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Baron Forrester

Sense and Sensibility

A Story of the Douro

1831-1861

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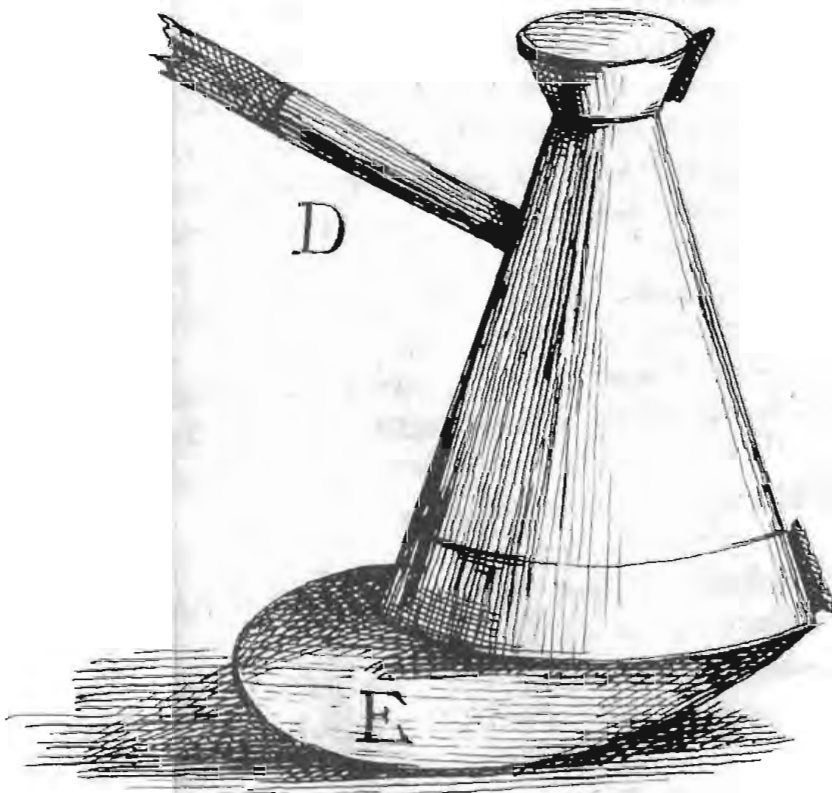
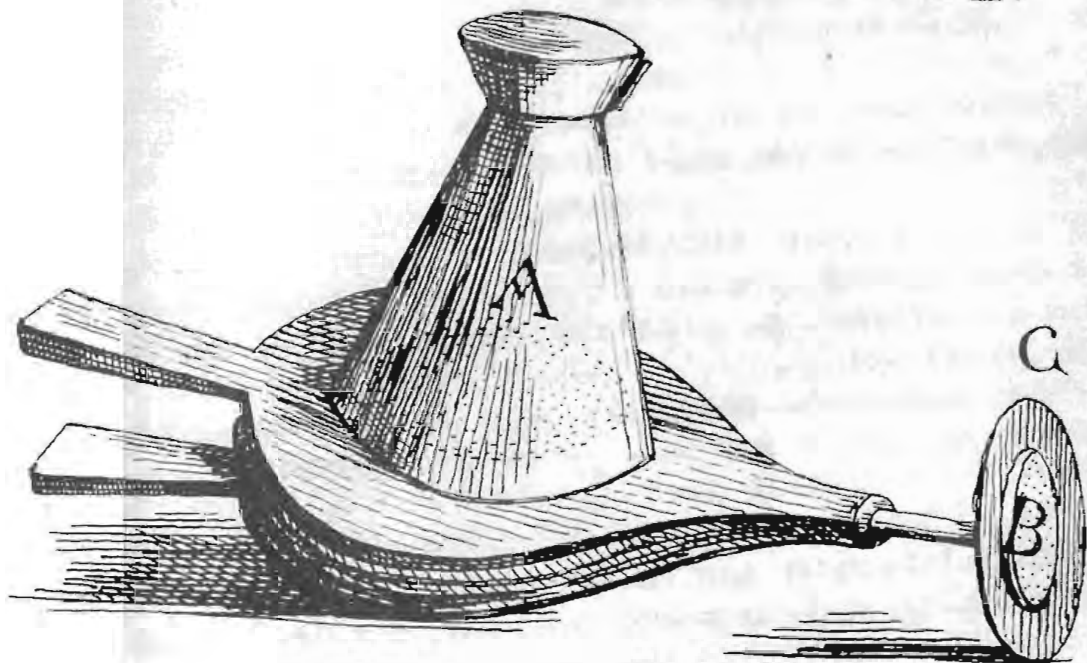


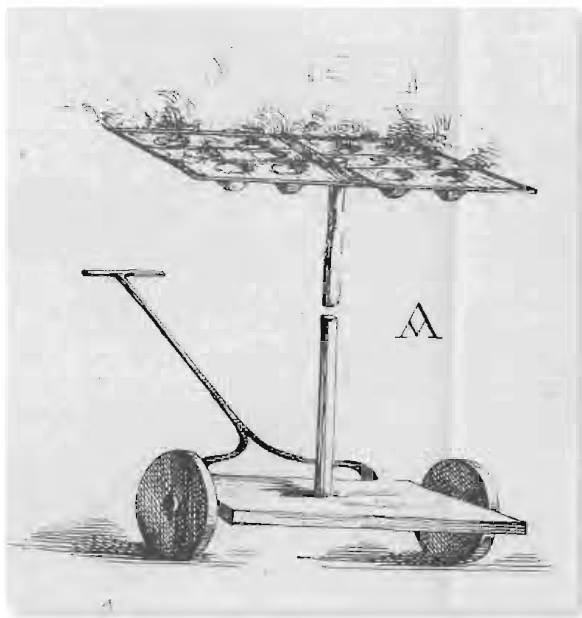
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Baron Forrester, Sense and Sensibility,
A Story of the Douro (1831-1861)

Forrester, the "wine district" and the good old way of making Port Wine

Conceição Andrade Martins

Nº 2.





When Joseph James Forrester arrived in Portugal in 1831, everything suggested that his stay in the country would be short. In fact, given the political and economic situation at the time (with the Miguelista threat at its height, civil war, crisis in the port wine sector, etc), the future would not have seemed auspicious for this young man of 22. He had come to work for an Porto export company (Offley, Webber & Forrester), which, like so many others involved in the port wine trade, was going through difficult times. However, this young idealist must have been fascinated by the political tremors that were shaking the country, with Porto (a liberal stronghold *par excellence*) as their epicentre, and he would have felt a strong desire to participate actively in the “revolutionary process under way”. The crisis affecting the business sector he was involved in would also have acted as a stimulus for someone such as he, who, throughout his life, had displayed a fighting spirit and would never sit idly by in the face of any challenge.

