

THE
HOUSE OF PERNOD AND SONS
OF PONTARLIER
(DOUBS)

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I

The House of Pernod and Sons is so intimately associated with the origins and progress of the absinthe industry that it is impossible to separate or distinguish the history of the one from the other.

The origins of absinthe are thus the obligatory preamble to the history of the House of Pernod & Sons which we propose to recount in these pages. In spite of the name Swiss absinthe by which it often goes, the famous liqueur is of French origin.

At the end of the last century a French doctor, Dr. Ordinaire, exiled in Switzerland, chose Couvet for the theater of his medical activity. We cannot resist the urge to reproduce the portrait drawn of him by a Swiss writer.

He was, apparently, an eccentric, of great height, riding through the Val de Travers on a small Corsican horse known in region as the Rocket. His unusual appearance did not fail to surprise the village populations; it gave rise to many jokes and persistent astonishment among the children. Ordinaire did not appear to be concerned with this; the gravity of his character was not affected. He was a doctor not without talents for his time, and he did a good job of bringing the medical art to the Val de Travers. He joined the practice of medicine to that of pharmacology; the majority of doctors of the countryside did no differently. Mr. Ordinaire did not scorn the panaceas, he employed one in particular, the elixir of wormwood, composed of aromatic plants of which only he knew the secret. Many people, having made use of it, declared themselves radically cured and the doctor could not pretend to be other than pleased and to prescribe its use.

Dr. Ordinaire would have been well astonished if anyone had predicted the high destinies to which his elixir would be called. At his death the mysterious recipe passed into the hands of the young Henriod ladies of Couvet. Cultivating the necessary herbs themselves in their garden, they distilled them in the family home. The production of the

elixir at the time amounted only to a few pots which were sold with some difficulty by hawking.

Little by little, however, thanks to its fragrance and pleasant taste, the elixir came to the attention of not only the sick, but to that of more and more fans, so that the recipe had already acquired monetary value when when Mr. Henri-Louis Pernod acquired it to exploit it commercially.

This happened in 1797. It was at that time the first absinthe factory was built. The establishment was created under extremely modest conditions, even for Couvet; the building where the industry was born still exists; it measures eight meters long by four meters broad by four meters high. Subsequently enlarged, the factory was not long in becoming too small and, in 1805, Mr. Pernod not being able to satisfy demand by the French customers which had taken to his product with a marked favor, fixed upon Pontarlier as the place to avoid the high taxes levied by the tax department upon Swiss Absinthe. We have before our eyes the contract dated the 25th day of the fifth month of the 13th year (French Republican calendar) by which Sir Benoit-Hilaire Courbe leases to Pernod & Sons for the price of 180 francs per year, a location designated as a house on Grand Street in Pontarlier, for the establishment of a green water factory. This tiny distillery could hardly foresee the splendid establishment which rises today at the edge of Doubs: two small apparatuses producing 16 liters per day each.

When Mr. Louis Pernod, currently still one of the heads of the house, and his brother, Fritz, unfortunately since deceased (March 17, 1880), took over the direction of the business in the absence of their father, whom they had lost early, the house was already on a good road, because the daily production had reached the figure of 450 liters.

Since the date to which we refer, that is, since 1855, production has increased enormously.

To what can we attribute this astonishing prosperity, this continuous development which only a small number of industries can boast? Quite simply, to the firm intent of the heads of the house of Pernod to always provide a superior product, never yielding to the temptation to realize greater profits by buying cheap raw materials of lower quality. This temptation was offered to them in a particularly seductive form when the French vineyards of the South, devastated by powdery mildew and later by phylloxera, could no longer provide, except at exorbitant prices, the spirits distilled from wine which form the basis of absinthe liqueur. It then seemed quite natural to replace the proof spirit of wine with alcohols from beets, grains, and potatoes; this is what was done by many distillers who, noticing the public favour given to the product of the House of Pernod, had installed absinthe factories almost everywhere. By a happy inspiration, Mssrs. Pernod decided to remain faithful to proof-spirit of wine; this resolution made the fortune of their house; the higher quality of their product, attested to by the preference accorded to it by consumers, is due primarily to the exclusive use of alcohol made by distillation of wine; it's not only that this alcohol gives to Pernod absinthe the fine flavor which distinguishes it, but that it makes for an inoffensive drink from a health standpoint, since it saves

consumers from the morbid effects of bad alcohols. We will have occasion to explain ourselves at greater length in this regard.

