

If a sufficient quantity of the juice of ripe grapes, or of any other saccharine fluid, be exposed to a moderately warm temperature, an internal movement of its particles soon begins to take place; which is technically called *fermentation*: and during the period when this is going on, the sugar of the liquor is, in part, converted into wine. If the fermentation be now arrested by the proper means, the whole mass of the liquid may be preserved in nearly the same state for a longer or shorter period, in proportion to the quantity of wine contained in it: but if, after the vinous fermentation, as it is called, has been completed, the temperature be to a certain degree increased, the wine is converted into vinegar by a continuance of the process of fermentation: and, ultimately, the acid taste and odour of the vinegar are lost; and the whole mass of the liquor becomes first vapid, and then putrid.

That such a process as putrefaction should take place in organised bodies after their death, might in reasoning be antecedently expected; for the purpose of administering to the growth of their successive generations in the case of vegetables^f; and to prevent the indefinite accumulation

^f “ Haud igitur penitus pereunt quæcunque videntur :

“ Quando alid ex alio reficit Natura, nec ullam

“ Rem gigni patitur, nisi morte adjutam aliena.”

LUCRET. I. 263—5.