Just as important (or maybe even more so) was the pull that the city of Porto would have exerted over the artist in him (for he was that too) - and above all, the great river that culminated here after its long trip through the Douro region. Thus, he embarked almost immediately (still in 1831) upon the pioneering task that was to last several years, namely the work of mapping out the River Douro and the wine district of Alto Douro. At the same time, he proceeded with his drawings, paintings and photographs of scenes and landscapes of Porto (Rua Nova dos Ingleses or “New English Street”, the Cordoaria fair, the city viewed from different angles, Freixo, the Church of St Nicholas, the Convents of Serra and Santo António, the Castle of Figueira, etc.) and portraits of people from the political and social life of the region and country (the

Marquis of Saldanha, José da Silva Passos, Félix Manuel Borges Pinto, Emanuel de Clamouse Browne, etc). Indeed, it was his artistic talents that were honoured in 1855 when he was awarded the title of Baron in recognition of the “overwhelming importance for this country” of his maps, the *Geological Map of the Banks of the River Douro*; *Topographical Map of the Course of the River Douro* and *Map of the Wine District of the Alto Douro*¹, “an exquisite work, perfectly finished, abounding in original information, accurate and beautifully executed”². The importance of these maps was also internationally recognised. A special committee of the British House of Commons ordered Forrester’s topographical map to be lithographed and published in the United Kingdom in 1852, and the international jury of the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855 awarded Honourable Mentions to three of his maps (the geological map of the banks of the River Douro, the topographical map of the course of the River Douro, and the topographical map of the wine district of the Alto Douro)³.

The beginning of the end of a historic cycle in the life of port wine

Through a quirk of fate, Forrester’s entry into the firm Offley, Webber & Forrester and consequently the port wine trade coincided, to some extent, with the beginning of the end of a cycle in the history of port⁴.

Moreover, the *Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro*, founded by Pombal in 1756, which held a monopoly that he would later oppose, was undergoing what Pinho Leal considered to be its last year of pros-

Plate No. 3.

The Aragonez.



*Trunk
2 feet above ground*



*Root
2 feet below
ground.*

The Aragonez. Practical Observation on the Vine-disease in the Alto-Douro. . . Ajuda National Palace Library. Ms. Av. 51-XIII-23, nr. 24 (ae), pp. 14.

perity⁵. From the following year (1832), the *Companhia's* fortunes were adversely affected by the domestic political situation. Indeed, it almost went bankrupt, partly because of the heavy taxes levied by liberals and "realists", but mainly because of the losses that it suffered in 1833, following a fire deliberately started by its opponents in its Gaia warehouse: it lost 31,200 barrels and casks of wine, some of which had been "extremely old", valued at over 2400 thousand réis. The *Companhia* was closed down between 1834 and 1838, thereafter operating as a "simple" commercial firm under the name of the *Companhia dos Vinhos do Porto*. It did recover some of its former privileges and attributions in 1838 and 1843, only to lose them again definitively in 1852, after which it functioned once more as a "mere commercial company"⁶. Furthermore, the regulation of the port wine sector, which was highly constrained both by a restrictive system and by heavy taxes on foreign trade, had become the hot topic of the day and the object of successive political interventions. Forrester, who supported free trade, became directly involved in the struggle to liberalise the sector, though he did not always see eye-to-eye with all the positions taken by the Porto Chamber of Commerce (*Associação Comercial do Porto* or ACP), which from 1834 was responsible for the sector⁷.

And last but not least, it was also in 1831 that the United Kingdom decided to level tariffs on all foreign wines, thus ending the preferential conditions that Portuguese wines had enjoyed under the Methuen Treaty⁸. Although this measure was, on its own, less crippling for the port wine trade with England than those implemented by Gladstone in 1860 and 1861, the truth is that, between 1830 and 1859, Portuguese wines lost some 15% of their share of the British market while Spanish wines gained 18%⁹.

Constraints "oppressing" the sector

In an attempt to invert this situation, Forrester appeared in 1852 in the House of Commons to respond to questions about the port wine trade and the tariffs levied on this product. He argued for a reduction in English import duties (suggesting a decrease from 6 shillings/gallon to 1 shilling/gallon) and the removal of many of the obstacles to free production and export that existed in Portugal¹⁰. These obstacles were largely the result of restrictions which continued to bear upon the port wine trade with the United Kingdom despite the 1842 Treaty, due to Portugal's interpretation of Articles 4 and 15 of that convention¹¹. That is to say, the differential duties that encumbered the product made it much less competitive on the British market¹². Moreover, the prohibition upon exporting wines to Britain that had not been properly approved and qualified for that destination meant that, according to Forrester, a third of the production of the Alto Douro was "condemned" to be consumed on the domestic market¹³. This was not because these wines were defective in any way, or of inferior quality; rather, it was because they were pure (i.e. made only from unblended fermented grape juice) and/or because they were produced outside the demarcated area.

What irritated Forrester even more than this geograph-

ic fluke was that both the law and the export trade rejected those wines on the grounds that they were not good enough quality and were not to the English taste (i.e. not "dark, strong and sweet"). Thus, the law and the merchants effectively conspired to encourage the widespread practice of adulterating port; they not only demanded that the wine that was separated off for sale to the United Kingdom should have particular qualities that the wines themselves were unable to produce, but also insisted that the English preferred wines that were "full-bodied, strongly coloured and strong tasting". Thus, while port had traditionally been laced with 4 to 5 gallons of brandy per barrel, now most of the wine exported to the United Kingdom received five times that amount, and even had elderberries and mistelle added to it. Contrary to what the merchants believed, this did not appeal to the English, whose tastes were now inclining more towards lighter younger cheaper wines (such as sherry and French wine). It also meant that the supply of Douro wines could not keep up with the increased demand from Britain¹⁴. But the adulterations practised (or instigated) by the merchants had yet another perverse effect. The practice not only damaged the reputation of port amongst the more affluent classes, which continued to prefer it, but also led to it being disqualified by a wine jury in 1859; the Gaia warehouses were full of wine that was unsuitable for export and deserved to be burnt, the jury stated, requesting measures that could restore the "licit and legal" trade with foreign markets.

