

in a substantial majority, and the accompanying material and moral improvement of the negroes (a thing easier of accomplishment when they shall be no longer densely massed in special areas), will give the problem a very different look from that threatening and disheartening one which it now seems to wear.

With this immediately threatening pressure of the race problem relieved, and men's minds freed for turning to other things, who shall say what our men of the Midi in coming generations may not accomplish in fields of endeavor that they now neglect or cultivate but feebly? It will be worth much to the Southern white to be drawn into the full stream of national life, to feel himself and his section one with the rest of the Union, not alone politically, but intellectually and spiritually.

With improved economic conditions at home and a less threatening race problem the South will perhaps be no longer subject to that ruinous drain of her energetic and ambitious youth to the cities of the North; and, on the other hand, the South will receive an increasing immigration of young men from the North and West eager to share in her rich but ill-developed natural opportunities.

Finally, if the boast that the Anglo-Saxon race is peculiarly gifted in the realms of politics and the higher imagination be justified, our Man of the Midi has a great future; for not only is he almost pure Anglo-Saxon, but his race has been warmed by the generous sack of his own semi-tropical sunshine; he is a blend of reason and passion new to the world of endeavor and service.

THE APPLE TREE

BY CANDACE WHEELER

What plant we in this apple tree?
Sweets for a hundred flowery springs
To load the May-wind's restless wings,
When from the orchard row he pours
Its fragrance through our open doors.
A world of blossoms for the bee

.
We plant with the apple tree.

I HAVE wholly lost my heart to an apple tree, — and it has come about in winter, when the great tribe and kindred of apple trees are stretching their branches under frosty skies, with roots buried in frozen ground and dead, dead, dead to all the impulses of life. They are as unconscious of the honey of summer as if no experience of it had ever vivified their past. There they stand, with feet under the chilled stillness of crystals of snow, their blue shadows thrown upon its glittering whiteness, — a network of beauty lying along the sloping hillside, under the

etching of brown branches which form the aisles of orchard vistas.

I remember such pictures as a part of the winter experiences of childhood, and I knew then, as I know now, that apple trees in winter were good to look at, — that such pictures might rank themselves with the blossom glories of May, or the wonder-bounties of September. So — I reflect to myself — there are three periods in every year of the apple tree's life when it is breathlessly beautiful, — once when it stands alone, or in a flock, sheltering its wondrous shadow, blue as a summer sky, on breadths of glittering snow; and once in Maytime, when it stands in a cloud of tinted-winged, perfume-breathing, heart-warming beauty; and once again in the autumn, when it offers to the earth, and the sun, and its lovers, and to the covetous man-soul of

every age and description, its final guerdon of the year in full-globed fruit.

These visions of the season enlarge themselves and fill my shut-in inclosure of space, my little city-room,—called up by a dish of apples standing upon the sideboard, each one a perfect sphere holding the years' experience and the final result of them. As I take one in my hand, I am more intimately conscious of the fruity perfume which has faintly pervaded the room, and I fall to wondering how it has escaped the close-grained skin, or whether it is the skin itself which is odorous. I wonder at its color, at the elastic ivory of its material, at the perfect protection it gives to the packed atoms of fruit; its efficacy of protection beyond that of any other fruit, beyond the thick velvety skin of the peach, or the thin transparent cover which binds the juicy particles of the cherry. I remember how it still protects its sphere of apple atoms when it has fallen from the tree and lies for weeks upon the greedy ground, or barreled for months in the cellar, or transported across the sea; through all these changes, the polished tinted skin quietly holds its charge almost beyond reason or expectation, and prolongs our autumn-fruit-riches into the depths of winter. It is an envelope finer and firmer than that which holds the human sweetness of a baby, a polished and painted surface thinner than silk and close enough to defy the crowding destructive elements which threaten.

Where did the apple find, or how did it manufacture, the envelope in which it packs its accumulation of flavored sweets? Where did it collect the mingled hues with which it is dyed, — for in it are the yellow of sunbeams, the green of forest and earth, the crimson of daybreak and evening, a color kneaded through its substance, — “dyed in the grain,” “sun-fast and waterfast,” and holding it unspoiled through the days of its being.

If I ignore the barrier of skin, and slash across the central mystery of seed, I come upon a core of star-shaped plates of color-

less enamel, ten of them folded together in pairs of five, each pair holding in its casket a brown jewel of a pointed seed. We cut ruthlessly across this guarded privacy and scatter its treasures, not even realizing that they hold the mystery of life within them. It is true, the instinct of growth lies in the woody fibre, but thought, aspiration, the reaching out of the germ of life toward outward and final development, lies within the seed.