Alongside this essential element of the success of the Pernod brand, are others which also have their importance. We want to talk about the manufacturing processes that Mr. Pernod never ceased to improve, sparing no effort to create model equipment capable of providing the best results; we want to also speak about the proverbial honesty that always governed the trade of the Pernod House, providing it with as many friends as customers and vendors.

These traditions were religiously respected and followed by Mr. Veil-Picardy to whom Mr. Pernod yielded his business, in which he remained as a silent partner in return for a significant share.

It is not futile to add that the former head of the house continued to follow with a quite natural solicitude the operations which he had directed for so many years; in particular, it was always he himself who dealt with the purchase of raw materials and not a wagon of proof spirit nor a bale of herbs or seeds entered the stores unless Mr. Pernod had approved the sample.

Furthermore, Mr. Viel-Picardy has made a point of retaining as the heads of technical and commercial services, the collaborators who assisted Mr. Pernod for years, and who, informed by long experience, continue to be inspired by his example and precepts.

II

Before describing the Pernod & Sons factory, recognized by experts as a model establishment, a few words about the fabrication processes employed there.

One starts by macerating, in spirits distilled from wine, grand wormwood, melissa with a delicate aroma, fennel of Gard, and anise of Tarn or Andalusia. After this maceration comes distillation, which is done in a double boiler heated by steam. This process is slower than distillation by direct steam, but quite preferable in that it avoids burning and does not allow the heavy oils to become entrained with the alcohol saturated with the aromatic principles of the plants.

Part of the product of distillation is then sent to special apparatus called colorators, with hyssop and petite wormwood, to obtain a concentrated product which is used to color the absinthe.

Let us study each raw material used in this process.

Wormwood - "the wormwood or bitter armoise", we read in the work of Dr. Lehameau entitled *Plants, Remedies and Diseases*, "grows in almost all countries; the dry, arid, rocky terrain, the higher elevations, mountainous and cold, are the places where it is normally found. A herbaceous and vigorous plant, wormwood has a rather strong stem, erect,

hard, stiff, and grooved, of ashy gray, filled with white marrow, reaching 70 to 80 centimeters and even a meter in height. (In 1894 a grand wormwood plant harvested on the Pernod factory property measured 1.8 meters in height.) The alternate leaves, heavily indented, are rather large, gray-green and silvery on top, whiter and silkier underneath. The flowers are numerous, resembling small globes, yellow, and arranged in small bunches; the root is woody, vibrant, and twirling.

The smell of wormwood is very strong and is not lost in drying, especially when drying is done carefully; its flavor is excessively bitter and penetrating.

The tonic virtues, stimulative, vermifugal and diuretic, of wormwood have been known for a very long time and have rendered it of great use in medicine and the veterinary arts. It can perhaps be classified as one of our most valuable indigenous plants, capable in many cases of replacing quinine.

To supplement this information let us add that the grand and the petite wormwood are the varieties most usually cultivated. The grand wormwood is sown in spring; and transplanted in autumn; the petite wormwood is multiplied by cuttings, the seeds do not reach maturity in our climate. One plants these cuttings in autumn in well loosened and plowed ground; after which wormwood requires nothing more than some hoeing. One harvests the leaves and stems in July a little before full flowering; one cuts the stems to within a few centimeters of the ground.

The House of Pernod formerly used wormwood cultivated in the mountains of the Swiss Jura; today the use of the plant in the factory is such that cultivation of it has developed considerably in the immediate surroundings of Pontarlier where it constitutes a significant source of income for the farmers. The factory is thus assured, in spite of the enormous development of its output, of always being able to get absinthe herbs of first quality.

Melissa - We know the remarkable anti-nervous properties of this plant, which is used successfully against migraine, languors and debilities of the stomach, spasms and convulsions.

Fennel - the culture of fennel is very widespread in Italy and in the South of France; the fennel of Gard enjoys a great reputation; it is that which is employed in the Pernod factory. This seed is one of the four large hot seeds; it is very digestive and fights the putrid fevers; it also strengthens the stomach and contributes strongly to digestion.

Anise - the anise seed is in extensive use in distilling, perfumery, confectionery and pharmacology, it is in general endowed with the same qualities as fennel. The best sources of anise are the Tarn and Andalusia; it is those regions that supply the House of Pernod.

Hyssop - this plant grows naturally in the South of France where it is very common; it is cultivated successfully in the North; it also is extensively employed in medicine, especially as an expectorant in pulmonary conditions.

III

Allow us to offer a short digression on the harmful effects attributed to absinthe.

