves to fall into an indolent apathy ? Certainly not ; on the contrary, convinced as we are, that the climate has not changed, that the beautiful soil has not degenerated, while it continues to produce the finest “ musts,” (for those of the present year will yield wines, equal, if not superior to those famous seasons for the Douro, such as 1815 and 1820,) it becomes us, I say, on the contrary, to redouble our activity, to communicate our mutual observations, until we discover the causes which have originated and produced the positive rejection, at the tables of high society in England, of Port-wine, which, only a few

years ago, was *the* wine of their choice. We ought to remedy, or at least to amend, as far as possible, a state of things which is hastening our ruin, and demand of the Government and the Chambers, such legislative measures, as shall tend to re-establish and fix the reputation of our wines in that high position, which belongs to them, and which they enjoyed for nearly a century.

“What, Gentlemen, was the most brilliant period of the European reputation of our wines? It was, when a company, established by that patriotic minister, the great Pombal, visited, with the severest penalties, the adulterators, and protected the culture, manufacture, and purity of the wines in the district of the factory. It was *then*, Gentlemen, when no one was bold enough to falsify his “musts.” This ought to undeceive us, and show us how far we have gone astray; let us return then to the point of deviation and follow the known and only true path. Let us make our wines as of old, of the purest, and without mixture of any kind whatever, whether of colour or confection. Let us offer *wines*, and not brandy mixed with wine (as Mr. Forrester has called it,) let us make them as he requires the farmers to present their “musts” to him. We have to thank this gentleman for the beautiful topographical chart of the wine country of the Alto-Douro, with which he has presented the municipal corporations, and many of the private gentlemen of the district. This map, so correct, so exact, and of a design so elegant, was the result of

great labour and expense. We owe to him also, the measurement of the Portuguese Douro, and a project for the improvement of its navigation. Mr. J. J. Forrester, partner of Messrs. Offley, Webber, and Forrester, one of the most ancient and respectable commercial houses of Oporto, has also rendered other most important services to this country, not only by advising and requiring of the farmers, to return to the ancient and true system of making their wines pure, but as we all know, by having already bought 1300 pipes of wine of this present vintage, animating and encouraging, by such means, the farmers to discountenance the erroneous system of mixtures and adulterations, to which they find themselves reduced, in order to procure the smallest outlet for their wines.

“Mr. Joseph J. Forrester is considered by us as the friend of the Alto-Douro, as our brother-farmer, who desires and promotes, with all his strength, the well-being of the country, by re-establishing the ancient credit and fame of our wines.

“It appears to me, therefore, nothing but just, that his friends here united, should drink to him the present toast:—

“The friend of the Alto-Douro, Mr. J. J. Forrester.”

Mr. Forrester presently rose, and responded to the toast in the following manner:—

“Gentlemen, I have long been ambitious for an opportunity like the present; an occasion on which I

might be able to offer my observations upon subjects in themselves highly interesting, and of transcendent importance to us *all* individually, and to the agriculturalists of the Douro in general.

“Having received such flattering representations from the different authorities of this country, and even yesterday from the worthy proprietors of the district of Penaguião, acknowledging the small services I have attempted to perform for the good of the Douro, I convened the present meeting, with the view to have the satisfaction of laying before you, all which I desire to accomplish, towards the restoration of the character of the wines of the Douro, and, moreover, the means which I am actually employing for that end; but before proceeding to my observations upon subjects so highly interesting, you will permit me to reply to a part of the toast, with which, on the proposition of my noble friend, the Viscount of Santa Martha, you have honoured me. You thank me, among other things, for being the author of a project for the improvement of the navigation of the river Douro. Some years ago, during the progress of my maps of the wine country, and of the river Douro, I submitted all my observations to the consideration of Mr. Johnston, Her Britannic Majesty’s Consul, knowing that this gentleman felt a great interest in all that could contribute to the good of this country. Mr. Johnston, whose education had been that of an engineer, immediately reflected, that it

would be highly advantageous for the country, if we could offer to the Government a plan for the improvement of the navigation of the river, and proposed that by and by we should take the subject in hand. Since then it is to Mr. Johnston, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul in Oporto, to whom I owe, and we owe, the origin of the project in question, and conjointly with whom, I have had the pleasure of contributing towards the perfection of our observations; while I thank you for your generosity, I can only accept for myself that part of your acknowledgments, which, allowing full justice to him to whom belongs the other, it becomes me to receive. (Applause.)

