

Wine-making on an Island in Lake Erie.

A letter to the *Ohio State Journal* gives the following account of grape-growing and wine-making on Kelley's Island on Lake Erie:

Grapevines were planted on the island more than twenty years ago, and are yet in good bearing condition—in fact the oldest vine on the island is to-day as prolific a bearer as any of the more recent vines. The varieties of grapes planted are the Catawba, Isabella, Delaware and Concord; many other varieties are represented by a few vines, but nine-tenths of the wine made on the island is made from the Catawba. In 1853 Mr. CHARLES CARPENTER had one acre in grapes. He sold grapes from the crop to the amount of \$100. Nine rows of Isabella vines yielded him 1,575 pounds of grapes, from which he made 200 gallons of wine. He gathered 2,270 pounds of Catawbas, but sold most of them for table use, and from the remainder he manufactured 130 gallons of wine. In 1857 the first quality of his Catawba "must" showed a specific gravity of 78 degrees, and with the addition of six ounces of sugar, showed 90 degrees. Of this quality he made 967 gallons. His No. 2 Catawba "must" showed 67 degrees, but with the addition of twelve ounces of sugar was 100 degrees; of this he made 178 gallons. The Isabella "must" showed 58 degrees, with eight ounces of sugar, 85 degrees, 245 gallons. Mr. KELLEY, in 1857, made 380 gallons. In 1857 there were about seventy acres in grapes on the island, one-half of which were set out that Spring.

The leading wine-growers on the island more than a year ago formed a joint stock company of \$100,000 capital; \$90,000 of the capital has been taken, and payments amounting to thirty-five per cent. have been made. The Company have contracted for the grapes on 150 acres, the "must" of which must be equivalent to a standard of 85 degrees. The Company owns a wine-cellar with a storage of 800,000 gallons. There are now some 12,000 gallons of wine on hand in it, and they intend to fill it with the vintage of this year. The Company has employed a very intelligent German from near the Rhine, who from youth was brought up to wine-making. He was employed last year, and his manufacture of the vintage of 1866 gives flattering promise of being the best wine ever made in Ohio; it certainly is very far superior to that made here in former years. To me it is very evident that much of grape-culture and wine-making is yet to be learned before Ohio will produce a wine in every respect equal to that made by that toilsome, patient and somewhat stolid tribe of the Teutonic race—the Swabians on the Rhine.

Aside from the company's cellar, there are eight other cellars on the island, whose aggregate capacity does not exceed that of the Company's alone. The Company have made preparations and arrangements to manufacture a first-class article of Catawba brandy. Wine and vine-growing must be fully as remunerative as petroleum stock. When I first visited the island in 1853, there were several men employed as laborers, working for \$12 to \$15 per month; with the savings of these limited earnings they purchased several acres of land, planted them in grapes, and to-day have not only comfortable, but really elegant homes, are free of debt, and have an annual income of from \$3,000 to \$5,000. About that period of time a German landed on the island with \$600 in cash—his entire worldly fortune. He paid \$400 of it for a few acres, planted them in grapes, and I am told that he now is worth over \$50,000—all made out of his few acres of grapes, by indomitable perseverance, untiring industry and unyielding energy. Is not this an example well worthy of imitation? Kelley's Island and the lake shore are not the only places where a sure reward awaits earnest and patient industry. I am willing to admit that the lake itself is of considerable advantage in modifying the meteorological influences for grape-growing; but there are many other points in Ohio where grape-growing can be made just as profitable as here.

The success which seemed to hover around every one who engaged earnestly in vine-culture or wine-making, produced, as may well be imagined, quite a mania for vineyards. Put-in-Bay Island is being rapidly converted into a large vineyard; North Bass Island is rapidly filling with the vine; the Peninsula has many acres, and round about Sandusky possibly one thousand acres are in grapes. I do not approve of "guessing," but could gain no definite statistics; and can only say in support of the "thousand-acre" guess, that on the road from Sandusky City to Venice there is literally almost a continuous vineyard for a distance of about five miles, and the entire suburbs of Sandusky City are simply a vast vineyard—here fifty acres, there ten, there twenty, over there fifty-four, here six, there twenty-five, &c.

At no period since grape-growing was commenced has there been promise of so bountiful a yield of grapes as the present season gives. Those best situated for the manufacture of wine are of opinion that not more than half of the crop, should the present promising condition be fully realized at the "gathering," or harvest, can possibly be made into wine; the grapes on Kelley's Island alone will make 240,000 gallons.