We are aware of the campaign almost everywhere against alcoholism; admittedly the goal is excellent and one can only applaud the efforts of those who seek to cure humanity of this hideous disease. That said, we have reservations about their methods, which cannot all be approved; and with very good cause, they have their zealots who, by their manifest exaggerations, compromise themselves in the eyes of reasonable people. Thus condemning moderate use of alcohol as well as abuse, they want to impose complete abstinence, and even, finding moral action insufficient and too slow, they call for forced measures to achieve complete removal of the production and sale of alcohol, with contempt for freedom of commerce and industry.

It is primarily absinthe which is the target of their efforts; it is it upon which they hang their blanket accusation, and which they proclaim as the cause of all the evils that afflict humanity. In addition to the reprobation which they slap other alcoholic drinks, absinthe, if you believe certain characters among them, is guilty of special crimes for which they create special columns in the newspapers; by the fact of the plants which compose it, it apparently constitutes a true poison and, in support of these statements, they announce strange recipes containing all manner of ingredients, which have only one error: to be without any connection to the manufacture of absinthe, at least as it is practiced in the House of Pernod Fils.

However laudable the objectives of the absinthe detractors, it doesn't authorize them to disguise the truth and to represent the drink as the product of a malevolent chemistry, whereas its components are honest plants, all well known, whose beneficial properties are universally admitted. How could the union of these inoffensive or salutary plants produce harmful effects? That, the adversaries of the green liqueur forget to explain, which is usually the case when passion derails logic.

It is scientists, however, we must say, who want to discover toxic properties in various of the plants used to make absinthe; their reports made a certain amount of noise a few years ago and the Academy of Medicine resounded with the tumult of their discussions. Because, as in the time of Moliere, the doctors are seldom of the same opinion, fans of the famous liqueur may be reassured by the surprising dissension among the opinions of these messieurs.

While some, as a result of completely conclusive experiments (according to them), show anise and fennel to be the cause of the cerebral disorders noticed in the drinkers, absolving the wormwood plant, others, by experiments quite as conclusive, announce on the contrary the latter as the only culprit and restore anise and fennel to their primitive innocence.

Which of them are right? Which are wrong? That is what the man on the street wants to

know and these fundamental differences are not likely to inspire him to great confidence in the allegations of one or the others. In the end, the way in which the famous experiments are done and the conclusions reached are such that it is hardly possible to take them seriously.

In effect, how does one seek to prove the toxic properties of anise essence or wormwood essence? One introduces into a guinea pig, by means of subcutaneous injections, one gram of essence; the animal is found to be stressed; sometimes he dies shortly after the operation; the demonstration is made and everyone must be convinced that either anise, or wormwood is a dangerous poison. Before thus swearing on the word of the Masters, it would be wise to fall back upon the self-evident value of the experiment from the point of view of the constant thesis; it will be easy to arrive at the following reasoning:

One will admit that a man whose weight is a hundred times greater than that of a guinea-pig, offers a force of resistance a hundred times greater as well; one gram of essence introduced into a guinea pig would thus represent 100 grams for a man; there would be nothing astonishing if the abrupt injection of 100 grams of essence into a human body had as a consequence serious disorders and even death.

According to very precise calculations, one liter of absinthe contains at most 3-1/2 grams of essences of anise and fennel; the injection of 100 grams would thus be equivalent to the absorption of 28 liters; as for essence of wormwood it exists in the amount of 15 centigrams at most in one liter of liqueur; thus to absorb 100 grams of it, one would have to drink 660 liters!

From one liter of absinthe, 25 portions are usually made; there are thus in each portion about 13 centigrams of various essences and 6 milligrams of essence of wormwood. Even supposing harmful properties are shown, which is not the case, it is difficult to admit that these infinitesimal quantities, quickly expelled from the body, can exert an annoying influence on the cerebral system. The consumer of Pernod Fils Absinthe runs certainly less risk than one who soaks up cognacs, fine champagne and other liquors manufactured with bad alcohols.

It is not difficult to oppose the exaggerations of the absinthe detractors with the reasonable opinions expressed by many scientists. Allow us to cite some:

Dr. F.-J. Cazin, in his practical and reasoned treatise on medicinal plants (Paris 1886), says, with regard to wormwood "in moderate amounts, it excites the stomach, sharpens the appetite, facilitates digestion, and accelerates the circulatory and secretive functions".

We read in the New Dictionary of the medicinal plants, by Dr. A. Heraud (Paris 1875. J.-B. Baihière and Son, 19 Hautefeuille Street): "If one takes account of the weak quantities of alcohol and essences which absinthe contains, one sees that with the amount of one or two glasses per day, it can have only slight influence on the consumer."

