

"The Family Circle"

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(Written on board the Steamer Manitoba.)

SEED THOUGHTS.

Thoughts are the seeds of character; and like perennials, they often develop and mature in a short season into the perfect plant, blooming if good into beautiful flowers in the garden of the soul, filling the circle of their influence with delightful fragrance, or blessing and refreshing others with their luscious and invigorating fruitage; or, if the seed be bad, bringing forth thorns and thistles to curse the soil that gave them birth, and rattle and fester in the depraved spirit that warmed them into life, or springing up into a deadly upas, exhaling its pestilential breath, luring to their ruin the souls that seek repose beneath its shadow. Thoughts lead to words and actions, and these make up our lives, and this life gives tone and character to all life; all we know, or hope, or fear, or dream of life, in the immeasurable and incomprehensible future. How important then are our "seed thoughts," and how careful we should be, with promptness and firmness to cast out evil ones, as soon as their presence is discovered, and to cherish and cultivate those that grow into the good and beautiful in human life. Often, oh, how often, has it been the case, that men and women too, have descended to the lowest depths of crime and degradation, depths from which in earlier life they would have shrunk back, could they have looked into them, with horror, and almost have despised their own souls if they could have believed them capable of sinking to such depths, and the terrible result so unforeseen and unimagined has afterward followed, as the natural growth and development of sinful seed thoughts, that fill, it may be, like thistle down, unbidden in the soil of an impulsive youthful heart, but were allowed to grow, like demon-sown tares, till the better plants of virtue were dwarfed and smothered, and the evil tree has grown so strong that the enfeebled soul could not summon up courage to pluck it up.

The saints in paradise and the lost souls in hell, could they but trace back the processes which eventuated in their final destiny, would find the beginning of the end in seed thoughts planted long before in the garden of the soul.

J. I. L.

ANCIENT ROMAN WINES.

Apropos of the renewed controversy regarding the wines mentioned in the Bible, and more particularly as to what kind—intoxicant or otherwise—our Lord made at the marriage feast at Cana, and which kind he used at the last supper, it will be interesting to learn that a curious account of ancient Roman wines was written toward the end of his life, by M. Grenier, of the Paris *Constitutionnel*, who died a short time ago. It appears that all our preconceived ideas as to wine must be abandoned in thinking of these liquors. They were rather to be compared to the sweetened drinks and even to the confections of our own days, being either sweet by nature or rendered so by mixing with a compound of various solid substances. Honey, cheese, essence of flowers and many other ingredients were thus used, and in such quantities as often to convert the wine into a sort of jelly. New wine was used for pouring on slices of bread, which were eaten in much the same way as children now eat bread and jam, or bread and molasses. Some of it, when older and more thoroughly dried, was formed into cakes and became quite hard. The old wine was thus either a thick syrup or solid, and when intended to be used was dissolved in water. Of course, none of these preparations could be intoxicating, and as the Romans were masters of Palestine during our Saviour's time, their method of making and using wines must have been well known to the Jews, if not previously practised by them, which is most likely. We know that "dibs" or grape juice boiled down to a syrup is greatly used in Syria, and has been used as much in former times as now. It is, therefore, far more probable that the wine made by our Lord was of that nature than that it was intoxicating. One may well suppose that what the wedding guests had been using was some such wines as above described, with water poured on it to dissolve it. The "dibs" or other preparation of sweet wines may have been exhausted, and the miracle may have consisted in obtaining a richer wine or grape juice by pouring in water when there was no wine to mix with it than had been obtained before by mixing the ordinary wine syrup with water. There is no fruit more conducive to health than the grape, and the expressed juice of it drank in an unfermented state, or made into a delicious syrup by boiling it down and then mixing with water, or vinegar and water, like raspberry vinegar must be a cooling and healthy beverage. Some years ago I suggested through your paper that California, being most suitable for raising the finest kinds of grapes in perfection, should go into the making of un-intoxicating wine by boiling grape juice into syrup instead of making it into fermented wine. It would probably pay them far better, besides being a business on which God's blessing could be invoked. I see that latterly some have gone into making syrup there, with what success I would like to learn.

JAMES DOUGALL.

Windsor, Ont., July 25, 1881.

HEALTH AND DISEASE.

Sunlight a Necessity.

Sun-baths cost nothing, and are the most refreshing life-giving baths that one can take, whether sick or well. Every housekeeper knows the necessity of giving her woollens the benefit of the sun from time to time, and especially after a long rainy season, or a long absence of the sun. Many will think of the injury their clothes are liable to from dampness, who will never reflect that an occasional exposure of their own bodies to the sunlight is equally necessary to their health. The sun-baths cost nothing, and that is a misfortune, for people are still deluded with the idea that those things only can be good or useful which cost money. Let it not be forgotten that three of God's most beneficent gifts to man—three things the most necessary to health—sunlight, fresh air, and water, are free to all; you can have them in abundance, without money and without price, if you will. If you would enjoy good health, then, see to it that you are supplied with pure air to breathe all the time; that you bathe for an hour or so in the sunlight, and that you quench your thirst with no other fluid than water.