

STORY OF A MAGNOLIA.

The evergreen magnolia, so well known for the splendor of its blossoms, was first brought to Europe, from the banks of the Mississippi, in 1732, by a French officer of marines, who planted it at his native placé, Maillardière, about four miles from Nantes. Here the magnolia grew and flourished; but, its introducer having died, little notice was taken of it, and, when observed, it was supposed to be only some variety of the common laurel, which it resembles in its leaves. Thirty years afterwards it flowered, and was then discovered by M. Bonami, professor of botany at Nantes, to be the *Magnolia grandiflora* of Linnæus. At a meeting of the states at Bretagne, held at Nantes in September, 1760, M. Bonami presented a branch of this magnolia in flower to the Princess de Rohan Chabot, and it excited so much admiration that its fame shortly after reached the ears of Louis XV. The monarch was then ornamenting his garden at the Petit Trainon, and had there some small plants of the *Magnolia grandiflora*, which had in the meantime been introduced into Europe by one of the English collectors; and when Louis heard that he had in his own dominions a tree of this rare exotic, forty feet high, which was covered with blossoms every year, he sent two of his gardeners to examine it, with orders to transport it to Versailles, if they could ensure its living. This *if* was a formidable obstacle; and, the gardeners reporting that they feared it would not survive its removal, it was suffered to remain at Maillardière. Thirty years more brought the Revolution, and amidst the general destruction even the poor magnolia did not escape; it was mutilated in the war of La Vendée, and its branches were cut for firewood; the house near which it stood was burnt down, and the magnolia was scorched and withered by the flames. It partially recovered, and still survives, though now only the wreck of what it was.

—Selected.



- LEARNING FRENCH.—When Brummell was obliged, “by money, debt, and all that,” to retire to France, he knew no French; and having obtained a grammar for the purpose of study, Scrope Davies was asked what progress the beau had made in French: he replied that “Brummell had been stopped, like Bonaparte in Russia, by the elements.”