

THE KING OF FRUITS

ALMOST everyone in the Philippines has seen apples which have been shipped to the Islands, although most Filipinos have not seen them growing because their culture is not adapted to the warmer climates. The apple tree thrives best in temperate climates.

The original of all varieties of the cultivated apple is the wild crab-apple, which has a small and extremely sour fruit, and is a native of most of the countries of Europe. The apple of history first appeared in Asia Minor, and from there spread all over the world.

By many the cultivated apple is considered the king of fruits, and it has been grown since the earliest times of which we have any knowledge. Charred remains of apples have been found in ruins of prehistoric lake-dwellings in Europe, and rude pictures of this fruit were carved long ago by the stone-age man.

References to the apple are common in the literature of almost all countries and all ages, and fairy tales and folk-lore abound with stories of apple trees and golden apples. The apple is mentioned in the Bible many times. Pliny, a writer of ancient Rome, tells of 22 varieties of apple common in his day.

Apples have been used as food and have been cultivated for more than 4,000 years. They were probably introduced into Britain by the Romans, and from England were carried to America. The greater number of varieties now grown have, however, been cultivated only within the last century or so. There are at present over 2,000 known varieties of apples. No other fruit can be cultivated over so wide an area of the earth.

It seems curious to find that the apple



tree belongs to the great rose family, as do also the peach, the cherry, the plum, and many other fruit trees. The blossom of the apple tree is pink, pinkish white, or white. There is no sight more beautiful than a large apple tree in full bloom. Many artists have used a blooming apple tree as the subject for a picture.

Apples are among the most delicious, as well as the most wholesome fruit. Although only one-sixth of the apple is solid material, it is an excellent food either cooked or raw.

REVIEW

1. Have you seen apples? Where?
2. Have you seen apple trees?
3. What was the original of all apples?
4. How is the apple considered by many?
5. Were there apples in ancient times? How do we know?
6. How long have apples been cultivated?