

## THE GRAPE-VINE

2. The grape-vine (*Vitis vinifera*) belongs to the ancient cultivated plants of western Asia and Egypt. It is not one of the most ancient cultivations, for cereals and many kinds of pulse are surely far earlier, but it is old enough to have its beginnings lost in the dawn of history. Viticulture represents such a complexity of ideas, of a uniform and persistent character throughout the ancient world, that it can have been disseminated but from a single centre. Opinions as to the location of this focus are of course divided, and our present knowledge of the subject does not permit us to go beyond more or less probable theories. Certain it is that the primeval home of vine-growing is to be sought in the Orient, and that it was propagated thence to Hellas and Italy, while the Romans (according to others, the Greeks) transplanted the vine to Gaul and the banks of the Rhine.<sup>1</sup> For botanical reasons, A. DE CANDOLLE<sup>2</sup> was inclined to regard the region south of the Caucasus as "the central and perhaps the most ancient home of the species." In view of the Biblical tradition of Noah planting the grape-vine near the Ararat,<sup>3</sup> it is a rather attractive hypothesis to conceive of Armenia as the country from which the knowledge of the grape took its starting-point.<sup>4</sup> However, we must not lose sight of the fact that both vine and wine were known in Egypt for at least three or four millenniums B.C.,<sup>5</sup> and were likewise familiar in Mesopotamia at a very early date. This is not the place for a discussion of O. SCHRADER'S theory<sup>6</sup> that the name and cultivation of the vine are due to Indo-Europeans of anterior Asia; the word for "wine" may well be of Indo-European or, more specifically, Armenian origin, but this does not

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the excellent study of G. CURTEL, *La Vigne et le vin chez les Romains* (Paris, 1903). See also A. STUMMER, *Zur Urgeschichte der Rebe und des Weinbaues* (*Mitt. Anthr. Ges. Wien*, 1911, pp. 283-296).

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis, IX, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. BILLIARD, *La Vigne dans l'antiquité*, p. 31 (Lyon, 1913). This is a well illustrated and artistic volume of 560 pages and one of the best monographs on the subject. As the French are masters in the art of viticulture, so they have also produced the best literature on the science of vine and wine. Of botanical works, J.-M. GUILLON, *Étude générale de la vigne* (Paris, 1905), may be recommended.

<sup>5</sup> V. LORET, *Flore pharaonique*, p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> In HEHN, *Kulturpflanzen*, pp. 91-95.