This position taken by the jury was immediately criticised by Forrester as damaging to port's image abroad. Indeed, that image had already been shaken by the Administrative Rule of December 1857, which had ordered chemical tests to be performed on all Douro wines arriving at Porto destined for export, even if they were accompanied by first class consignment notes, in order to detect any toxic substances (such as lead protoxide or gold slag)¹⁵. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Forrester again pointed out the causes for the decline in the port wine trade and suggested ways of overcoming it. Amongst the causes mentioned were: i) the testing procedures and illegal traffic in qualification documents ("*guias*"), which enabled 2nd and 3rd class wines, and even rejects, to enter the Gaia warehouses; ii) the fact that only one kind of wine qualified for export; iii) the effect of the aforementioned administrative rule and the resulting sharp decline in port consumption habits, particularly in England; iv) the fact that many of the approved wines were disqualified for export because of mildew; v) the fact that there were large consignments of (dark, strong and sweet) wines in London that were unmarketable and therefore only served for blends; vi) the situation of the trade deposits (full of expensive wines); vii) the decline in port consumption in the United Kingdom; viii) and the conflict of interests in the Porto marketplace between the foreign exporters (who refused to take part in ACP discussions), the "speculators" (who, unable to sell to exporters, would send their wines to England at ridiculously low prices), the "capitalists" (who were involved in the trade only to acquire dividends) and the *Companhia* (which still enjoyed much of its prestige of former times, despite being a mere commercial firm). He believed that the solution lay in liberalising the Douro wine trade (as

had already happened with sherry and Bordeaux): in exporting pure wines that were not subject to restrictions or tests, but which were made "without a drop of brandy", like the wines of Bordeaux and the Rhine, which, despite having a lower alcohol content (10% to 20%, as opposed to the 40% or more for port) were sold in Great Britain for higher prices; and in the formation of an Association (or "joint stock company") with the noble purpose of "patriotically sustaining the credit and purity of Douro wines" without imposing restrictions and which would only be "under the nominal protection of the government" until it could operate under its own steam¹⁶.

For Forrester, the main culprit was the restrictive system that regulated the production and commercialisation of port and permitted "no man, whether producer or consumer, (...) to have an opinion of his own, either as to the wines he may grow, or the wines that may be required of him"¹⁷. Regarding the *Companhia*, which was the "bête noir" of most English exporters and the ACP, his position was less radical, as he reveals in his *Considerações á cerca da Carta de Lei de 21 d'Abri! de 1843*. In this, he says that he would like to "completely separate the law from those who are obliged to comply with it" and that he understands that the *Companhia* has the right to look after its shareholders' interests provided that it acts in accordance with the law governing it¹⁸. The heart of the question did not lie with the "executors of the law" (the *Companhia*) but rather with the restrictive system, since this regulated the production and trade in port wine through its endless registers, tests, classifications, brands, qualification documents, consignment papers, etc. In his opinion, the decline of port on the English market was due to these regulations, which determined how much or how little wine was approved for export, and the system of qualifications, which meant that tasters often rejected many vats of good wine for export to the United Kingdom while approving much that was "bad". Moreover, while the French and Spanish had taken pains to adapt their wines to British tastes, Portugal "despite its long and painful experience" had re-instigated "oppressive Pombaline measures" and only allowed the export of a single kind of wine. By limiting supply and artificially manipulating prices, they also made Douro wines less competitive.

Similar ideas were aired by figures such as José Frutuoso Aires de Gouveia Osório, for whom the restrictive laws deprived the farmer of "the freedom to act with regard to his own property and encouraged adulterations, instead of guaranteeing the purity of the product". The Douro was therefore unable to market the full range of wines that it produced, and which were unrivalled in the world; instead, it was "obliged" to falsify its wines so that they could be admitted for export "in accordance with an imaginary standard". This was also a reason to advocate the standardisation of wine legislation throughout the country¹⁹.

As Forrester was against the law rather than its executors, he did not rejoice at the demise of the *Companhã-dos Vinhos do Porto* in 1852; indeed, many of its attributions were transferred to the Douro Wine and Agriculture Regulatory Board, which had a special Committee

charged with "reviewing and harmonising all legal provisions concerning registration, testing, qualification, vintages, the issuing of documents, warehouse accounting, embezzlement, fines and inspections, ensuring that these were altered or reformed in accordance with the requirements of agriculture and trade, and codifying them into a single special regulation"²⁰. Thus, he states in the Preface to the 2nd edition of his *Prize-Essay on Portugal* that, until the "enlightened Government and Regency" of Ferdinand carried out the reforms that he dared to prognosticate and revoked the "absurd, narrow-minded, and ruinous" laws and restrictions upon the production, manufacture and export of port wine, a "black cloud" would continue to hover over Portugal, for whom wine and brandy were the chief sources of wealth, "amounting to one-half of her entire exports"²¹.

