

and in individuals who have lived in crowded and ill-ventilated habitations, will acknowledge that in very many instances wine alone has, humanly speaking, rescued the patient from the grave.

Nor will it be irrelevant to the general subject of this treatise to consider the natural origin of wine: by which I mean, not the mode or time of its discovery; either of which it would be as useless as vain to attempt to investigate, since this liquid was in common use at a period long antecedent to history: but by its natural origin I mean the circumstances under which it is usually produced. There is a law in nature, by which organised bodies, vegetables as well as animals, are disposed to undergo spontaneous decomposition very soon after they have ceased to live; the ultimate result of which is, a resolution into their elementary principles; in other words, they putrefy and perish. But even in this state, in which they are deprived of all their former properties, they administer to the good of man; and, under the name of manure, are known as the principal means of fertilizing the ground; from whence all his food is ultimately obtained. The circumstances, however, which accompany this change in vegetables, differ very much from those which attend the corresponding change in animals; and may be well illustrated by a reference to the process of making any common wine.