

the ceremony is performed, the tree is bound up and the fissure plastered with mud or clay. The belief is that if the tree heals, the child's body will heal, but if the cleft does not heal, the operation will not be successful. If the disease is cured and some one cuts down the tree, even a long time afterward, the disease will reappear. Thus not long ago a man who had recently taken possession of an estate in England and in making improvements planned to cut down some ash trees, was asked by a neighbor not to cut a certain tree for he as a child had been passed through it.

A similar cure for various diseases, but especially for rupture, has been commonly practised in nearly every country of Europe, but on the Continent the tree employed is usually an oak instead of an ash. Ten or a dozen years ago the ceremony was performed in Newfoundland, only the tree used was a mountain ash instead of the real ash.

In Aid of the Milk Supply.

One finds in folk-lore literature many references to the mountain ash or rowan tree as an effective agency against evil spirits. In Westphalia, for example, the herdsman cuts at dawn on May Day just as the first rays of the sun are touching it, a rowan tree and switches his cows on the flanks with its branches to drive away witches which are particularly likely to rob the cows of their milk on the morning of May Day. In Scotland the branches of the rowan tree are placed over the doors of cow stables for the same purpose. A still better way of attaining the same object is to tie a cross of rowan tree wood with a scarlet thread to the tail of each cow. A modified relict of this belief is found in New England, where it is said that cattle will drive better, if the farmer carries a white ash or a mountain ash stick.

Fortune Follows the Rowan Tree.

The practice of driving away evil spirits by beating with switches is common in the remote districts all over Europe and South America. Among people who no longer believe in evil spirits the custom still persists on certain festival days, such as Easter, Christmas and New Year's, only now the ceremony is said to bring good luck. It is a general belief in the rural districts of New England and also in Eastern Canada, that a mountain ash tree on the lawn or in the garden brings good luck to the household. That may be the

reason so many of them are to be found in our cities. The same idea is found in the custom of planting a tree at marriage or at the birth of a child.

Thus I have tried to outline the role which trees have played in the

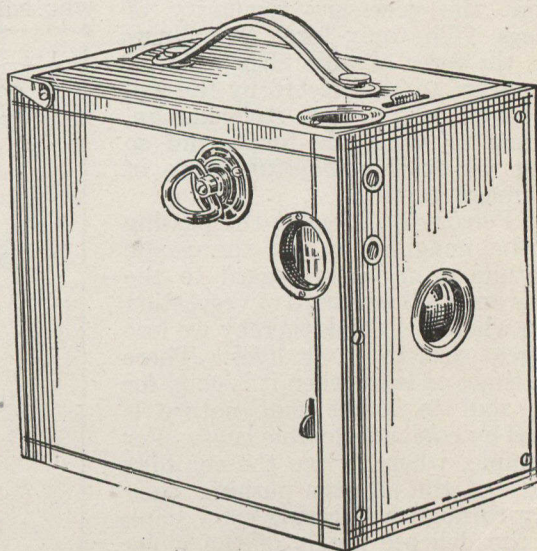
imagination of primitive people to show you that trees were regarded as the abode of spirits and as such, worshipped; they being the largest and dominant forms of vegetable life, their spirits influenced the fertility and productiveness of

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