

A WONDERFUL SHRUB

ON IT GROW THE MYSTERIOUS FLOWERS OF ST. PATRICK.

This Phenomenal Plant Blossoms In France In Midwinter In Tribute. So the History of It Relates, to Ireland's Patron Saint.

In Ireland many local traditions about St. Patrick are identified with rivers and mountains—those natural monuments which time cannot efface; but Ireland is not the only country where these monuments of nature give evidence of the saint's passage. France also bears testimony to St. Patrick in the mysterious Fleurs de St. Patrice and the venerable Eglise de St. Patrice, situated in the diocese of Tours, on the banks of the Loire, a few leagues distant from the city of St. Martin. St. Patrick was a disciple of St. Martin of Tours, with whom he spent four years after his escape from Ireland and from whom he received the tonsure and was thus made a cleric. Men have doubted of St. Patrick's presence at Tours, but the fact of that presence is proved by the traditions and monuments which are bound up with the beautiful legend of Les Fleurs de St. Patrice and their blossoming every year in midwinter for the past 1,500 years.

But what are the Fleurs de St. Patrice? The most reliable account of these mysterious flowers is the one given by Mgr. Chevallier, president of the Archaeological Society of Tours, in 1850. He writes as follows:

"On the banks of the Loire, a few leagues from Tours, a very remarkable phenomenon is repeated year by year, one concerning which science as yet has given no satisfactory explanation. This phenomenon, too little known, consists in the blossoming, in the midst of the rigors of winter, of the blackthorn (*Rubus spinosa*), commonly called the sloe.

This remarkable shrub is to be found at St. Patrice, upon the slope of a hill not far from the Chateau de Rochette. The circulation of the sap, which should be suspended in winter, is plainly revealed by the moist state of the bark, which easily separates from the wood which it covers. The buds swell, the flowers expand as in the month of April and cover the boughs with odoriferous and snowlike flowers, while a few leaves timidly venture to expose their delicate verdure to the icy north wind. To the flowers succeeds the fruit, and at the beginning of January a small berry appears, attached to a long peduncle in the midst of the withered and discolored petals, which soon shrivel and dries up.

This singular growth of flowers is almost unknown, although it has been repeated every year from time immemorial. The oldest inhabitant of St. Patrice has always seen it take place at a fixed period of the year, no matter how severe the season may be, and such has also been the ancient tradition of their forefathers, while the legend we are about to relate attributes a very remote origin to the fact; but, as the shrub itself appears quite young, it is probable that it is renewed from the roots. However, this phenomenon is limited to the locality and to the shrub in question. Cuttings transplanted elsewhere have only blossomed in the spring, and the hawthorns which grow amid the sloes do not manifest any circulation of sap.

In the year 1850 the flowers were in bloom from Christmas until the 1st of January—that is, at a time when the thermometer was almost always below the freezing point. Although growing on the slope of a hill, this shrub is in no way sheltered from the north wind. Its branches are incrustured with hoar frost, the icy northeast wind blows violently among them, and it often happens that the shrub is loaded at one and the same time with the snow of winter and the snow of its own flowers.

The inhabitants of St. Patrice record an ancient tradition which is full of freshness and poetry. St. Patrick, it is said, being on his way from Ireland to join St. Martin in Gaul—attracted by the fame of the saint's sanctity and miracles—and having arrived at the bank of the Loire near the spot where the church now bearing his name has been built, rested under a shrub. It was Christmas time, when the cold was intense. In honor of the saint the shrub expanded its branches and, shaking off the snow which rested on them, by an unheard of prodigy arrayed itself in flowers white as the snow itself. St. Patrick crossed the Loire on his cloak, and on reaching the opposite bank another blackthorn under which he rested at once burst out into flowers. Since that time, says the chronicler, the

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Dec. 21, 1900, dwalyn.

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two shrubs have never ceased to blossom at Christmas in honor of St. Patrick.

Such is the account given by Mgr. Chevallier in 1851. Father William Morris visited it 30 years later, in 1881, and writes that he was struck by the extraordinary beauty and luxuriance of the foliage on the trees—"it was so dense from the ground upward that it was impossible to distinguish the stem"—and he could understand how, when it flowers at Christmas, it supplies the country round with trophies of St. Patrick. The winter of 1879-80 was remarkable for its severity, and during the month of December, 1879, the ground was covered with snow, yet the blackthorn of St. Patrick—"l'epine de St. Patrice," as it is called at Tours—flowered as usual, though the branches were laden with snow and the blossoms came out under the snow.