Dr. Heraud notes that the danger comes not from moderate use of absinthe, but from the abuse in which a great number of drinkers all too easily involve themselves. One can say as much of the abuse of wine, beer, cider and other drinks classed as healthy.

MM. Dujardin-Beaumetz and E.Egasse, in their treatise on the indigenous and exotic medicinal plants (Paris 1889. Doin, editor), after having indicated the proportions of alcohol and essences contained in an ordinary glass of absinthe, add "One sees that the proportion of essence is very tiny, and it is appropriate to incriminate all alcohol as well, especially when it contains pentanol, as is the case with inferior liquors.

Bad alcohol, that is the enemy! We need look no further.

That was demonstrated by Mr. Emmanuel Alglave at the international congress of hygiene which met in Budapest in September 1894, the cause of alcoholism lies much less in the quantity of alcohol absorbed than in the bad quality of the alcohol. Indeed, liquors derived from industrial alcohols contain, in addition to pure ethanol, pentanols, butylic and methyl alcohol, etc. It is important to distinguish pure ethanol from the others, particularly pentanol, because there are radical difference between their effects. Indeed pure ethanol, boiling at 79°, evaporates from the lungs almost as soon as it is ingested; it only traverses the body, so to speak; amyl alcohol, on the contrary, stops at 140°, so that at human body temperature, it almost never evaporates. Once introduced into the body, it remains there and accumulates there, the daily amount added to that of the day before and two days before that, as those have been added to previous amounts. No matter how weak the quantity taken each day, the body ends up accumulating a considerable quantity of this toxic alcohol. (The Time of September 21, 1894.)

Those are the unhealthy effects of bad alcohols, especially the amyl essences contained in all the potato, grain, and beet alcohols, which are absent in spirits distilled from wine such as are exclusively used in the House of Pernod Fils.

To summarize this chapter, we thus can, without hazard to ourselves, venture the following propositions:

If the absinthe is distilled carefully, it constitutes a tonic and refreshing drink; its abuse can become a problem, because it contains much alcohol, but the people who make moderate use of this drink represent proof of its salutatory effects.

The absinthe made by certain distillers is a simple mixture, cold-processed, using duplicated alcohol and essences, the whole colored by chemical means.

Why these manufacturers aim especially at cheap markets, one can easily see from these mixtures! The least danger that they present is the unequal saturation of alcohol by the essences; those, being more volatile, separate from the alcohol and rise to the surface which is thus saturated to excess.

When absinthe is prepared from spirits distilled from wine and maceration of plants in the alcohol followed by a methodical distillation, the product obtained is healthy and tonic.

This chapter was written when we were informed of the discussion which taken up in the House of Commons in May and June 1895 concerning the project presented by the Government on the reform of the taxation of drinks. It was about reducing the taxes on drinks qualified as healthy - wine, beer, cider, perry, etc, to defer all the load of taxation upon the alcohol which one can justifiably call the beast of burden of the tax department. To justify this measure, they painted a very dark picture of the ravages of alcoholism. Perhaps, in order to produce a sharper impression on our legislators and to more easily obtain from them the enormous surtax applied to alcohol, they had to let fly some exaggerations.

As it is, we know from the information provided on that occasion by the most qualified men, that alcoholism was, so to speak, unknown in France for as long as we consumed only naturally produced brandies, made by distillation of wine and fruit juices. Such was noted, among others, by Dr. Lannelongue, who dealt ex professo in the chamber with the question of alcoholism, and who produced for the tribunal the results of his own observations joined with those of the highest scientific authorities, before 1850 we knew no alcoholism in France, or rather we knew an alcoholism different from what it is today; chronic alcoholism was not frequent; the cases observed in the lunatic asylums were not numerous; in summary, declared Mr. Lannelongue, at that time, alcoholism presented no problem, not for society, not for the family, not for the race.

It is from the appearance of industrial alcohols made by distillation of grains, beets, potatoes, and molasses that alcoholism is born and grows with astonishing speed, bringing with it an increase in criminality, mental illness, and suicides. Such is the thesis supported by Mr. Lannelongue and many speakers from extremely diverse groups in the Chamber, without said thesis being seriously contradicted by anybody.

The work of the doctors and chemists has revealed the existence of ethanol and a whole series of other alcohols having different molecular compositions and higher boiling points; that's why they were given the name *higher alcohols*, which lends ambiguity, since it is proven that it is precisely these alcohols whose effects are especially harmful to the human organism.

