

MAGIC CLOVERS.

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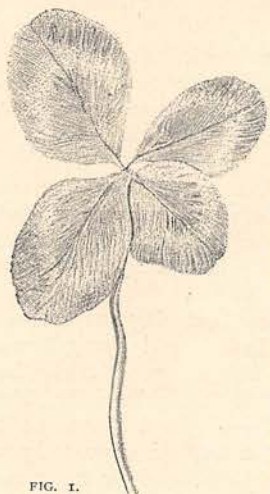


FIG. 1.

FROM time immemorial it has been considered good luck to find a four-leaved clover. Some have said that the discoverer of one was certain to become wealthy and wise; others, that the fairies would grant him every wish; and others, that the little magic leaves could show where gold was lying buried in the earth. And certainly

there does seem to be something very wonderful in the fact that, in a large field containing millions of little plants furnished with groups of three leaflets, there should be only one or two of the four-leaved variety. I do not mean that some varieties of clover bear leaves *all* in groups of four or five, for this is not the fact. Perhaps one four-leaved clover will grow upon a plant that has fifty threes, although occasionally several fours or fives will be found in a bunch on the same plant.



FIG. 4.

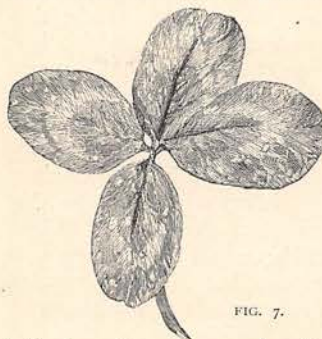


FIG. 7.



FIG. 2.

Figure No. 1 shows the usual type of a four-leaved clover. As a general thing, three leaves are nearly of a size, while the fourth is somewhat smaller—though this does not always follow. I

have seen several like Figure No. 2, in which the fourth leaflet is borne out on a separate stalk. Figure No. 3 shows it growing on the stem, a considerable distance below the other three. Figure No. 4 represents it very much smaller than they; Figure No. 5, smaller still, and growing directly upon one of the larger; Figure No. 6, as set upon a distinct stem above the main leaves; while Figure No. 7 depicts a four-leaved clover with two leaflets grown into one.

If the finding of four-leaved clovers is a sign of good luck, I, truly, am very lucky, for I have found more than anybody I know. And I am of the opinion that very few persons are aware of the variety of forms in which they are sometimes seen.

The clovers shown at Figures Nos. 8 and 9 are quite uncommon. The former specimen has four leaflets, one rolled inward, and borne on an upright stem, at the base of which is a little bract. The latter has three leaves of ordinary size; a fourth, smaller and turned upward; and a fifth, rolled inward, and springing upon a tiny stalk from the under side of the fourth. Five-leaved clovers, like Figure No. 10, occur almost as often as four. Frequently fours and fives are found growing together. Some say that you must not pick a five-leaved clover—it will neutralize all the good luck brought by a four. Others assert the direct contrary, and say that it is



FIG. 3.



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.

ing up the magic wand, and presently finding himself wafted away on invisible wings to Elf-land.

Once I found a seven-leaved clover, like Figure No. 11. The leaflets were arranged in two rows, three growing upon four. I have heard of fifteen-leaved and seventeen-leaved clovers,—and seeing as many as I do of the wonderful freaks of nature, I do not doubt that there are such things.

Aside from the wide-spread interest attaching to the duplication of the leaflet, clovers seem special favorites of poets and romancers. It is said that, when St. Patrick was preaching to the unconverted Irish, some of them ridiculed the idea of the Trinity. For answer, he caught up a trefoil from the sod, and told them that here was a leaf exemplifying three in one. Hence, the three-leaved clover, or shamrock, was adopted as the national emblem of Ireland. Some say that the



FIG. 9.

common wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) shares with the white clover the credit of being the true shamrock. One authority says that this oxalis is a native of Ireland, while the clover is of comparatively recent introduction. In a song by the Irish poet, Thomas Moore, the shamrock—whether oxalis or clover he does not say—is mentioned as “Old Erin’s native shamrock.”

very much more potent for good than the four-leaved stalk. According to one legend, only the holder of a five-leaved clover can be admitted to the fairy-court. Several pretty stories describe the fortunate one as standing out on the grass at midnight, holding



FIG. 8.

The scientific name of clover is *Trifolium*, or “three-leaved.” The most familiar varieties are the pink, or field-clover, noticeable for its full, rich heads and large, dark green leaves, with a light green crescent in the center of nearly every leaflet; the white, or shamrock, with its smaller, white heads, and plain, green leaves; the rabbit-foot, with its long-haired, silky heads and narrow, folded leaves; and the larger and smaller yellow clovers, each with bright, golden heads and small, dark leaves. I can not say whether the leaflets of any of these latter are ever grouped in fours or fives or not—but these varieties, so far as I know, are to be found mostly among the red and the white clovers.

As I said at first, the discovery of a four-leaved clover was regarded, even centuries ago, as an omen of good luck. But in a poem by Robert Herrick, who wrote a short time after Shakespeare, is a mention of “lucky four-leaved grasse”; and, in another very old volume, it is soberly stated that, “if a man walking in the fields finds any four-leaved grass, he shall, in a small while after, find some good thing.” Several mentions to the same effect are made in the writings of other poets.

I hope you will have many a hunt for magic clovers in the sweet-smelling summer fields; for I find, in that charming occupation, “luck” sufficient,—even when no “lucky four-leaved grasse” rewards my search.



FIG. 10.



FIG. 11.