If you cut a twig of the tree and plant it in the ground, the instinct of growth and race survives and pushes it straightway into the world in the shape of a baby tree, a slim youngling, standing in sight of its mother tree, inwardly a perfect reproduction of traits, qualities and gifts; a true child, without variation of flavor, or shape, or quality of either of the myriads of separate particles which make up its composition. It has no thought, no initiative. It grows according to the inevitable law of its kind. But if you take one of the little brown jewels of the apple's centre of life and bury it in the ground, *it thinks* while the process of germination goes on and all the wonderful and miraculous play of life-atoms expands; the primal experimental thought of creation is at work within it, and it is an individual, it is not a race-thought, which animates it.

Perhaps the germ aspires wisely toward perfection, or progresses ignorantly toward deterioration, — but generally when the experimental, creative thought has grown and perfected its fruit, it surprises us with some added value of flavor, some modification of a crudeness, even some finer symmetry of curve and shape, or enlargement of size or added measure of juice or deepening of blush or painting of color. Verily, the little jewel of a seed has been busy with its experiments and plans, as it lay swelling in earth's moisture, resolving what it would be. Perhaps it remembered some stirring of love or admiration toward individuals of its garden or orchard neighbors, some thrills of joy in the beauty of shape or

skin, or waft of fragrance from a neighbor apple tree worthy of admiration.

It is conceivable, in view of results, that all these efforts and memories are consciously or unconsciously held in the ivory germ closed in its polished seed cover, and treasured in the flower-shaped casket of its core. Growers of fruits know what the apple tree is capable of in fibre and fruit and seed, even when they have no time to speculate upon the how, and why, and wherefore; we can fancy that as a rule they wander in a maze of bewilderment among familiar miracles.

But sometimes, one more egotistic of man-power than the rest undertakes to guide and direct the hidden mysteries of vegetable action, and his energy accomplishes unheard-of things.

It was a sacrilegious thought, to eliminate the core of the apple, the very seat of its germinal life; but misdirected man-intelligence has attempted and in a few unhonored instances succeeded. One poor bewildered fruit I have seen, having—in an effort to follow both the guiding of nature and powerful human suggestion—removed its seed from its rightful centre only to have it reassert its right of existence on the very surface and outside of the fruit. It was provocative of tears, to see this poor misguided specimen trying to perfect its seed in open daylight instead of the fruitful darkness and holy privacy of its centre.

But sometimes man and nature work together in beautiful harmony of effort, and give us fruits of paradise, Eve-blessed and Adam-tended. The long search of the apple-seed for perfection, from the sour and contracted crab of the thicket to the varied and magnificent growths of the well-tended orchard, makes an enviable record; even when the wild apple dropped its unnoticed fruit to the ground, the seed within it must have had glimmerings of progressive excellence until it finally started on its varied journey toward species and perfection.

We think with wondering admiration of the Spitzenberg, beginning its upward

journey in the orcharded plains of the Esopus, and under the high blue summits of the Catskills, and being inspired by the rarity of mountain air, until it absorbed its rare, winelike quality into its very flesh, and flavored it with spice-like odors of mountain flowers and painted it with the glow of crimson sunsets,—earning and wearing the name of *Spitz Bergen* with pride as well as content.

And when the "King Apple" first perfected its fruit, think you its name was more than a bare acknowledgment of well-earned, seedling effort? or was the christening of the Seek-no-further more than a just testimony to qualities weighed and chosen and considered in the very heart of the seed, and acquired by persistent thought during patient growth? Whenever I look at the more and more constant and greater perfection of these kings of fruit, I am impressed with the forward march of progress in the aspiration of the apple.

Dear apple trees! So ethereally beautiful in the days of your blossoming, and so satisfyingly bounteous in your days of fruitage, your song of life is a pæan which fills and enriches mortal life. It is but one of the ways in which nature teaches all her manifestations to minister to the something above herself,—to the higher,—to that which may grow to imagined perfection.

Emerson calls the apple our "national fruit," and it has good title to the name, both as a wildling and as a tamed and chosen companion of man. From north to south and from east to west it spreads its roots and rears its trunk. The pioneer, when he selects his newly-chosen home, plants seeds from the old home-orchard around the newly-reared walls of his cabin; the great landowner beautifies his acres and enhances their value with rare and choice selections of trees; and each tree has a family receipt for flavor which it implicitly follows,—each species keeping inviolate the virtue of mixture. We can imagine a gossipy Seek-no-further trying to extract from a youth-

ful Spitzenberg the secret of its spicy acid, but it would remain forever untold. Each one gathers its own store of flavors and mixes them with unvarying skill and always with the same result.

