

VINEYARD WORK FOR APRIL.

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MARCH and April are busy months with the winemaker. Provided the good weather continues the Pinots (Gris, Meunier, and Noir) and Golden Chasselas will be ripe this month, followed by Malbec, Shiraz, Pinot Chardonay, Carbenet Sauvignon, Pedro Ximenes, &c., a little later.

It is no new statement to make that ripe grapes contain all the elements for making a sound and good-keeping wine, provided the utensils used are clean and the methods employed are such as one would expect in making an article for consumption.

Every winemaker should be provided with a saccharometer, to enable him to tell the saccharine-content of the grapes. Any grape showing up to 20 per cent. by this instrument will make a wine that will keep—that is, a good dry wine. Many kinds of grapes will in a dry season exceed this, such as the three Pinots above mentioned, Pedro Ximenes, Shiraz, &c., but they must be quite ripe. Rainy weather and the depredations of birds very often cause the vine-grower to commence the vintage before the fully ripe stage is reached. It is, however, doubtful whether the loss by birds and rain is as great as the loss in quality of the wine by gathering the grapes too soon. The making of wine from grapes thoroughly ripe is simple, rapid, and every way satisfactory in our climate, compared with that of making wine from grapes insufficiently ripened, and where sugar has to be added to the must to bring up the saccharine to the normal requirements. In the case of the former fermentation is over in from forty-eight to seventy-two hours, in the latter it may last a month.

Where the quantity of grapes is not large—say, from 1 to 3 acres—it is a good plan after picking to spread out the grapes on a floor for twenty-four hours or longer, to let them cool and evaporate any moisture. If the sugar-percentage is low and a drying wind blowing, they might be left some days before crushing.

VINE-HOUSE WORK FOR APRIL.

With the exception of the late grapes, most of the vine-houses will be cleared this month. If it happens to be warm and mealy-bug