Without claiming that spirits distilled from wine, pure ethanol, are completely innocent and can be misused with impunity, which would be an absurdity, we have the right to agree, following scientists such as Dujardin-Beaumetz and Audige, that their effects cannot be compared with those of industrial alcohols.

Dr. Lannelongue, after having declared that they have not been able to discover the harmful principle in ethanol, sought to determine the dose at which this alcohol becomes harmful to man. He estimates that an adult can consume 120 grams of it with impunity, which corresponds to about one liter of wine at 8 degrees per day, or to eight small

glasses of Armagnac at 50 degrees.

The scientist/doctor combated the allegations of certain writers who accuse that spirits distilled from wine contain elements as dangerous as those known to exist in industrial alcohols. He quoted on that occasion the opinion of Lancereau which affirms that "brandies and homemade wine are not more dangerous than wine"; that of Laborde which claims in turn that "brandy from wine is well tolerated because it possesses minimum toxic power"; and finally that of Girard which gives an assent by saying that "brandy from wine is harmless in moderate amounts ".

To fill the hole dug into the budget by the reduction of taxes on drinks known as healthy, the surtax on alcohol would not serve, they dreamed up a special tax on spirits, absinthe in particular, naturally with much insistence on the dangers presented to the public health by the abuse of that drink. But in the anathemas that certain speakers launched with glee against it, we never found anything to belie the conclusions at which we arrived after a calm and reasoned examination of the question; we met no argument able to convince us of the toxic effects of the essences contained in a well-made absinthe, taken in the doses which we indicated and which are precise.

One rose with vehemence against the shameful products too often sold for consumption under the name of absinthe: the fact was brought out that many make these products themselves by cold mixing unrectified industrial alcohol with essences which are true poisons, so that the consumer suffers a double poisoning by bad alcohol and by the essences.

All decent people will share the indignation raised by the revelations made in House of Commons regarding the intrigues of these culprits; everyone will applaud the severe measurements the Government has decided to take to ensure the hygienic control of drinks and to put a stop to the systematic poisoning of the French consumer.

But it is necessary to take care not to confuse the products of an infamous industry with absinthe such as is carefully distilled in the factory of Pernod & Sons, using spirits distilled from wines chosen from among the best of Languedoc and Roussillon, and aromatic plants of the best quality. There is between them the same difference as between wine made from fresh grapes, pure juice of the vine, and the degenerate drink made under the name of wine in certain warehouses for the use of the Parisian population.

IV

Let us tour this important factory. The main building measures 88 meters long by 20 meters wide. Before and behind it stand large halls covering more than 2,000 square meters, intended for shipping and receiving; they are equipped with docks and railways connecting the factory to the station.

Two vast warehouses, one east and the other west of the main buildings, and accessed in

the same ways, are intended, one for the raw materials and provisions which require processing, and the other for goods packed for shipment; the eye sounds with pleasure the vast perspectives formed by the regular accumulations of bottles, the bundles of herbs and seeds, the cases prepared for the filling of orders.

Spacious, solidly vaulted cellars occupy the floor under the buildings.

The central structure which houses the distillery forms on the ground floor a single room 22 meters by 20 by 4-1/2 meters high; the ceiling is supported on strong iron crossbars supported by four cast iron columns.

The visitor is struck by the majestic aspect of this section, where 26 large stills and 22 colorators capable of producing twenty thousand liters of absinthe a day are symmetrically arranged.

Two steam generators supply the distillery; a third supplies the turbine which is turned by the Doubs (river), in case repairs are needed to the turbine or water is exceptionally low. The nominal force of these three generators is 250 horsepower.

Atop the distillery is the storeroom where the plants and seeds are measured out; using a carriage covered by a fabric sleeve and traveling on rails, they are easily distributed to the equipment. On the right and left sides of the storeroom are the stores of anise and fennel.

As we said, distillation is done using double boilers heated by steam. Through the years many modifications have been made to the distilling equipment; these perfections, now completed, make it possible to distill under the best conditions.

All these features of the production of the Pernod factory are carefully monitored; it is this full-time care, along with the scrupulous selection of raw materials, which brings the constantly growing fame enjoyed by its products in France and abroad.

The most stringent cleanliness, the most perfect order reign everywhere and when in the evening the vast distilling coppers are resplendent under the rays of the electrical lighting, the effect is truly magnificent.

If, after visiting the distillery, we make our way right or left, we enter two large well-lit rooms, the clamor of which contrasts with the calm laboratory where two workmen are sufficient to monitor the distillation and control the equipment. These are the workshops for preparing and shipping bottles.