“Now Gentlemen, let me beg your attention to the subject which is of transcendent importance to this country,—the actual apathy of the business of the wines of the Douro. This apathy,—this mercantile crisis,—the immense quantity of wine accumulated in Oporto, and the adulteration of the great proportion of that deposit, are all subjects deserving our most earnest attention.

“The great accumulation to which I refer, although called wine of the Douro,—is, of a certainty, and without a doubt, *not* Douro wine. Do not be surprised, gentlemen, that I make this declaration. Formerly, there were laws and restrictions which prohibited the entry into the City of Oporto and Villa Nova, of any wines which were not of the Douro; but now, the wines of the “*Bairrada*,” whose

earthy taste, want of colour, and body, being so easily made up and disguised in the hands of speculators, offered by their low price, and long credits, (never less than three to six years,) such a temptation to the commercial body, that the exporting houses, (more studious of present advantage than of their character as merchants,) began to send away to Great Britain, these worst of wines, under the name of Port-wines, but having no other title to that name than what they derived from the port whence they were shipped.

“In the same proportion as these adulterated wines accumulated, and cheapened, those of the Douro began also to fall in value, not because they too were adulterated, or bad, but for the simple reason that, as the lodges of the exporters could not be freed of the wine referred to, their owners found themselves unable to purchase more wine; and more especially as the farmers of this country are not, and never were, in circumstances to compete with the owners of the wines of the “*Bairrada*,” on account of their low prices and long credits. (Applause.)

“No sooner had begun the exportation of wines of the character I have described, than the example was followed by a great number of people; and large deposits began to accumulate in all the ports of England. But, as they did not readily meet with purchasers, the wines suffered both loss of colour and body; and when the owners had determined on selling at enormous sacrifices, the English merehants,

seeing that they were thus able to purchase at a cheap rate, a quality of wine which would suit a *certain class* of their customers, sent out large orders for wines more highly coloured and bodied, with the intention of lotting them with the above deposits in England, so that by such means, an immense quantity of inferior wine being spread over the country, all Port-wine fell into discredit, and many of the noble and most respectable families of Great Britain, abandoned the use of it altogether.

“On the other hand, the orders which came out here, not only gave the commercial body of Oporto, but also the farmers of the Douro, to understand, that the taste of the English had changed for wine,—“*black, strong, and sweet,*” while in fact, such wines are fit only for the lowest classes, or used to make up other wines of a still worse description, and even those of other countries; and in this manner, began to alienate, and effectuate the total ruin of, the otherwise far-famed wines of the Douro. (Loud cheers).

“During the last few years, in consequence of the large deposits in Oporto, and the accumulation of wines in the Douro, the prices of the latter have fallen to such a point, that the wines of the “*Bairrada*” can no longer compete with them,—but such is the mania for making wines, called by many, “*Vinhos da fama,*” but which I call “*Vinhos defamados,*”—(cheers) that many farmers have taken more pains in arranging the usual quantity of

elder, sugar, and brandy, to throw into their wines, than they have, in giving orders to their commissaries to make the wine itself. (Applause.)

“Gentlemen, that which I state is a fact notorious, and known to all of you; but if I am mistaken in any assertion, or speak in a manner not perfectly clear and intelligible, I request you will put me right, (‘it is all true,’—‘the pure truth’). Yes, Gentlemen, I repeat, that elderberry, sugar, and brandy, wine loaded with sweetness, and jerupiga, are adulterations, which have imperceptibly become to be considered absolutely necessary for the perfection of the wines of the Douro. Perfection indeed! let it rather be called the absolute ruin! for the climate has not degenerated, nor the soil, as the noble Viscount declared: still less has changed, to any extent, the taste of the ancient consumers of our wines. (Great applause).

“I am a farmer, and a large one, but I am also a merchant, and declare to you that my customers do not desire, as some now present know well, wine full of brandy; on the contrary, they *do* prefer wines the most pure, and the least inebriative possible.

“The crisis has then now arrived, when the “*Lavradores*” of the Douro have an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, by the perfect manner in which they are determined to make their wines.

“I do not submit to your consideration any innovation, my desire is simply that all the “*Lavradores*”

should follow the ancient system,—the system which formerly was so much esteemed, and procured for the wines of the Douro, their deservedly high credit. (Applause).