On the 20th of December of 1900, a French journal directed attention to this wonderful blossoming of the blackthorn, and this so excited the attention of those living near Tours that the shrub was stripped of its flowers and left completely bare at Christmas. The proprietor of the ground on which the shrub grows then surrounded it with a fence in order to preserve the blossoms from being plucked.

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JULY BIG

CHEAP SALE!!

Read This Long Letter

Summer goods must be cleared out before the end of this month, at cost, under cost, and a trifle over cost. We already have several invoices for fall goods. We must have the room for our fall stock now on the way from all parts of the universe. Now is the time to buy. A dollar spent this month will take away almost double its value. Come in and look through our stock of seasonable goods at sales prices. Under our new manager's supervision our aim is to go forward. We're here to stay, and it's our ambition to hold our old patrons, and add new ones every day. No fake offers at this July Clearance Sale.

These are a few of this week's sellers. Early buyers will get first selection.

STRAW HATS AT ONE HALF PRICE. Balance of our Straw Hats must be sold this week at these low prices. 10c. Straw Hats reduced to 5c.; 20c. Straw Hats reduced to 10c.; 35c. Straw Hats reduced to 18c.; 50c. Straw Hats reduced to 25c. Only a few of a kind left. Come soon if you need a Summer Hat.

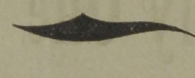
\$3.00 Tan Boots for men at \$1.90. 23 pairs men's \$3.00 Tan Boots to be sold this week at \$1.90 a pair. Boys' \$2.25 Tan Boots, Hartt make, sizes 1 to 5, this week reduced to \$1.40 a pair. Ladies Oxford Shoes, 69c. and 95c. a pair, former prices 95c. and \$1.40. A lot of Misses' Button and Lace Summer Boots to be cleared out at 78c. and 90c. a pair, sizes 11 to 2, they are a big bargain. 63 pairs Men's Carpet Slippers, sewed or clinched, to go at 24c. a pair. 160 pairs Women's House Slippers, this week only 14c. a pair.

CLOTHING TALK!

We've already told our readers that our stock of Men's and Boys' Clothing is as large as all the clothiers of this town put together. Don't believe this until you've looked through our men's store on first floor, and the big piles of Suits and Top Coats on second floor. This immense stock was purchased a couple of weeks ago from Canada's best clothiers at a big discount. The same firm also sold a big bill to St. John's biggest clothiers. You've heard of the values that are here awaiting for you at this sale. We have decided to reduce the quantity, prices no object. Every garment sold carries a full guarantee of entire satisfaction or your money refunded, after the garments have been worn. Compare these low prices with others but see our assortment first.

Men's Light Summer Suits.

All sizes worth \$6.00, July sale price \$3.45. Men's fine worsted \$10.00 suit, July price \$6.50 a suit. Men's imported tweeds, \$9.50 suits this week at \$6.00 a suit. Men's best \$14.00 suits in F'ton, our price this week \$8.00 a suit. Men's Black Venetian Dress Suits, worth \$12.50 reduced to \$8.50. Men's navy Serge Suits, best worsted yarn, tailor made, worth \$9.50, this week at \$5.90. Boys' 3 piece tweed suits marked to sell at \$5.00, this week choice of \$5.00 boys' suits for \$2.95. Boys' 2 piece tweed suits worth \$3.00, this week \$1.85. 83 pairs Men's Tweed Pants, marked to sell at \$1.40 to \$1.80, this week choice \$1.00 a pair. Men's Black Worsted Stripe Pants, worth \$2.50 a pair, this week any size at \$1.45. Men's White Fannel Pants only \$2.50 a pair. Men's Rubber Coats with Capes, made of genuine waterproof paramata cloth, reduced to \$3.75. Men's Double Thread Balbriggan Underwear, all sizes, reduced to 29c. and 38c. per garment. Men's Neglige Shirts, 50c., 65c. and 75c. If you are out buying clothing and are looking for your money's worth, come in and talk it over at



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N. B.—On Wednesday, July 17th and following days we will have a remnant sale. Hundreds of useful remnants of all sorts of goods will be sold at extraordinary low prices. Please come in the forenoon to the remnant sale.