The wine-making system proposed by Forrester

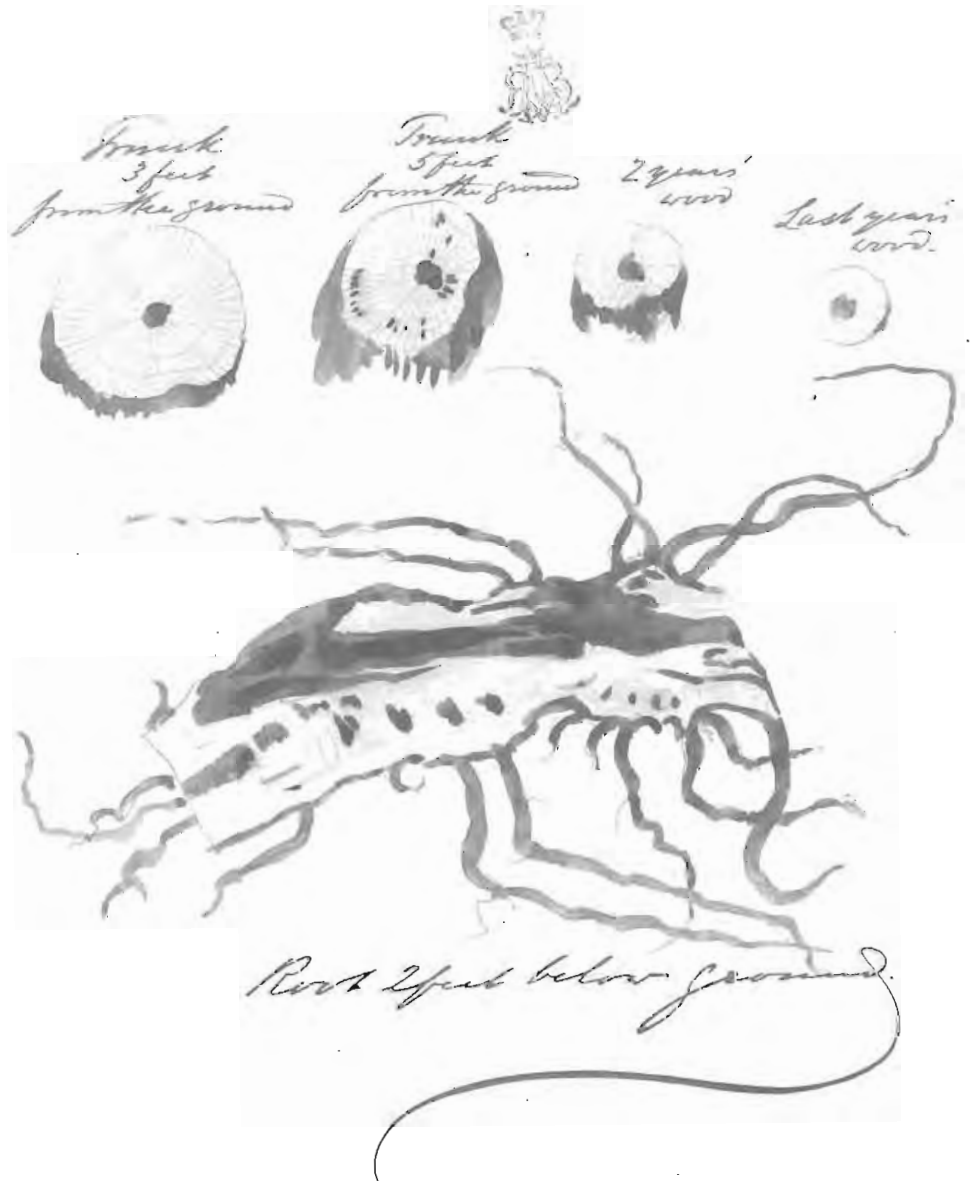
Although Portuguese wines may have taken time to adapt to new patterns of consumption (the winemaking techniques did not enable them to be preserved in good condition without being laced with brandy²²), the truth was that, for the same reasons, and also to better "manipulate" the product, traders continued to prefer sweet fortified wines. This suggested that the accusations of immobilism and failure to adapt and change did not always take account of the demand side of the equation. If the market was not particularly interested in a different product, what incentive did the producers have to alter and improve their winemaking techniques? Indeed, the behaviour of port exports to England during this period seemed to reflect the lack of interest amongst exporters in adapting their wine to new habits of consumption. Given the diversification of the market and increased demand for different types of wine, this may have been a deliberate strategy on the part of some English import/export companies, many of whom also had a stake in sherry; for, by accentuating the difference between those two products, they could ensure regular supply to different sectors of the market²³.

The defects that were repeatedly attributed to port resulted from the fact that the wine was made too early and with unripe grapes, that fermentation would be stopped by the addition of large quantities of "colourless adventitious spirit", that artificial substances would be used to colour and sweeten it; and that it was not allowed enough time to age. So while the wine thus "manufactured" might be sweet and strong, Forrester insisted that its taste and bouquet were defective, and that it would therefore not be able to satisfy connoisseurs²⁴. In addition to these defects (which were not to be underestimated), there was also the inconvenience of allowing (or facilitating) blends with other wines, which was not only counterproductive for Douro producers, but also affected the quality of the product exported from the mouth of the Douro as port.

In order to invert this situation, restore the reputation of Douro wines and overcome the crises that were affecting the sector in 1829-1833 and 1841-1843, he urged wine producers to avoid the practices described above and follow the advice given by the *Companhã*, which was af-

Plate No. 1.

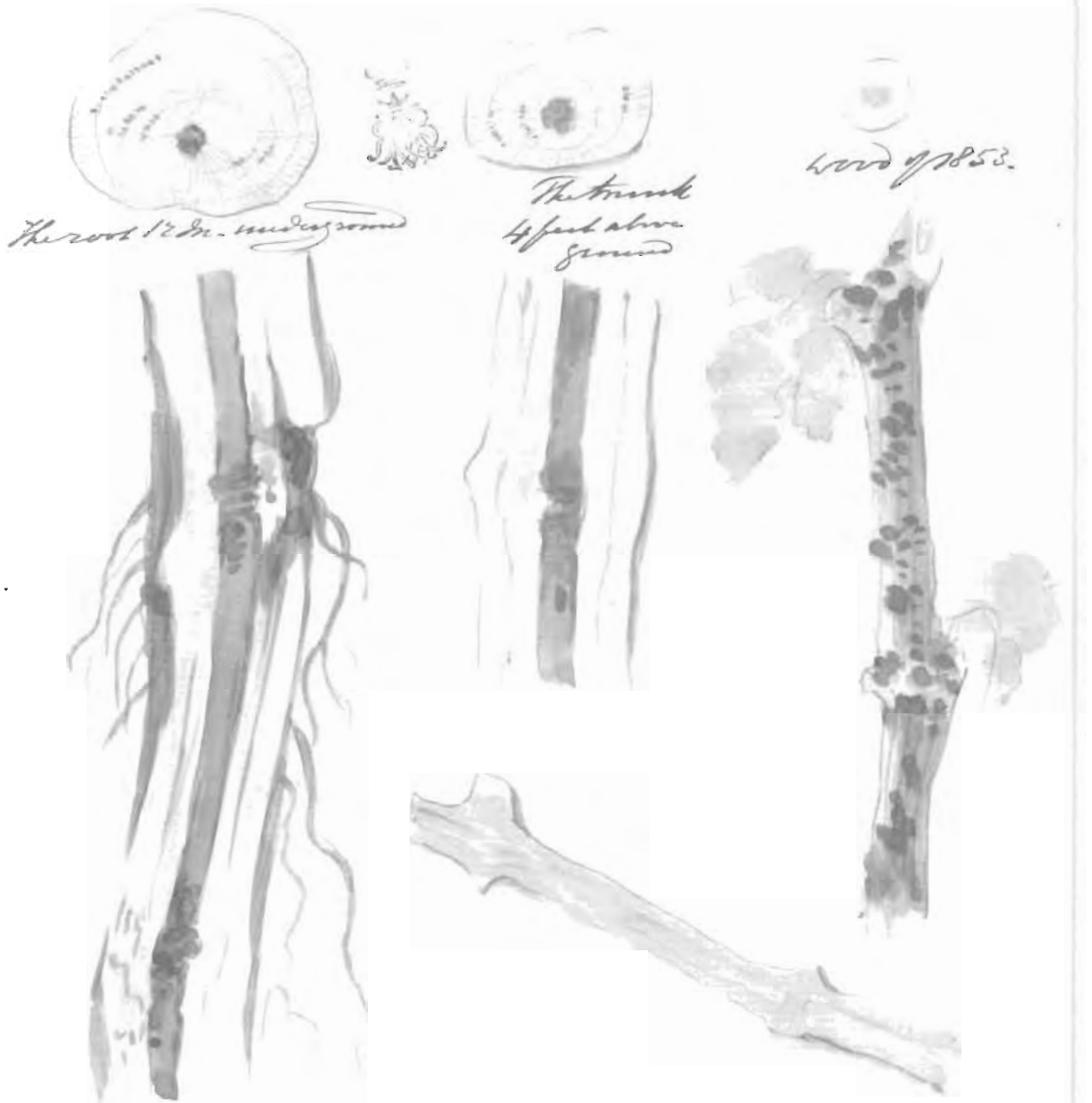
The Castellão or Castellina.



