

THE SEEDLESS APPLE IN CANADA

W. T. MACOUN, HORTICULTURIST, C. E. F., OTTAWA.

A WONDERFUL seedless apple is said to have been developed by a western experimenter. There have been seedless apples in Canada for many years. One was exhibited at the annual meeting of the Ontario Fruit Growers' Association at Brantford, Ont., December 19, 1900. In the report of that meeting the following reference is made to it:

"A curiosity in the form of a seedless apple was shown by Mr. W. A. Whitney, of Iroquois, Ont. The apple was quite normal in outward appearance and of good size. Mr. Whitney says that none of the apples contain seeds."

As Mr. Whitney is dead, I wrote to Mr. A. D. Harkness, Irena, Ont., for information regarding this fruit. He obtained scions from the tree for me last spring. It was reported by the owner, Mr. L. Cameron, Ont., to be both seedless and bloomless. I asked Mr. Harkness to obtain some of the blossoms or places from which the fruit sprang, and the following description was made of them:

"Apetalous apple blossoms received from Mr. A. D. Harkness, Irena, Ont., from tree grown by Mr. L. Cameron, Iroquois, Ont., May 26, 1904: About one dozen flowers received. Flowers in clusters averaging three each. Calyx apparently very similar (these were not compared with the calyx of perfect flowers at the time) to that of ordinary flowers. Petals abortive, very small, and hidden by the sepals. Flowers evidently all pistillate. Appear to be 15 stigmas to each flower. W. T. Macoun."

Knowing the interest in seedless apples I visited Iroquois, August, 1904, and went to see the tree, which is in Mr. Cameron's garden. It was found in a very thrifty condition, but with no fruit. This lack was explained by the fact that there were practically no apples in the orchard last year, hence the pistillate flowers could not be pol-

lenized. Mr. Cameron informed me that it was a seedling tree about 10 years old, and probably fruited for the first time in 1900, when the fruit was shown at Brantford. He has this seedless apple top grafted on another variety in addition to the original tree. The apple, as shown at Brantford, was a rather handsome yellow apple, above medium in size and of fair quality. I remember testing it and noting that it was seedless. It was an early winter variety. Next summer we hope to obtain a full description.

In April, 1904, the following item appeared in the Prince Edward Island Farmer:

"In a recent issue of the Farmer we published the result of an experiment in apple growing by which a noted Colorado orchardist, after seven years of experimenting, had succeeded in producing a seedless apple. It was noted that the tree bearing this scientific wonder bears no blossoms, and that the fruit resembles a naval orange. Last Saturday, to our surprise and pleasure, we received a box of seedless apples grown last year in the orchard of Mr. Hugh Ramsay, Port Hill, with the explanation that similar apples had been grown yearly on the same tree during the past 30 years. Examination shows that the apple is entirely solid; there are no seed chambers nor any semblance of seed; it is well formed, richly flavored, and a good winter keeper, the samples received being firm and fresh, although stored in ordinary barrels. The tree bearing this peculiar variety was full grown and bearing heavily when Mr. Ramsay came into possession of his farm 30 years ago. Since then it has been a heavy bearer yearly, and in no case has a seed ever been found in any of the fruit."

I wrote to the editor and also to the owner of the fruit, asking for specimens, but unfortunately the best were gone, the speci-