The rinsing machines, manned by eight workers, make the bottles turn between fixed brushes, under hot water jets; they come out perfectly clear, drain on pivoting draining racks and pass to the filling machines which fill them at a rate of 20 a minute; this machine, a little marvel, is special at the Pernod house; it is the work of the technical director, Mr. Arthur Borel, who with meticulous care occupies himself with the

improvement of the equipment.

The filled bottles come from there to the corkers, who only have to place them under their machines, which, driven by an ingenious mechanism, insert the stopper automatically.

The bottles then pass to the hands of the labelers, who affix labels gummed on the rubber cylinders of a special apparatus; then they are covered with tin foil which wraps the neck, and are deposited in cases fixed on a tricycle which conducts them to the place where they will be arranged by thousands, sealed, wrapped in paper, and placed into straw casing and boxes; these pass to the nailing machines which, with a single stroke, nail a whole side of the case, without noise and without jolting; these machines thus nail a hundred and fifty to two hundred cases per hour; two are enough to meet the needs of the factory.

Beside the nailing machines, which are of American origin, we admire a machine which marks the stoppers, accounting for 5,000 stoppers per hour, without requiring any attention other than to fill the hopper which feeds it from time to time.

The nailed cases are lined up in the vast halls of which we spoke before, there they are branded, rigged, and loaded onto the wagons that await them at the doorway. A hundred cases of 12 bottles can thus be finished in the space of an hour and the number could be well increased if not for the fact that this would make it necessary to enlarge the buildings.

From the handling of bottles, we descend into the cellars where new surprises await us.

Under these sonorous vaults are aligned in immense perspective the 230 tuns containing altogether millions of liters of fabricated absinthe; 19 large steel vats contain in their bellies the hundreds of millions of liters of proof spirit of wine. A simple move of the tap starts the flow of alcohol to the vats from tank cars brought from Languedoc and Rousillon.

Powerful pumps make the transfers, accumulating in a storage room the proof spirit needed to distill or to fill the bottle preparation vats; electric bells, acoustic tubes and whistles transmit commands at the speed of thought and the enormous handling required to move such considerable quantities of liquids is done, so to speak, without even realizing it, by four workers.

The temperature of the cellars is maintained at a constant level during the winter by means of steam pipes with fins.

From the cellars we climb to the workshop for packing barrels and carboys; both are covered with fir tree straw packing, in order to avoid, as far as possible, accidents en route; leads and wax seals, with the mark of the house, protect them from subtractions in the course of transport.

All transit between the workshops, the docks and the stores is accomplished using small Decauville railroads; manual labor is reduced to a minimum; therefore the impression with which one is left after having toured the vast factory is astonishment at how so few personnel can do so many things. All the same, the establishment employs a hundred and seventy workmen, including eighty women, not counting the coopers and woodworkers who work outdoors.

Ever since the cases have been supplied by a contractor exclusively occupied with their fabrication, there has been a workshop dependent on the factory; there sophisticated tools plane wood, cut it to size, cut the dovetails, groove the lids, nail the bottoms, etc; this workshop employs 30 workmen who deliver a hundred cases per hour; it is set up in a building formerly used as a paper mill and it excites a keen interest in all visitors to the Pernod factory.

The driving force which actuates the pumps; the machines for rinsing bottles, corking, labelling, and nailing, the elevators; the dynamoelectric machines; in a word the complex tools of the establishment, is provided by a turbine of 150 horsepower and a steam engine of 25 horsepower.

V

Nowadays labor questions justifiably concern everyone. When it comes to an industrial plant, one is not satisfied any more to be informed on the quality of its products, on its manufacturing processes, on the nature of its equipment. One wants to know how the workmen are treated there; this concern does not solely lie with the civil servants charged by the government with applying the recent laws for the protection of people employed in the factories; it has existed for a long time among the numerous free associations which are dedicated to the study of social problems and researching the means of solving them peacefully and equitably, and for a long time before that among certain owners and heads of industry concerned with the material interests and moral of their workers.

The heads of the House of Pernod and Sons did not wait to display the benevolent feelings that animate them with regard to their personnel, the explosion of sympathy which has occurred these last few years for the working classes. Indeed, Mr. Bernard Lavergne, senator from Tarn, in his book *The Social Evolution* published in 1893, notes, in speaking of the House of Pernod and Sons, that "sympathy for the workman is traditional in that establishment."

