

The disparaging use of the term in reference to male homosexuals is now less common, and a Los Angeles gay radio program is called (with a quaint air) "Fruit Punch."

Wholly unrelated is the "Sodom apple," a name given to a mythical fruit that is fair to the eye but, once touched, turns to ashes—hence recalling the conflagration of Sodom in Genesis 19. The transformation could be glossed metaphorically as the outcome of vain or illicit conduct. "Through life we chase, with fond pursuit, / What mocks our hope like Sodom's fruit" (J. Bancks, *Young's Last Day*, 1736).

See also Flower Symbolism.

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FULLER, HENRY BLAKE (1857–1929)

American novelist. Scion of an eminent Chicago family, he gradually slid into genteel poverty and literary obscurity after enjoying early wealth and critical esteem. He used to be remembered as the author of novels which attacked the corrupt plutocrats of Chicago, and it is only in the last few years that attention has been turned to his literary treatment of homosexuality, in which he was a pioneer.

Little is known about his private life. His journals from his teenage days make it clear that he was in love with some dormitory roommates at Allison Classical Academy (1873–74). At the age of 19 he wrote an imaginary personal advertisement in which he says, "I would pass by twenty beautiful women to look upon a handsome man."

The years pass without further evidence until, at the age of 34, Fuller admits to being in love with a 15-year-old boy whose initials are "C.N.," and who had blue eyes and strawberry-blond hair. Five years later, Fuller wrote and managed to publish a very short play, *At Saint Judas's*, about a homosexual who commits suicide at the wedding of his former lover. This was strong stuff for the period,

but today this poorly-written play would be laughed at for its melodramatic absurdities. Nevertheless, it deserves credit as the first American play to deal explicitly with homosexuality.

Fuller did not return to this theme until 1919, when he published at his own expense *Bertram Cope's Year*, a novel about a homosexual love affair between Bertram Cope and Arthur Lemoyne, which ends with Cope turning heterosexual. Critics agree that Fuller lost his nerve while writing this novel and spoiled it by having his hero end up as a conformist. Four years later, the elderly Fuller began an affair with a college student named William Shepherd, with whom he went to Europe. A few years later, Fuller died after Carl Van Vechten had made an attempt to revive interest in his writings. Mention should also be made of the letters that Fuller received in 1897 and 1898 from a homosexual Canadian named Harold Curtis, which reveal the homosexual subculture of Toronto. Fuller saved these letters for future historians.

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FUNCTIONING

Down to the 1950s, psychiatric and psychological opinion held that homosexual behavior in an adult was symptomatic of severe emotional disorder. A detached evaluation of the homosexual personality was rendered even more difficult by the anger, revulsion, and distaste with which many clinicians reacted. The central difficulty, however, stemmed from the fact that for decades the clinical picture of homosexuality had been formed by the observation of subjects found in consulting offices, mental hospitals, or prisons. These groups did not constitute a valid sample of the homosexual population as a whole.