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# Wild Apples: A Classic Essay

*Henry David Thoreau*

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## Wild Apples

A Classic Essay

Henry David Thoreau

1862

It is remarkable how closely the history of the Apple-tree is connected with that of man. The geologist tells us that the order of the Rosaceae, which includes the Apple, also the true Grasses, and the Labiatae or Mints, were introduced only a short time previous to the appearance of man on the globe.

It appears that apples made a part of the food of that unknown primitive people whose traces have lately been found at the bottom of the Swiss lakes, supposed to be older than the foundation of Rome, so old that they had no metallic implements. An entire black and shrivelled Crab-Apple has been recovered from their stores.

Tacitus says of the ancient Germans, that they satisfied their hunger with wild apples (agrestia poma) among other things.
Niebuhr observes that "the words for a house, a field, a plough, ploughing, wine, oil, milk, sheep, apples, and others relating to agriculture and the gentler way of life, agree in Latin and Greek, while the Latin words for all objects pertaining to war or the chase are utterly alien from the Greek." Thus the apple-tree may be considered a symbol of peace no less than the olive.

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