“Many observations and criticisms have been made by curious persons, in respect of the manner in which I myself am accustomed to make my wines, and I determined that every thing which had the appearance of mystery, should be dispelled at once. With this view it was, that to-day, I opened and exposed my stores to you all, and explained to you the system which I practise every year,—a system which I did not bring from a stranger land, but which I learnt in this country itself, and from persons, whose fathers and ancestors for more than a century had employed the same. The system is extremely simple, and has one great advantage, inasmuch as it does not permit the great evaporation which the wine suffers by the ordinary method. (Applause).

“Having now attempted to trace the condition of the trade of Port-wine to its low estate, I beg your indulgence, while I take the liberty of submitting to you my observations on the actual practice and manner of making wines.

“I have remarked, that when the taste for strong wines commenced, many farmers were accustomed to graft their vines with different kinds, whose only merit was the great colour which they impart to the grape, despising in such manner, those kinds

formerly preferred, which, although they gave less colour, produced wines of high flavour and of an especial *aroma*.

“It is well known, that when the grape is fully matured for the press, and is allowed to remain upon the vine for several days, it ferments and decomposes before being pressed, and cannot, of a certainty, produce good wine. It is also known, that as the “must,” from hour to hour, gives sufficient proof of its vinous condition, it should never be thrown into “*Tonels*,” which require, afterwards, wine from other *Lagars*, and made some days later, to test them. For this reason, the “*Tonels*” should always be proportioned to the “*Lagars*,” or at least, the adoption of small “*Tonels*,” of from two to four pipes, (as mine are,) would be of great advantage in all the lodges.

“The system of pressing the grapes half by night and half by day, taking the people away in the interval, cannot fail to do much injury to the wine, by causing an irregular fermentation, and rendering it necessary that it should remain a longer time in the “*Lagar*” than would otherwise be required.

“The evaporation which takes place in consequence of the large exposed superficies in the open *Lagar*, requires that the *Tonels* during the second fermentation, should be closed, as all mine are, large and small, and which I have had the honour to show to you to-day. Another advantage would be obtained from small *Tonels*, viz.:—the keeping of

small samples of wines from different kinds of grapes, or from the different "*Lagars*."

"The gathering of the grape might be more perfect, and the period of the vintage better defined; and I much regret that the experienced *Lavradores* of the Douro should have suffered themselves to be induced to follow the pernicious example given by some ignorant merchants in this respect, hastening to gather their grapes much before the time; and, as examples in point, I must not omit to notice the vintage of 1840, 1842, and 1843, and now of the present year. Was it not so gentlemen? (It was, it was, true, true.)

"As to the vintage which is still fresh in the memory of you all, no one can deny, that, although the grape was so well formed, it required *water*, and that those "*Lavradores*" who gathered their grapes later, that is, after the rain, made better wine—Is not this true? (Several voices, it is, it is, true, true.)

"I confess that much rain, out of season, could not fail to do great harm to a vintage impending, and almost ready; but also, that much sun, and intense heats, without any rain, would produce effects still worse; and I appeal to your own experience, if the grape can be properly seasoned without its due proportion both of rain and sun? (Many voices,—it cannot be.) No, gentlemen, it cannot be in any respect, and whoever declares the contrary, shews the small knowledge he possesses of the nature of the grape. (Applause.)

“Gentlemen, and brother Lavradors,—(as you permit me the honour of calling you) there is still another subject on which it is necessary I should speak; and that is, the unfortunate interpretation given by many to the words, “for itself and for others,”* which take place in the description of the class entitled ‘first quality wine.’ Is it possible that wine, however perfect it may be, can have too many fine qualities,—that it can have perfections too many for itself, and some to spare for others? Allow me to tell you, that wine really superior, is, by its very nature, of the first quality; but, *as such*, it must be permitted to remain. For my part, I understand these words as nothing more nor less than a premium on adulterations, upon elderberries, sugar, and jerupigas, because it is these mixtures alone which have *enough for themselves and something to spare*. (Applause.)

“In the last year, for example, we all know what the tasters did, and that wines which were not constituted as above, and which did not shew a colour like blacking, or ink, although they possessed every quality essential to good wine, were excluded from the ‘first class!!’