This sympathy was illustrated in 1871 by an important fact in the history of the House of Pernod and Sons. Without knowledge of what the state of the matter was elsewhere in the country, Mssrs. Louis and Fritz Pernod spontaneously introduced their personnel to participation in a benefit plan and, after careful consideration, they decided that the best form for that plan to take was that of a retirement fund. They wanted to create a savings plan so that when the workers could no longer work due to age or infirmity, they would find themselves in charge of a small nest egg by means of which they could either face

urgent needs, or start a small business; these savings were also to constitute an invaluable resource for families deprived of their breadwinner by death.

The proposed goal has been fully attained in the 23 years the plan has functioned to the complete satisfaction of everyone concerned.

The retirement fund consists of a share determined by the operating profits, contributed each year by the House of Pernod and Sons to its workmen and employees. The funds remain deposited in the firm and are productive interests; each workman receives a booklet which reports to him, at the time of accounting, the share of the benefits in which he is vested.

In order to make sure the workmen do not waste the savings accumulated for their benefit, the rules stipulate that the shares are nontransferable and nondistrainable and that participants can touch their share of the capital only when they leave employment with the firm. The only exception to this rule is for workers who want to acquire a house. Mr. Pernod agreed to that, figuring that settling on real estate is a guarantee against the temptation to waste money to which workmen in possession of movable capital easily succumb.

At the end of each year, all participants are vested in the interest accrued to them that year.

The benefit shares increase with years of service for a period of six years, after which they reach their maximum rate which was in 1894 40% of wages; the minimum rate was 10%.

The retirement fund had grown as of December 31st, 1894 to 267,566.25 francs.

Retiring workmen and heirs to deceased workmen have, since the foundation of the retirement fund, withdrawn the sum of 238,705.25 francs.

We have before us (December 1894) the account booklet of a worker who has participated in the plan since 1871, and whose share has accumulated with interest to a total of 11,351.70 francs.

The firm insures its workmen against accidents; it even pays the premiums itself without making the workmen pay into the pool.

The effective working day is fixed at 11 hours; the minimum wage is 20 centimes per hour for women and 30 centimes per hour for men.

Work is suspended all day on Sunday.

No effort is spared to improve working conditions and to avoid accidents.

Two collections are taken each day for personnel to also have the benefit of Christmas gifts at the end of the year.

Every summer an excursion open to all personnel is organized at the expense of the firm to an interesting town or to some picturesque site. A band recruited almost exclusively from among the workmen of the establishment brightens these outings and contributes at all times to the esprit de corps which is in any case very strong; the workers of the Pernod factory regard themselves as privileged to belong to a firm which assures them of such benefits. Therefore recruitment could not be easier; applications are always numerous and the firm suffers only the embarrassment of having to choose from among the crowds of candidates who show up.

There have never been strikes in the House of Pernod and Sons.

Commonality of interest has rendered the rapport between owners and workers cordial and easy. Time and time again, without any false modesty, the workmen have seized the opportunity to express to their bosses their appreciation for the good policies of which they are the object.

If sympathy for the worker is traditional in the Pernod firm, never has it manifested in the form of interference by the boss in the private life of his subordinates; never has one seen that anxious supervision which amounts to meddling in the slightest details of the life of the worker, to dictate even his political and religious opinions to him. In all cases where discipline in the workplace is not involved, personal freedom is absolutely respected.

In becoming owners of the House of Pernod and Sons, Mssrs. Veil-Picard made a point of preserving the philanthropic institutions created by their predecessors, to which they attach the same value as to the manufacturing processes, the improvement of the equipment, and the reputation of the trademark known and appreciated all over the world.

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Pernod and Sons absinthe has now spread to all parts of the world; this is no exaggeration; to be convinced it is enough to attend the loading of the wagons, which, on shipping days, come to line up along the docks of the factory. The destination indicated on each case permits us to follow the famous liqueur in our imagination to the most diverse latitudes, to Canada, the Argentine Republic, Mexico, Cochin China and the Sudan.

France was its first and is still its principal outlet. It was introduced into the remote areas by our soldiers for whom it neutralized the effects of the fever produced by the bad quality of the water and the noxious miasmas of the marshes; - and by the many foreigners who for business or pleasure visit our country; after having been introduced to the true Pernod and sons absinthe in the cafes of our towns and aboard our steam liners,

our guests, once back home, are not satisfied any more with substitutes and require the authentic trademark.

One should not be astonished that the reputation of the brand, that the prosperity of the House of Pernod and Sons, have sparked much covetousness. They are indeed numerous, those who have sought and still seek to exploit for their own profit a situation acquired by a century of conscientious work and ceaseless effort; numerous, those which, under a banner of respectability, spread shameful products.

To safeguard its own interests and those of the public which has placed its confidence in it, it is a daily fight which the House of Pernod and Sons must take to the unscrupulous industrialists who provide it with unfair competition.

