

but usually the vines are left to nature after the grapes have formed, as the hot sun and drying wind are sufficient to keep down adverse vegetation.

The grapes ripen towards the middle or end of August. The commanderia grapes are collected and spread upon the flat mud-plastered roofs of the native houses, and are exposed for several days, until they show symptoms of shrivelling in the skin, and the stalks have partially dried: they are then pressed. By this time many of the grapes that have been bruised by this rough treatment have fermented, and the dust and dirt of the house-top, together with flies and other insects, have adhered to the impure heap. It has been imagined by some travellers that the grapes are purposely dried before pressing; on the other hand, I have been assured by the inhabitants that their only reason for heaping and exposing their crop upon the house-tops is the danger of leaving it to ripen in the vineyard. None of the plots are fenced, and before the grapes are sufficiently ripe for pressing they are stolen in large quantities, or destroyed by cattle, goats, mules, and every stray animal that is attracted to the fields. The owner of the vineyard accordingly gathers his crop by degrees, a little before the proper time, and the grapes are exposed upon the house-tops to ripen artificially in the sun. In this manner the quality is seriously damaged; but the natives will not acknowledge it any more than the Devonshire farmers, who leave their apples in heaps upon the ground for many weeks, rotting and wasp-eaten, before they are carried to the pound for the grinding of cider. The grapes having been trodden by men with large boots, are pressed, and the juice of the commanderia is placed in jars capable of holding from seventy to one hundred