

Quant aux diverses sortes de terrains, il dit :

" I teach thee next the differing soils to know :
The light for vines, the heavier for the plough ;
Choose first a place for such a purpose fit,
Then dig the solid earth, and sink a pit ;
Next fill the hole with its own earth again,
And trample with thy feet, and tread it in :
Then, if it rise not to the former height
Of superfluous, conclude that soil is light,
A proper ground for pasturage and vines—
But if the sullen earth, so pressed, repines—
Within its native mansion to retire—
And stays without, a heap of heavy mire,
'Tis good for arable, a glebe that asks
Tough teams of oxen and laborious tasks."

Préparation du vignoble à l'automne :

" These rules consider well : with early care
The vineyard destined for thy vines prepare ;
But long before the planting, dig the ground
With furrows deep, that cast a rising mound ;
The clods exposed to winter winds will bake,
For putrid earth will best in vineyards take,
And hoary frosts, after the painful toil—
Of delving hinds, will rot the mellow soil."

Sur la transplantation, il dit :

" Some peasants, not t'omit the nicest, care
Of the same soil their nursery prepare—
With that of their plantation, lest the tree
Transplanted, should not with the soil agree.
Besides, to plant it as it was, they mark
The heavens four quarters on the tender bark,
And to the north or south restore the side,
Which at their birth did heat or cold abide.
So strong is custom, such effects can use
On tender souls or pliant plants produce."

Il donne ensuite les distances convenables pour les vignes :

" On hills or rising ground, good distances apart,
Extend their loose battalions largely wide ;
Open the ranks and files on either side,
But marshalled all in order as they stand,
And let no soldier struggle from its band.
As legions in a field their fronts display,
To try the fortunes of some doubtful day—
So let thy vines in intervals be set,
But not their rural discipline forget ;
Indulge their width and add a roomy space,
That their extreme lines may scarce embrace.
Nor this alone t' indulge a vain delight,
And make a pleasant prospect for the sight ;
But for the ground itself, this only way
Can equal vigor to the plant convey ;
Mid crowded want the room their branches to display."

A quelle profondeur

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