

A BIT OF ASTROLOGY.

It may be surprising to such persons as have given very little attention to the subject to find that considerable superstition still exists among even the enlightened people of Eastern Pennsylvania. Signs of the moon are observed not only in the planting of fence-posts, but also in the art of horticulture, for who does not remember that we must not plant certain kinds of vegetables under unfavorable signs, lest they run to seed or do some other undesirable thing? Every now and then we come upon a relic of this kind, which shows to how great an extent signs controlled the activities of the people referred to in very recent times, if they do not even at the present time.

Thus, the intimate connection between astrology and the practice of medicine is strikingly shown in a table entitled "A Useful Flebotomy Table," handed to the writer a few days ago. Judging by the character of the letters and the German language in which it is printed, this table is most likely about a hundred years old; but it by no means follows that its instructions are no longer observed. Bloodletting was freely practiced in the early part of the last century, and many persons believe that it hastened the death of Gen. Washington in the last year of the previous century.

Astrology is such a study and knowledge of the sun, moon and stars, especially of their places in the sky with relation to each other on partic-

ular days, as is supposed to enable the possessor of this knowledge to guide himself in his daily affairs. It is assumed that every one is born under the influence of some star, whose relative position indicates the success or failure of a proposed undertaking; hence arose the custom of consulting an astrologer before undertaking any important business. (Caesar, Wallenstein and Napoleon were great believers in their stars.) In order to do this most conveniently the "useful Flebotomy Table" referred to above was prepared, "in which may be seen the days of the entire month on which it is well to perform the operation of flebotomy (commonly called bloodletting)."

"In the first place one must carefully observe the time of the new moon. If this takes place in the forenoon, one must begin to count with that day, but if new moon takes place in the afternoon, the counting must begin with the following day, and it is not necessary to make any further observations of the signs, be they good or bad; but, nota bene, when the bloodletting is necessary no particular day should be awaited."

" 1 day is bad—Loses color.

2 day is bad—Gets a fever.

3 day is bad—Gives great soreness.

4 day is bad—Inclines to dying.

5 day is bad—Blood disappears.

6 day is good—Bleeding helps the blood and promotes micturition..

7 day is bad—Loss of desire to eat and drink.

8 day is bad—Gives diseases of the stomach.

9 day is bad—Itching of the body.

10 day is bad—Gives watery eyes.

11 day is good—Creates desire to eat and drink.

12 day is good—Entire body becomes refreshed.

- 13 day is bad—Neither eating nor drinking is beneficial.
- 14 day is bad—Soreness appears.
- 15 day is good—Strengthens eating and drinking.
- 16 day is bad—The most dangerous day in the year.
- 17 day is good—The best day in the year.
- 18 day is good—Promotes health.
- 19 day is bad.
- 20 day is bad—Does not escape grave illness.
- 21 day is good—Good for everything.
- 22 day is good—Free of all diseases.
- 23 day is good—Wards off disease and strengthens the members.
- 24 day is good—Takes away all bad humors.
- 25 day is good—Serves also for prudence and wisdom.
- 26 day is good—Will be spared weakness of the stomach and fever through the entire year.
- 27 day is very bad—Dangerous also to diseased eyes.
- 28 day is good—Promotes good health.
- 29 day is bad.
- 30 day is bad.”

As the interval from new moon to new moon is only twenty-nine days, the maker of this table was evidently so innocent of astronomical science as to believe that lunations sometimes are thirty days in length.

In this connection attention may be called to an illustration in the back part of Baer's Almanac—a woodcut of a nude man with lines drawn from different parts of the body to figures and symbols representing the twelve signs of the zodiac named after particular groups of stars, called constellations, regarded as belonging to the several signs. The heading reads: “Anatomy of Man's Body as Said to be Governed by the Twelve Constella-

tions." This government is distributed as follows:

Head and Face....	Aries	(Ram).
Neck	Taurus	(Bull).
Arms	Gemini	(Twins).
Breast	Cancer	(Crab).
Heart	Leo	(Lion).
Bowels	Virgo	(Virgin).
Reins	Libra	(Scales).
Secrets	Scorpio	(Scorpion).
Thighs	Sagittarius	(Archer).
Knees	Capricorn	(Goat).
Legs..	Aquarius	(Water-bearer.)
Feet	Pisces	(Fishes).

This belief in the power of the gods represented by signs over the different parts of the body can be traced in its westward course all the way from Chaldea to our own country, and from before the days of Abraham to the twentieth century, as witnessed by Baer's, and, indeed, most almanacs. The place of the sun and especially of the moon, that is, its proximity to some particular star or constellation of stars, was carefully observed and physicians and surgeons regulated their practice—their treatment of patients—accordingly.

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