The Castellão.
Practical Observation
on the Vine-disease
in the Alto-Douro...
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nr. 24 (99), pp. 12.

Plate No. 4.

The Malvaceae.



The Malv
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fixed throughout the Douro region²⁵. Indeed, it was these guidelines that inspired Forrester to write his pamphlet *A Word or two on Port Wine* in 1844, dedicated to all the Douro farmers, in which he begged them to contribute to the regeneration of the port wine trade by producing pure wines that were properly fermented in accordance with the "more refined" taste of English connoisseurs.

The wine making system proposed by Forrester was not, therefore, an innovation, as indeed he took pains to explain. Rather, he wanted to revive methods formerly used in the Douro, and which he had learned from the farmers that worked the estates of Enxudeiro and Cabanas that he leased from the Viscount of Canelas, and who had continued to follow the tradition of their forebears. "His" system was based on the following "principles":

- "New" grape varieties should not be grafted onto existing vines merely to give colour to the wine (as many had been doing since the taste for dark wines developed), and priority should be given to the old vines that give little colour but produce better wine with a special taste. Amongst these, he highlights Bastardo, Alvarilhão, Touriga, Tinta Francisca, Tinta Cão, Tinta Lameira, Tinta Grossa and Sousão, though he "forgot" about Mourisco Preto, which, in the opinion of Joaquim Manuel de Barros Cardoso, mayor of Favaios, was one of the best, producing a "fine balsamic wine that can keep for years without the addition of brandy"; indeed, Barros Cardoso even preferred it to Tinta Lameira, as it had more colour and wine properties²⁶.
- The grapes should be harvested at the proper time, taking into account that in some years, despite being well tended, the grapes may require some rain and that too much water out of season is bad for them, as is "too much sun, intense heat, without any rain at all".
- The grapes should be carefully selected and should not be left too long in the press before treading to avoid premature fermentation and rotting, which does not make for a good wine.
- The grapes should not be trodden at intervals (half nights and half days) to avoid leaving them in the press longer than necessary, which can provoke irregular fermentation.
- The must should be thrown into smaller vats (2 to 4 barrels) proportional to the size of the presses, so that it would not be necessary to add finished wine; the vats should be covered to avoid evaporation during the second fermentation²⁷.

Although Forrester recognised that the production and conservation of wine by this process was more time-consuming and laborious than adulteration (which "hides a multitude of sins"), it was cheaper for the producer and gave faster results. In addition, it had the advantage of producing ports that were pure and sufficiently rich in (natural) alcohol to dispense with the addition of large quantities of brandy (which should be wine based and not too alcoholic) during ageing and prior to export.

This was how the matter was understood by those present at a dinner that Forrester organised at his estate at Régua on 8th October 1844 to discuss the crisis and apathy of the wine trade and "his" system of producing wine. Given to his fellow wine producers to return to the "old true method of making pure wines" and for the en-

couragement that he gave them by purchasing over 1500 barrels of unadulterated wine from the current harvest²⁸. Convinced that adulteration lay behind the drop in consumption of Douro wines (as they had never regained the reputation they had acquired at the time of the "great Pombal", when one Company, created by him, controlled the whole production process), the Viscount of Santa Marta suggested that they returned to the "point of error" and made their wines as before – "very pure" and unblended – so that they would actually be wines and not "brandy mixed with wine". Forrester, as a great producer and trader of wines, insisted that these wines would find great acceptance amongst the English upper classes, who were tired of adulterations and preferred wines that were as pure and as un-intoxicating as possible.

He was annoyed at the "confections" made with Bairrada wines, which were cheaper but whose "earthy taste, lack of colour and body" meant that they had to be blended for export as port or mixed with it. And he also railed against the fact that the Porto deposits were full of wines that were called Douro wines when in fact they were not. Forrester insisted on the need to go back to making wines as formerly. He considered that the characteristics that wines required by law, in order to be approved as top quality, encouraged adulterations. And he warned of the need to choose tasters that "understood the matter and were able to reject inferior adulterated wines"²⁹.

As a wine producer and lessee of property in the Douro where, before the mildew problem, he had collected more than a thousand barrels of wine made according to the traditional method under his direction, Forrester followed this example and that of other Douro wine-producers using the same methods to preach to his fellow farmers and to public opinion in general about the advantages of producing pure Douro wine. That is to say, he argued that good wine should be well fermented without the addition of any "extraneous" substances (elderberries, mistelle, sugar, etc) using only the amount of brandy necessary to conserve it. He called attention to the good results he had achieved at the Paris Exhibition of 1855, when his own wines from the 1853 vintage (using the grape varieties Alvarilhão, Tinta Lameira, Tinta Francisca, Tinta Cão and Touriga), which had not been laced with brandy at the harvest, only later benefiting from 18 to 24 *canadas* per barrel, had been honoured with a 1st class silver medal by an international jury. He also pointed out that the same prize had been awarded to the Douro wines presented by José Bernardo Ferreira from his Vezúvio (or Figueiras) and Vargiela estates, which were outside the officially demarcated area, like his own, and were therefore "anathema to the Company" and "rejected by the wine tasters for export"³⁰.