“These are incontestable facts, and you, gentlemen, are witnesses of their truth; (several voices, facts, facts, all true!) well then, gentlemen, there

* Alluding to a clause in the regulations of the company, which declares, that only those Wines shall be placed in the first class which have *richness enough for themselves and some to spare for others*.

are still persons who have the temerity to write and assert to the British publick, that these adulterations are not used, and that all the richness which they present in their wines, is the pure juice of the grape, and even mark their pipes with words chosen for this very purpose.

“ I do not desire to attack or offend any one, but in this momentous crisis, it is absolutely necessary that we should not conceal the truth; and I consider it the sacred duty and obligation of you all to choose your tasters from among persons who understand the subject, and who are capable, before all things, of placing *coloured* and *adulterated* wines in the class of ‘refuse,’ instead of in that of ‘first quality.’ Your own credit, and the credit of your wines, demand this. Yes, gentlemen, I repeat, your credit demands that this year all the wines which have received elderberry and other mixtures, shall be rejected and placed among the refuse. Do this, and the tasters will deserve your gratitude. Adulterations will fall to the ground, and your commerce will be saved. (Loud applause.)

“ And can there be any doubt that this will be the case, no! because, if your tasters are faithful to their duty, those of the company will be equally faithful to theirs; for now we have the satisfaction of seeing that the company is beginning in earnest to shew signs of supporting our cause, and the purity of our wines; because it has just given orders to all its agents and commissaries, that they shall make their wines pure, *and especially without elderberry.*

“I confess that the majority of the commercial body still demand wines, *black, strong, and sweet*; but as the country is in our favour, and the company, the merchants and the adulterators must remain in the minority. (Loud applause.)

“The wines of this year are delicious, and equal to those of 1815, or of 1820, (applause,) and will be celebrated throughout all Europe; and if people continue to make their purchases at the period of the vintage, instead of in the following summer, the farmers themselves will know, not only how to make their wines, but also how to sell them. (Applause.) I know that several houses who are accustomed to throw brandy into their wines, in the proportion of three to five almudes to the pipe, elderberry without limit, and a pipe of sugar in each “*lagar*,” this year will content themselves with the half of these doses.

“I know that others have given orders to their commissaries, to make their wines as I make mine; you will see, therefore, that in the year which is coming, purity will triumph, and the commercial body will find themselves compelled to pass over to our side. (Cheers and great applause.)

“I offer not these observations as novelties, but solely to support customs which you yourselves did, some time ago, approve, and those which both your and my predecessors were used to follow,—customs which unhappily have fallen into disuse, in consequence of a combination between certain speculators and merchants, to make wines, (as I have

already several times observed,) "*black, strong, and sweet.*"

"True it is that the majority of the commercial body require them so; but the time has arrived to reform these errors, and to re-establish the ancient system in all its beauty, and in all its perfection. Let us, therefore, follow the bright example of our forefathers, and of that period, (as my noble friend the Viscount Santa Martha has told you,) when there were rigorous laws for the prevention of adulterations. Let us not wait till the law compels *us*. Let us do all of our own free will and choice. (Applause.)

"I have neither talents nor qualifications to suggest new plans to you, gentlemen, nor if I had, should I be bold enough to offer them in an assembly of persons so distinguished, so well-informed, and so perfectly conversant with the subject; but the honourable position to which you yourselves have called me, approving of the spirit of the attempts I have made, to do some good to this rich country, and the sympathy which I have had the honour to confess that I feel, in common with its worthy inhabitants, and especially my more particular and esteemed friends, assure me, that, notwithstanding the opposition which exists on the part of certain exporters of Oporto, (whom it is not necessary I should here more particularly indicate,) against anything which treats of the purity of the wines of the Douro, I shall not fail to find here, amongst you, gentlemen, those who will aid me in carrying forward our great undertaking, which is to restore

Port-wine to that high position, which it formerly occupied in my country. (Cheers.)

“The cause is great; it is noble. Purity is truth, and the truth will always prevail. Let us determine then, like a body of skilful architects, that truth and purity shall be the base of our operations, upon which we will raise a structure, beautiful and strong, which shall endure through all time. (Cheers.) Union, constancy, and confidence in a good cause, will give us strength to overcome our enemies, and, in a very little time, all the proprietors of the Douro will not fail to unite with us in our important and interesting undertaking.

