

## HARDY GRAPES.

**A**T the meeting of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, for discussion, Dr. Jabez Fisher of Fitchburg read a paper on "Hardy Grapes," of which the following is a summary :

Dr. Fisher purchased his first grape vine, a Concord, forty years ago. His first stimulating success was in 1865, when, with a dry, favorable season, the crop was enormous—four and a half tons upon three-fourths of an acre—which were well ripened and brought a high price ; but he has never been able to equal this again. Since 1871 large crops have generally, though not always, alternated with small, but through judicious thinning the quality has been satisfactory. In his whole experience there have been three total failures—in 1860, 1875 and 1888.

In considering the outlook for the future, Dr. Fisher said that the expediency of any person's taking up grape-growing depended on circumstances. He would not advise a novice to start in the business, but if a person has a vineyard well situated and in good condition, he thought it wise to attempt growing the best possible quality of product.

To attain the quality that commands the highest price calls only for a few conditions, but they are imperative and as important to the amateur with his few vines as to the extensive cultivator. His experience, coupled with extensive observation, had taught him that the best soil is a strong one, inclining to clay, but not too heavy, and well drained, either naturally or artificially. A gentle southern or south-eastern slope, near to but not on the summit of elevated land, is desirable. Shelter of land, buildings or trees is useful. No especial preparation of the soil is necessary. A field in

fit condition for corn is also suitable for grapevines. Two-year-old plants, if they have been transplanted at one year and the roots shortened in, may be best, but otherwise he would choose one-year-olds. Spring is the preferable time for planting, and the earlier the better, provided that the soil is friable. Cultivation should take place as soon after every packing rain as the surface will work mellow. No training is necessary the first year, as soon as the leaves fall the vines should be cut down, leaving two or three buds only.

The second year a temporary stake should be used to support the growing vine which needs no other training and no pruning, except that a single cane only is allowed to grow. The autumn pruning is like that of the first year.

At the beginning of the third season a permanent support should be provided, according to the system of training that is to be adopted, whether trellis, stakes or otherwise. The object in view during the season is to grow from this cane for fruitage the subsequent year. When the length of six feet is attained this cane should be stopped by pinching off the point. All laterals that grow from this cane should be pinched so close that they may not divert growth from it, but otherwise there should be full freedom of development. If the growth should be satisfactory, i. e., if it makes a cane from five to six-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, it will be safe to allow it to fruit for half its length, and it should be cut back to that point at the fall pruning. If less vigorous, the whole should be cut away as in previous years. Nothing so injures a young vine as to allow it to carry a crop of fruit beyond its capacity ; it is like putting a boy of fifteen or sixteen to perform a man's labor.