The wine district and the changes that he anticipated and helped implement

Although Forrester had not been too alarmed by the damage provoked by mildew in 1854, when he went to the Douro to see the state of his vines, he nevertheless did not ignore the problem and sent his son to visit the vineyards of Madeira, Cadiz and the Mediterranean to be

Plate N.º 2

The Raba de Velha



Wood of 1853.



3 1/2 year's wood



Trunk 3 feet below ground



Roots 2 feet below ground.

The Raba de Ovelha. Practical Observations on the Vine-disease in the Alto-Douro... Ajuda National Palace Library. Ms. Av. 51-XII-23. n.º 24 (ae). pp. 13

able to assess the situation better³¹. The knowledge that he thereby acquired of the disease and the way it was being treated in European vineyards allowed him to “create” a treatment process, involving sulphur fumigations, which had the advantage that it could be applied not only to vines and trellises, but also to climbing vines³². Other advantages of “his” process were: it required less flower of sulphur (which was very expensive); it used quicklime, which could be acquired easily and cheaply; the solution could (and indeed should) be made on the spot and applied in less time, using female and child labour, which reduced manpower costs; and the solution was innocuous and would not damage the vines.

Along with Félix Manuel Borges Pinto de Carvalho, Forrester was something of a pioneer in the use of sulphur to treat vines in the Douro, and in his attempts to divulge this treatment throughout the region. Concerned, perhaps, with the way the disease was spreading and the inability of his fellow farmers to combat it (either through ignorance or because they did not have the resources), he decided in 1858 to make a “very daring and risky offer”, with the aim of “restoring the vines, until they started producing again normally”³³. He sent a circular around all the vineyard owners in the parish of São João de Covas do Douro (in the county of Sabrosa), suggesting that they treated their sick vines at his expense with remedies that were not restricted to flower of sulphur. In compensation, he would keep half the grapes that the wine producers managed to collect over and above “the double of last year’s yield”, paying the expenses of harvesting the amount that corresponded to his share of the wine, and he would have preferential right of purchase over the rest of their production at local prices. If the vineyard owners preferred to take responsibility for the treatment themselves (and costs were estimated at between 7\$000 and 15\$000 per 1250 vines, the quantity that in the region could produce a barrel of wine), he offered to supply the remedy “at cost price” and oversee its application in exchange for 1/10 of their surplus produce³⁴. Although this proposal, despite the compensations, was quite advantageous to the wine-producers, who had few resources and had been left to their own devices by the political powers, it was not widely taken up in the region. This was due to the “extraordinary profusion” of the method of treating vines with flower of sulphur in the county of Sabrosa; indeed, only those farmers who were unable to, did not use this method³⁵. He did, however, receive several proposals from other places both inside and outside the demarcated area, as well as in the provinces of Minho and Estremadura. These he did not accept, preferring merely to publish the method that he had decided to use and the remedies that he believed most effective against the disease³⁶.

Indeed, it was thanks to the efforts of Forrester and many other determined and audacious landowner-farmers (Félix Manuel Borges Pinto de Carvalho, Count of Samodães, Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira, José António Ferreira, Bernardo de Lemos, etc.) that the region began to recover from the mildew attack before the rest of the country. Nevertheless, the cost of the sulphur treatments, combined with the loss of production and low price of wine, led many farmers to fall into debt, leading to an influx of

capital from the commercial sphere (and not only) in production. But Forrester was a forerunner in this aspect too, because, as he liked to show off, he had been one of the first English exporters to make Douro wine.

He was also a forerunner in restoring the old process of producing pure must, as was recognised in 1845, and in arguing for the production and commercialisation of different kinds of Douro wines in order to respond to the diversification in world demand and the changes that had occurred in consumption habits. Much more popular than the rich fortified ports would be the weaker Douro wines that could be drunk at meals and could therefore compete with lighter wines such as those from the Rhine, Bordeaux or Spain. Thus, we could consider that the first table wines were produced in the Douro through Forrester’s system.

Also important for the region were his pioneering works into the improvement of navigation on the River Douro, which he undertook in partnership with an English engineer (who was also consul in Porto), Johnston. These were the *Hydraulic maps of the mouth of the Douro indicating the easiest ways of removing obstacles in the way of navigation and sounding of the River Douro from the estuary to Barca d’Alva – showing the high and water levels in mid summer and mid winter* -, as well as his studies and illustrations on the *Geology of the Douro river bed, its banks and estuary*.

But the Douro also owes him a very important part of its history, namely the beautiful *Map of the Wine District of the Alto Douro* which, thanks to the care with which it was drawn and the minute detail represented, was used right up until the beginning of the 20th century as the basis for the delimitation of the demarcated region. Many of the participants in the 1907 demarcation process, as well as the agricultural board of the Portuguese Chamber of Deputies, pronounced on the issue, suggesting that the area considered to produce the finest Douro wines be limited to that defined by the old *Companhia* or “demarcated by Baron Forrester”, introducing any corrections that were deemed necessary³⁷. Equally or more interesting than the praise and recognition resulting from these proposals were the words of one of the members of that committee, Júlio de Carvalho Vasques, the deputy for Vila Real. Impressed with the care taken by Baron Forrester (“that bastion of old English houses”) in the production of his map, he tried to find out if there was any “special reason that had led its author to undertake the demarcation so carefully that he even eliminated from the fine wine area a strip of land along the banks of the Douro that belonged to the country of Carrazeda, and another, bordering on to that, in the county of Pesqueira”. However, if we compare it with the geological and isometric maps of the region, we can see that, in his demarcation, Forrester had taken account not only of the geological composition of the land (schist and schist interspersed with granite), but also altitude (less than 500 metres) - that is to say, aspects that would have to be pondered in future demarcations and in the point system.

Another aspect that called the attention of Júlio Vasques in Forrester’s map was the fact that, at some points, the contour line surrounding the region of Alto Douro was not closed. This led them to suggest that “in the mind of the

author, who knew the region so well, there was the idea that port could also be produced further up river [as] experience has effectively demonstrated, with regards to the Rivers Pinhão and Tua”³⁸. Thus, Forrester had also anticipated that in the future, the region could and should extend further inland, as indeed he had suggested in his response to the accusations levelled at him by the English businessmen, showing that good wine could be produced outside the demarcated region and that the region had the capacity to respond to any increase in demand, provided it was free of the impediments imposed upon it by the restrictive and “anachronistic” legislation.