“I beg pardon, if in any expression I have used, I have offended here, any one of the respectable members of this assembly, assuring you that I have no other object at heart but the general good, and for this, I am prepared to make the greatest sacrifices.

“To all my old friends now present, I acknowledge thus publickly, the numerous services with which, with so much sympathy and kindness they have honoured me, and to those new and distinguished friends whom I now see for the first time, I offer the assurance of my friendship and esteem.

“In conclusion, I beg of every gentleman here, unitedly with me, and with all their hearts, to do full justice to the toast which I have the honour to propose:—

“The prosperity of the wine Country of the Alto-Douro, and the re-establishment of the ancient credit of its wines.” (Loud and continued applause.)

His Excellency Antonio Teixeira de Sousa, President of the Association of the Agriculturists of the Alto-Douro, referring to the explanation given by Mr. Forrester, of that part of the toast which pertained to the project for the navigation of the Douro, proposed:—

“The health of Mr. E. J. Johnston, Her Britannic Majesty’s Consul, first promoter of the said project, and to whom we owe much for the interest he has shewn, for the welfare of the country of the Douro.”

To which Colonel Owen replied as follows:—

“Soldier as I am, and little accustomed to speak in publick, it would be presumption in me to offer a single remark here, were it not for the obligation which friendship imposes upon me, that of thanking your Excellencies and you, gentlemen, for the honour you have just done to my distinguished friend, Her Britannic Majesty’s Consul.

“Sorry I am that he is not now present to witness this brilliant assembly of nobility,—of public authorities, and distinguished proprietors, united together for the common good of the agriculture of the district of the Alto-Douro,—an assembly still more interesting in my eyes, by the presence of two military men of such distinction, as the Viscount Santa Martha and Lieutenant General Lacerda, who have changed into pruning hooks the swords, which,

from the age of fifteen years, they unsheathed in the defence of their country against the invading enemy.

“On my return to Oporto, I shall have much pleasure in giving to my friend the consul, a faithful representation of this event, and in the meantime, I thank you all, in his name, for the honour he has this day received.”

During the evening, Mr. Forrester delivered his ideas on the subject of oil, the second source of the riches of the province. He shewed the great prejudice resulting from the want of pruning the olive trees, as well as the waste caused by the custom of beating down the fruit with poles, and the evil occasioned by the putting of salt in the baskets, and by the use of boiling water in the separation of the oil.

He eulogized the system recommended by our distinguished author, Delabella, already put in practice at the Quinta of a gentleman of Oporto, Mr. Francis Vanzeller, and which has produced him oil equal to the best of Lucea.

Mr. Forrester offered to obtain permission from the Academy of Sciences in Lisbon, to reprint the work of Delabella, and to present it to the Lavradores for the simple cost of printing: he also promised to exhibit in the Douro, the model of a machine for making oil according to the system laid down in the above work.

The company separated at an early hour, highly delighted with the entertainment they had received.

(Signed) “HUGH OWEN, COLONEL.”

Porto, 20th October, 1844.

“In our paper of to-day, we publish a letter received from His Excellency the Visconde de Santa Martha, with the entire of the speeches delivered at a dinner given in Regoa, on the 8th Instant, by Mr. Joseph James Forrester, to several gentlemen and proprietors of the Alto-Douro, as also those of Mr. Forrester and Colonel Owen. We rejoice to see that subjects of such vital consequence to this country are under discussion. The commerce in wines is not only of the utmost importance to the export trade of Oporto, Lisbon, and Figueira, it is also that which gives any value to property in the Douro, Estremadura, and Beira. To trace, therefore, the causes of its falling off, the improvements of which it is susceptible, and the means of bringing it safely through the crisis in which it is languishing, and which has endured already some years, is without question of the highest importance; and it is when those who understand and are deeply interested in the subject, deliver their opinions, that public discussion will bring to light and discriminate the means, most conducive to the object in view.

“Mr. Forrester, profiting by the occasion of his presence in the Douro, for the purpose of buying a large parcel of wine of this year’s vintage, for the commercial purposes of the house of which he is managing partner, to convene a number of the principal proprietors, and to deliver his sentiments on the state of the commerce of the country, and on the making of wines, shewed himself something more than a merchant of considerable intelligence,—he proved his great zeal for all which concerns the prosperity of the Alto-Douro, where he already possesses property of considerable value.

“EDITOR.”



S.A.
30676

