

At the Sign of the Wooden Leg

By "Silas Wegg."

Almost All About Apples.

As I walked homeward the other evening, carrying a dollars-worth of apples in my overcoat pockets (what small pockets they put in one's overcoat these times!) my thoughts turned to the remarks which an observing friend of mine made to me recently about apples and their place in history.

"To the mere annalist," said he, "history is a question of dates; to him who looks at history through the eyes of love it is a question of pears; to the politicians perhaps a question of plums, and who got them; but to the philosopher, the story of man's life on this planet is the story of the apple.

"The apple," he continued, "is the prime stage-property in the drama of Fate. Consider the first act of that drama as it was set forth in the Garden of Eden."

Here I was constrained to interrupt the philosopher, for I had discovered in my excursions into the regions of higher criticism that it was not an apple but some citrous fruit, a lemon perchance, which Eve handed to Adam. I called this fact to his mind and added in my own inimitably bright way that it may have been a bit of orange peel that caused the fall of man.

He made some remark to the effect that Joe Miller was not a safe authority in matters of either history or theology and forsook Eden to speak of the apples of Sodom, the golden apples of the Hesperides and the apple of discord marked "For the Fairest"

which was thrown among the assembled deities of Olympus.

"The apple of discord," he remarked, "was the A No. 1 pippin of its day. Note how it was branded—For the Fairest—the superlative degree of For the Fair, that being the legend which unto this day the farmer places on his choicer fruits."

I could not forbear remarking at this point, coming back to Eden, that Adam probably exhibited his apple at the First Fall Fair.

"Apple of discord," he resumed without noticing my interruption, "is the generic name of all exhibition fruits. Tennyson called the Prince Consort who suggested the first international exhibition the 'far-sighted summoner of War and Waste to fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace.' He would have put 'fruitful strifes' in italics and included beans as well as peas in his rivalries had he possessed a practical knowledge of exhibitions. I have seen rural families split in twain over the question of a few ounces in the weight of a prize turnip or the number of kernels on an ear of corn.

"Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste," I repeated. "I see now where the kernels come in. Great man that Tennyson in linking up the military and the civil services. Go on, though, and don't mind me."

He was going on and was not minding me.

"Then we have Newton's famous apple which taught him the principles of gravitation."

I was waiting for him there and gave him a broadside prepared by Lowell about tracing