Conclusion

Like other artists, Forrester had something of the visionary about him. In his surveys of the Douro region, he caught a glimpse of how the future might be: a future in which there was freedom to produce; where the wine district extended further upriver; a future of greater, better

and more diversified wine production, and with regularisation of the river current...

As well as wine, Forrester was interested in the manufacture of olive oil, which he also produced, “inventing” a press that was a simplified and adapted version of Dalla Bella’s model, and a method that did not require the application of salt to the receptacles or hot water for the extraction of the oil.

Although he lived in Portugal during a difficult period when, despite the measures taken, the political powers showed little interest in wine growing (in general and in the Douro in particular). Forrester did everything he could to improve the situation in the “richest jewel in the wine crown of Portugal”³⁹, and put an end to the restrictions that constrained and debilitated it. Whether he did all this out of mere philanthropy, to acquire recognition for the country which had received him with open arms, as he liked to point out, or if it was motivated by his crusading liberal spirit and creative effervescence, the answer will have to remain with him at the bottom of the river that he loved, and illustrated, so well.

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Notes

¹ The Map of the Wine District of the Alto Douro, which Forrester dedicated to Queen Mary II and sent to be engraved in England, was eventually printed in Porto in 1843, following a number of petitions to the Courts by town councils and regional institutions (the Councils of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, the Douro Farmers’ Association, the Douro Wine Company, etc.) to overturn the decision taken by the Ministry of the Realm and grant the author “copyright over his excellent Maps of the wine district of the Alto Douro, which this praiseworthy foreigner undertook and had printed in England”. V. DCD of 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17 and 18.5.1843.

² Opinion expressed by the Deputy for the Douro region, Joaquim Vieira de Magalhães, Chamber of Deputies, DCD of 5.5.1843.

³ Forrester also received a further three “honourable mentions” at that exhibition for his olive oil, vinegar from the Alto Douro and salt from Aveiro, and a 1st class silver medal for his display of Douro wines. Cf., *Recompensas accordées aux exposants Portugais par le Jury International de l’Exposition universelle de l’industrie et de l’agriculture*, Paris, 1855.

⁴ Originally founded by William Offley in 1737, the firm’s name – Offley, Webber & Forrester – reflected the family alliances that had been entered into, such as the entry of James Forrester (uncle of Joseph James Forrester).

⁵ This prosperity was “well proven by the fact that its shares had almost doubled in value on the market”. Augusto Soares d’Azevedo Barbosa de Pinho Leal, *Portugal Antigo e Moderno. Dicionário Geográfico, Estatístico, Chorográfico, Heraldico, Archeológico, Histórico, Biográfico e Etymológico de todas as cidades, villas e freguesias de Portugal e de grande numero de aldeias*, Vol. VII, Lisbon, Livraria Editora de Mattos Moreira & Companhia, 1876, p. 417.

⁶ Fernando de Sousa, *A Real Companhia Velha, Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro (1756-2006)*, Porto, CEPESE, 2006, p. 321. On the situation, jurisdiction and functioning of the Company during these years, see *ibidem*, pp. 258-327.

⁷ Cf., *Vindicação de José James Forrester contra as imputações a elle feitas no parecer da Direcção da associação Commercial do Porto*, Porto, 1845.

⁸ From 1831, foreign wines had to pay 5 shillings and 6 pence per gallon, approximately double the amount paid by wines from the British Empire (2 sh and 9 d). It will be recalled that Article II of the Methuen Treaty stipulated that “from henceforth” Portuguese wines

would pay lower import duties than French wines, and in fact, for a long time, they enjoyed an even better advantage than the third less agreed in the Treaty. See Conceição Andrade Martins, “O Tratado de Methuen e o crescimento do comércio vinícola português na primeira metade de Setecentos” in José Luis Cardoso et alia, *O Tratado de Methuen (1703) diplomacia, guerra, política e economia*, Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 2003, pp. 111-130.

⁹ The Portuguese share of the British wine market dropped from 55.5% (in 1805-1829) to 40.4% (in 1830-1859), while the Spanish share increased from 26.9% to 44.9% in the same period. After the changes to customs duties introduced by Gladstone in 1860 and 1861 (tariffs were generally lowered, though progressive charges were introduced on wines in accordance with their alcohol content), the drop became even more accentuated (the Portuguese share of the market going down to 22.1%). This was largely due to the fact that port had been included in the highest category (over 26° Sykes); as such, they had to pay over a shilling more per gallon than less alcoholic wines.

¹⁰ The September Revolution of 23rd May 1852. On this subject, see also José James Forrester, *Provas de verdade, contra provas de vinho, ou mais “uma ou duas palavras” sobre os vinhos do Porto*, Porto, 1859.

¹¹ Considering that, with regard to the port wine trade, Article 15 was an exception to Article 4, Portugal not only maintained its prohibition on the export to Britain of certain wines produced in the Alto Douro, but also continued to impose high taxes on the wines that left the port of Porto destined for that country.

¹² At that time, port shipped to the United Kingdom paid more / per barrel in export duty than the same product destined for the rest of Europe and America. On this matter, see Joseph James Forrester, *A Short Treatise on the unequal and disproportionate imposts levied on Port-Wine, shipped from Porto to Great-Britain; compared with the imposts levied on wines, of the same character, shipped to America and other countries*, London, 1850.

¹³ Between 1833 and 1852, the portion of Douro production that was not approved for export and therefore destined for home consumption vastly exceeded the portion approved (over 70%). Cf. Conceição Andrade Martins, *Memória do Vinho do Porto*, Lisbon, Social Science Institute, 1990, p. 202.

¹⁴ See Note 9. On this subject, see José James Forrester, *Uma ou*

Duas palavras sobre vinho do Porto dirigidas ao publico britannico em geral, e com especialidade aos particulares; mostrando como, e porque he adulterado, e apontando alguns meios de se conhecerem as adulterações. Porto, Typ. Commercial Portuense, 1844, pp. 9-10 and 15; and *Provas de verdade, contra provas de vinho, ou mais "uma ou duas palavras" sobre os vinhos do Porto.* Porto, 1859, 28-29. On this subject, and the problems arising from the export of Douro wines to the English market in subsequent years, see also Vila Maior in the Report on Class LXXIII of the International Exhibition of 1867 (especially pp. 143 onwards).

