

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

Strange as it may seem, St. Patrick was not an Irishman at all, but was by birth a Scotchman, having been born in Scotland about 372. When he was sixteen or seventeen years old he was stolen by Pirates and taken to Ireland and made to work at herding swine. He was a very studious boy and in the seven years that he remained a swineherd he learned the Irish language and the customs of the people.

He then made up his mind that swineherding was not the right sort of occupation for a bright-minded youth like himself, so he escaped to the Continent, where after more years of study he was ordained by Pope Celestine and sent back to Ireland to preach Christianity to the people.

But the old priests did not like him. He was very likely too bright for them, and they persecuted him, and made things very uncomfortable for him. Finally he was obliged to leave there, but before he went he cursed the lands of the other priests so that they would not bear crops, just to even up things.

St. Patrick performed many miracles, and when the scourge of snakes came he was sent for and begged to disperse the reptiles. He said that that would be easy, if they would bring him a drum. A drum was brought and he began beating it with such vim and vigor that he broke its head, and looked for a time as though the trick would fail. But just then an angel came and mended the drum and the snakes were forever banished. Just to prove it they kept the drum for many centuries.

These and other miracles St. Patrick performed. He lived to be 121 years old, dying on his birthday, March 17th., 492.

Historians have relegated many stories about Saint Patrick to the realm of myth, but the shamrock remains the emblem of Ireland, proudly worn by Irishmen the world over on Saint Patrick's Day, March 17th. The true shamrock is the hop clover, which much resembles our common white clover, except that the flower is yellow instead of blue-green. Large shipments of shamrocks are brought to the United States for Saint Patrick's Day.

So the shamrock is the National emblem of Irish people, and it is said that no snake can live where it grows.

Perhaps if one will take the trouble to think it out, ~~one~~ ^{he} may find in that belief the idea of faith and loyalty and love of the country for which the Irish people are noted, and that emblematically it means that no traitor to Ireland can live near the Shamrock.