Peaches and pears and oranges and limes have the peach or pear or orange or lime flavor, but who shall tell the flavor of an apple whose family is unknown to us? It may be honey-sweet or lemon-sour, or it may taste of pines or strawberries and smell of all the flowers that blow. It is that one of "the social fruits in which nature has deposited every possible flavor; whole zones of climates she has concentrated into apples."

It begins its life as a fruit some April day, a mere dot of rose color wrapped in furry green on the surface of a rough gray bough; and as it gradually unfolds itself into flower shape, it and its myriad of kindred widen and broaden into clouds of tender and transcendent beauty.

Under an apple tree in full bloom, the infinite gradation of pearl and gray and rose, transparent as the blue of heaven, there is a beauty as heavenly and tender as if one stood within the shadow of angelic wings.

Invisible perfume steals in unnoticeable spirals from every half-closed bud and perfect flower. Even the floating shell-curved flower-leaves dropped from the small green fingers of infant font-cups fall downward in a little encompassing cloud of fragrance.

The fragrance is fanned and stirred into eddies of sweetness by filmy wings upbearing the insect intelligences which are impelled from hives and wild-bee homes to find it in the very heart and source of apple-bough perfume.

The birth hour of the fruit is a cup of joy; but when this is past and the mosaic of the wonder-blossoms falls in bits of veined beauty to the ground, we leave the tree to nurse the babies of its race through summer days, and to feed the infant fruit with the clarified juices of earth gathered by exploring rootlets.

While it clings with tenacious hold to

the bough, the wind and sun are bringing it essences from widespread fields where flowers are awake in the sun, and from the green shadows of forests where tree blossoms drowse in the stillness, and the apple waxes and globes itself through days and nights of nature's tendence until its days of fulfillment, when the "full-juiced apple, waxing overmellow, falls in a silent autumn night." Falls, or we gather and appropriate it, half unconscious that it holds sunlight and starlight and all the moods of summer in its little sphere of strange and thrilling substances.

In the great new orchards of Colorado and Washington our familiar friend and old-time neighbor takes on a different character. The apple trees are as symmetrical as statues, and not relying upon hereditary respectability, and ignoring the Lady Clara Vere de Vere claims of long descent, they exhibit a willingness to adopt new ideas and methods, which is essentially Western. They accept the obligation of their surroundings and become experimental and progressive. Standing in the new young orchards, in long perspective of diminishing lines and in speckless uniforms of bark and leaf, they remind one of a grand parade of pupils from countless military schools. The knobby, rheumatic trunks and lichen-covered branches we know so well on Eastern farms are missing. These are educated youths preparing for professional careers. Their perfected fruit will be gathered with scientific precision according to tested rule, barreled into paper seclusion, and sent to every country in the world which can indulge in American luxuries.

There is a curious difference between these great swelling globes of juicy fruit-flesh and their unsophisticated rural kindred from the hill-farms of the East: they are wrapped in the same polished and tinted skins, but their substance is more open and juicy; it lacks the crisp conservatism of the half-wild, wholly uneducated, abundantly trusted apple of our

old home farms. Their very names are new, but they are God's and Nature's good gift as truly as are their long-descended relations, and play their part in the enrichment of mankind as honestly. In the spring they flood the sunny prairie-land with a measureless foam of blossom, and in autumn they yield to pickers and packers an incalculable harvest of topaz and ruby globes, as precious and profitable as the gold of their neighboring mountains.

It is a lesson in the sensitiveness of the species to surroundings, to compare the apple tree grown in the deep loam of a Western prairie with that of its Eastern kindred. In the bleak mountain orchards of the Catskills I have seen ancient apple trees whose boles were turned in climbing

folds as regular as the carven legs of an antique mahogany table; row after row of fluted trunks telling forever of the winter winds and biting frosts which twisted them so sorely in the pliable days of their youth. The sap veins which vitalize them follow the curved and circling lines, unhesitatingly doing their spring and summer food-carrying over a long and crooked road as cheerfully and effectively as if it were straight and young. But wherever we may find them, — crowded in thick-set hedges within sight of the salty seas, or springing between the rocks of mountain clearings, or standing in well-ordered orchards of Eastern or Western plains, — they are everywhere and always a preëminent gift and blessing.

ALCHEMY

BY EDWARD WILBUR MASON

Out of the songs of frailest birds,
 Out of the winds that veer,
 My soul has winnowed deathless words
 Of faith and hope and cheer!

Out of the passing stars of night,
 And waning suns of day,
 My soul has woven robes of light
 That shall not fade away!

Out of the lowering clouds above,
 And out of storm and stress,
 My soul has gathered dews of love,
 And golden happiness!

Out of its travail like the sea,
 Out of the breath of dust,
 My soul has shaped Infinity,
 And made itself august!