¹⁸Administrative Rule of 5th December 1857. This measure, which was designed to offer a response to foreign critics, particularly the British, proved damaging to Portuguese trade in wines with the United Kingdom, as it was misinterpreted (it was widely believed that such an official document would never have been promulgated without due reason). Recognising the "imprudence of officially arrogated suspicion", the government revoked the measure the following year (Administrative Rule of 7th November 1858), on the grounds that the reasons that had induced it to take measures to prevent the serious consequences that could arise from the possible adulterations of the 1857 harvest were no longer present.

¹⁹José James Forrester, *A verdadeira cauda da crise commercial no Porto, com uma analyse da Representação dos senhores presidentes do jury qualificador em que se pretende invadir o direito de propriedade como meio o mais efficaz de restabelecer o credito dos vinhos do Porto.* Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1859, pp. 4-5 and 23-26.

²⁰Joseph James Forrester (Baron of Forrester, in Portugal), Portugal and its Capabilities: (being the Essay for which "The Oliveira Prize and medal" were awarded) with the author's evidence regarding that country, given before a select committee of the House of Commons in May, 1852, on the wine-duties; together with A Companion to the Essay containing "A Word or Two on Port-Wine" re-iterated, and a statistical account of the Port-Wine trade from 1678 to 1860. Fourth Edition, London, 1860, pp. 26-27.

²¹*Considerações á cerca da Carta da Lei de 21 d'Abril de 1843 e resultado que se tem colhido para o Paiz Vinhateiro do Alto-Douro, e Commercio dos Vinhos do Porto.* Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1849, p. 5.

²²José Fructuoso Ayres de Gouvêa Osório, *Relatona e notas relativas á Exposição d'Agricultura, realisada nos dias 12, 13 e 14 de Julho de 1857, e promovida por uma commissão da Sociedade Agricola do Porto.* Porto, 1857, pp. 45-50.

²³Decree of 11th October 1852 and administrative rule of the same date.

²⁴Portugal and its Capabilities, cit., pp. xv-xvi and 7.

²⁵Although José Maria da Fonseca was considered one of the most illustrious and experienced wine-growers in the country, he had suffered some embarrassment as a result of his experiments with 'virgin' wines (i.e. wine that had been scarcely laced with brandy), which he had dispatched to Brazil.

²⁶On the growth of English demand at this time, see A. Briggs, *Wine for sale, Victoria wine and liquor trade, 1860-1984*, Chicago, 1985, pp. 27-29.

²⁷Cf. Joseph James Forrester, *Companion to "Portugal and its Capabilities" or "A word or two more on Port-Wine" shewing the rise and progress of the Port-Wine trade from 1678 to 1860*, Porto, Commercial Printing Office, 1860, pp. 35 and 38.

²⁸These were: that the grape harvest should be postponed as long as possible; that the grapes be carefully selected; that the use of elderberries should be avoided completely; that the grapes be carefully pressed to enable the wine to ferment naturally without any impediment; that the practice of adding brandy to the vats

to provoke a second fermentation be stopped; and that the wine should be protected from air currents. Cf. Joseph James Forrester, *Companion to "Portugal and its Capabilities" or "A word or two more on Port-Wine" shewing the rise and progress of the Port-Wine trade from 1678 to 1860*, Porto, Commercial Printing Office, 1860, pp. 36-38.

²⁹Cf. Forrester, *Uma ou Duas palavras*, cit. (pp. 7-8); *Documentos sobre os esforços de José James Forrester e das Câmaras Municipaes do Districto Vinhateiro do Alto Douro, para a supressão da contrafeição dos Vinhos do Porto.* Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1845, p. 4.

³⁰Smaller vats also have the advantage of conserving samples of wines made from different grape varieties or different presses. José James Forrester, *O Commercio do Vinho do Alto Douro, Discursos pronunciados em uma reunião no Pezo da Regua convidado pelo Lavrador do Douro e Negociante Britannico José James Forrester em 8 de Outubro de 1844*, Porto, Imprensa de Alvares Ribeiro, 1844, p. 8.

³¹Cf., *O Commercio do Vinho do Alto Douro*, cit., p. 5. Present at that meeting were, amongst other landowners and local authorities, the mayors of the councils of Santa Marta de Penaguião and Sabrosa, the administrators of Sta Marta and Peso da Régua, and the president of the Douro Farmers' Association, António Teixeira de Sousa.

³²*Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

³³Barão de Forrester, *Algumas Palavras sobre a Exposição de Paris pelo ... oferecidas aos seus amigos*, Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1856, p. 35.

³⁴Letter from Joseph James Forrester published in the Porto newspaper *Nacional*, cit. in *Annaes da Sociedade Promotora da Industria Nacional*, No. 8, Lisbon, 1854. In that same year, Forrester published his *Ensaio sobre a molesta nas videiras, com numerosas illustrações e desenhos microscópicos, adoptado pela "Royal Society" de Londres, e por ella admitido nas suas "Transactions", e premiado em Paris com uma menção honrosa*, London, Royal Society, 1854.

³⁵Forrester's process, which he himself considered to be innovative, was an adapted version of Dr Price's plan: 30 parts of quicklime with 80 parts of flowers of sulphur mixed with water and boiled until it acquires a reddish colour and the excess sulphur is deposited; this solution was then mixed with 12 to 20 times its own volume of water, and would be applied to the vines with a sponge, paintbrush or syringe. See José James Forrester, *Memoria sobre o curativo da molesta nas videiras*, Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1857.

³⁶V. José James Forrester, *Memoria sobre o curativo da molesta nas videiras*, Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1857.

³⁷"Aos proprietários de vinhas na freguesia de S. João de Covas do Douro", Circular from Joseph James Forrester published in various regional newspapers.

³⁸As reported in the *Jornal da Sociedade Agricola do Porto* of 1858 (p. 219) and which Forrester himself acknowledged in the *Memoria sobre o curativo da molesta nas videiras*, Porto, Typographia Commercial, 1857, p. 6.

³⁹As described in *ob. cit.*, *Memoria sobre o curativo da molesta nas videiras*.

⁴⁰The corrections in question involved part of the Alto Douro "where today the grapes are harvested for fine port", but which had not yet been planted at the date when Forrester created his map (*Map of the Wine District of the Alto Douro*), V., DCD of 18th and 23rd January 1907.

⁴¹DCD of 23rd January 1907.

⁴²This felicitous expression used by the Viscount of Vila Maior about port (and Madeira) wine = *Relatórios sobre a classe LXXIII da Exposição Intemacional de 1867*, Lisbon, 1868, p. 140.