One cannot imagine the various forms this competition takes; to get an idea of it, it is necessary to peruse the legal archives of the firm, into which every year come to be filed some new judgements, some new arrests.

First there is the counterfeiter himself, who eschews complex schemes and goes right for the goal; that type simply orders, from an engraver with an elastic conscience, a false seal imitating that of the House of Pernod and Sons; he affixes it onto bottles he provides himself, carefully chosen primarily because their labels are still intact; needless to say filling those bottles beforehand with an absinthe of inferior quality bought at a low price. This fraud cannot be practiced a long time; sooner or later a misled consumer perceives the trickery; moreover the (Pernod) firm is vigilant; the false seal inevitably has differences from the authentic seal which do not escape the experienced eyes of its agents; the counterfeiter is sure to see a good correctional judgement soon putting a stop to his dishonest activity.

Another more astute process consists in imitating as close as possible the appearance of the Pernod and Sons bottle, the seals of glass and wax which characterize it and especially the label whose colors and design are reproduced most faithfully. It is a question of creating in this way, between the two bottles, a resemblance such that the inattentive or illiterate purchaser voluntarily accepts the imitation for the true product. This game is dangerous and many an industrialist who has ingeniously come up with a label similar enough to that of the House of Pernod and Sons to create confusion, and dissimilar enough to dodge a fraudulent imitation lawsuit, - has seen his calculations thwarted. With good reason the Court has trouble believing, when some labels mistakenly resemble those of a reputable firm, that this similarity is the result of pure chance, they are always inclined to see rather the proof of illicit intent.

It is said, if the counterfeit is actually theft, the fraudulent imitation constitutes a true breach of trust, a swindle, and the Courts will never fail to severely repress this way of appropriating the good of others, of attacking the honor, the reputation of another, while often endangering the health of the too trustful consumer. The House of Pernod and Sons has no complaint about the results obtained in the keen war that it wages against the imitators of its trademark. It would be tiresome to mention here the various judgements

rendered in its favor in similar affairs. Let us limit it to citing one judgement returned on May 20, 1884 by the Court of Chalon on the Saone and upheld the following 21st of November by the Court of Appeal of Dijon, in the case between Mr. Pernod and Sons and Mr. S..., distiller. This judgement notes that " the label filed by Pernod and Sons" at the Clerk's office of Pontarlier, comprised notably of the "federal Swiss cross surmounted by a cap, as the principal figurative element, along with the dimensions, the arrangement and the colors on the label, constitute the exclusive property of Pernod and Sons as its trademark."

It is a fact known to everyone that the product made in the factory of Mssrs. Veil Picard is not called in public by the name absinthe. To distinguish it from similar products, its fans call it by the name of its manufacturer and, everywhere today, at the aperitif hour, it is a Pernod for which they ask.

It is also Pernod that the customers of the firm ask for in their letters of invoice. This detail has not escaped the attention of certain competitors.

All the large firms have been wounded by homonyms; all, at some time, have seen arise in their vicinity, sometimes in the same town, individuals hitherto unknown in industry, without special knowledge, without money but with by sheer chance the advantage of bearing a respected name; they have seen their correspondence intercepted, confusion put into their business relations, their customers diverted, all to the profit of an industrialist whom by good luck managed to get his hands on a homonym and was willing to trade illicitly on his name.

Recent lawsuits concerning our best champagne houses reveal quite curious facts, and, extremely fortunately, an energetic repression has arisen to derail the schemes of many audacious shysters.

The House of Pernod and Sons was not to escape the common law; for some years a number of firms have emerged, proudly raising either the name of Pernod, or a name which resembles it as much as possible.

Did we not see a simple stable boy named Pernod making money by authorizing a manufacturer of absinthe in Drome to plaster his name on their labels!

Even more recently a distiller of Doubs, under pretext of a contract signed by a traveling salesman named Pernot, seized the name and flooded Paris and the province with his product which, evidently, would have gone over with great difficulty without this trickery. The civil Court of the Seine, taking up the question, did not hold as legitimate this very ingenious procedure and prohibited its use. Its judgement will certainly be confirmed by the Appellate Court of Paris which will not be long in intervening.

Upon leaving the Pernod and Sons factory, visitors will all share the impression which we have proved to ourselves, it is that, in this splendid establishment all is subordinated to only one goal: To ensure the excellence of the product which the house offers for

consumption. This goal is attained: nobody will dispute it, because the name Pernod has replaced, in common parlance, the generic name of absinthe to designate a product of superior quality.

Finis.