

houlder, and I don't know where to go. Oh, please, good Fairy, help me."

"Oh, that will be such fun," cried Bessie, clapping her hands. "And now let's begin."

Bessie walked along beside the box, dropped down upon the floor, and began her pretense of crying. "Ah, little girl, what is the matter?" asked Billie. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, good Fairy, I'm lost in the forest and a big bear wants to eat me, and a big snake wants to bite my big toe. And I can't find my mamma. Will you help me, good Fairy?"

"Yes, make a wish, and I shall grant it," replied Billie.

"Well, good Fairy, I want my dear mamma," replied Bessie, and her voice trembled a bit as she said this, for she voiced her dearest wish in very truth as well as in play.

Billie waived his wand, saying: "Wave, wand, for luck. Wave, wand, to help those in distress. Wave, wand, and keep the bear from eating her. Wave, wand, and strangle the snake before it bites her big toe. Wave, wand, and find her mother for her, for that is her dearest wish."

"Ah, bless my babies, what are they doing in this cold attic?" And to the supreme delight of Bessie and Billie their mother came into the attic and had them in her arms, kissing them and hugging them till they could scarcely get their breath. And when at last they could speak, Bessie said: "Mamma, brother made the best fairy in the world. He brought you to me, my dearest wish."

**MISTLETOE MYTHS EXPLAINED**

**Why It Is Hung From Ceiling—Kiss for Every Berry**

The good old custom of hanging the mistletoe from the ceiling at the Christmas festivities is said to have its origin in the idea that since the plant did not have its roots in the ground, no part of it should ever be permitted to touch the earth, says a writer in the *London Queen*. Among the Saxons the fact that mistletoe was suspended from the roof of a dwelling intimated to the wayfarer that the hospitality of the house was at his disposal, and beneath its branches friend and stranger, vassal and lord, gathered together in comradeship and good cheer. The religious aspect of the mistletoe tradition, which had its origin in the Druidical rites, and the gathering of it by the Arch-Druid with his golden sickle, merged later into a purely social symbol, and the idea of simple hospitality developed into one of merrymaking and a somewhat riotous entertainment.

The kiss of the Scandinavian goddess expanded into the custom of a kiss given for every berry that grew on the bough. Small wonder that, in spite of the mistletoe having originally existed in the odor of sanctity, the Church came to regard it as an entirely pagan symbol, and refused to allow it to participate with the holly and the evergreen in the Yuletide decorations. There is an ancient belief that the mistletoe was the tree from which the holy cross was hewn, and that after this was made the plant withered and ever afterward became a mere parasitic growth, clinging for support to

other and sturdier trees. Other stories, however, credit it with divine gifts in the healing of disease and the expulsion of evil spirits.

Ram, the high priest of the Celts, received in a dream the intimation that by means of the plant he would be enabled to save his people from the plague which was decimating them. To celebrate their delivery he instituted the feast of Noel, new health, a midwinter holiday which has come to be considered coincident with the New Year. In many parts of the United Kingdom the silver berries and the gray-green leaves of the mistletoe are looked upon as anything but an emblem of good cheer; on the contrary, the plant is regarded with dread as being the bringer of ill luck and the sign of ill omen. This superstition exists both in Devonshire and in Ireland, and, strange to say, in neither of these places does the plant flourish, owing, report has it, to the fact that both incurred the displeasure of the Druids, and were, in consequence, cursed in such a way that their soil became incapable of nourishing the sacred growth.

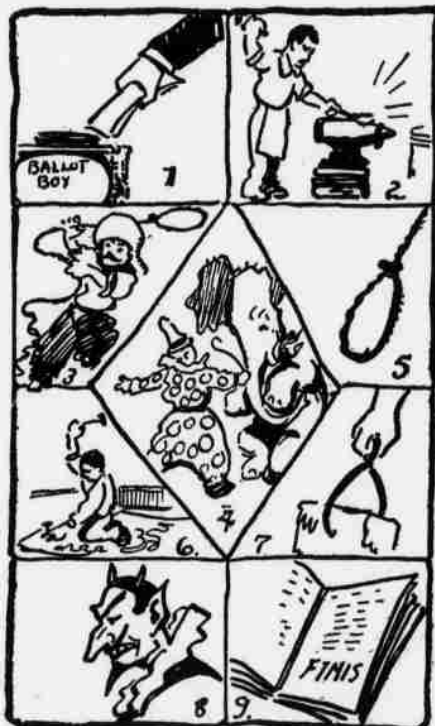
In the sixth book of the *Aeneid* a lengthy description of the mistletoe is given by Virgil, who makes the Sybil describe to his hero the exact spot in Hades where he will find it growing. There is little doubt that the strange, ethereal appearance of the little opaque berry is largely responsible for the mystic character it has enjoyed among the peoples of diverse nations from the earliest historical times.

**Christmas Letter Enigma**

My first is in single, but not in double;  
My second is in wrangle, but not in trouble;  
My third is in knot, but not in tie;  
My fourth is in oyster, but not in fry;  
My fifth is the same as you have in my two;  
My sixth is in church, but not in pew;  
My seventh is in old, but not in new;  
My eighth you have had in my five and my two;  
My ninth is in hunter, but not in setter;  
My tenth is the same as my very first letter.

My whole spells a name  
That children love dear;  
And they hear it much talked of  
At this time of year.

**PICTURED WORD PUZZLE**



The initial letters of the words depicted spell what day?

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