

Chapter 7

Astrological Significance of Holidays

The operation of spiritual laws often best can be illustrated by their parallel effects on the affairs of earth. The Law of Correspondences is such a law. In effect, the principle involved—which has ramifications as broad as the universe itself—is that bodies and minds move more easily by flowing along in the same direction as a stream of force than across the current or against it. In the low-velocity physical world this is easy to picture, as we all have had ample experience with currents of water and currents of air, and have felt the impulse to go along with them, and the resistance they offered when we tried to move in some other direction

But because so few of us have consciously had ample experiences of the high-velocity inner plane type, it is very difficult to picture how inner plane currents exert a pressure that is similar, except that additional properties are involved. Yet while such pressures, which lie at the base of the law of correspondences, are difficult to reconstruct in the imagination, they are exceedingly simple to point out in example. When, for instance, a child is born, he enters physical life at the moment the signs and planets rather closely map the thought organization of his astral body; when the regions thus mapped permit the stream of high-velocity planetary energy to flow freely through them. It is the application of the principle of least resistance. It is easier for the child to be born then than at a time when astral currents are flowing against his birth

Furthermore, if the divergence between the organization of his astral body and the planetary currents mapped by his birthchart is too great, the child does not live. Too much astral pressure against him will stop his life. And in a similar way, a question to be answered by Horary Astrology is asked when the planets map the conditions relating to it rather than at some other time, because to ask it at some other time would mean too great a mental effort bucking astral headwinds

As I said, this principle is as wide as the universe in its ramifications. But to illustrate one phase of its application, it is instructive to list the various persistent holidays, and show its invariable operation where they are concerned. For, just as a child born when the astrological correspondences do not coincide with its character does not live, so also a holiday, or recurrent festival, if established at a time when the astrological positions do not correspond, falls immediately into disuse

The sun is the source of that vitality which gives length of life, and its position in the zodiac during its annual journey around it is the index by which people chiefly determine the time for observing holidays. I mean that we time Christmas, New Year's Day, Fourth of July, etc., by the day of the month, which in turn is determined by the station of the sun in the zodiac. Therefore, in seeking the correspondences which determine whether or not a holiday or festival once born will live, and continue to be observed, we chiefly look to the zodiacal position of the sun

This path of the sun, called the zodiac, was carefully studied by the Wise Men of the East, and mapped into divisions, each of which was discerned to have a special influence. They divided this apparent path of the sun into 12 major divisions of equal extent, called signs of the zodiac. Then, because they found they exerted each a distinct influence, they divided each sign into three equal subdivisions of 10 degrees, called decanates. Through long ages of painstaking observation they ascertained the precise influence upon human life and the spiritual significance of the 12 zodiacal signs and 36 decanates. Then, by means of symbolic pictographs, they portrayed this influence and spiritual significance by designs traced among the stars

In discerning the nature of astral currents which influence the life and nature of holidays, therefore, we have two main factors: the general rulership of the section of the zodiac occupied by the sun on the day in question, and the constellated picture which gives more detail and in addition reveals its spiritual significance. Let us, therefore, now commence with the first of the Civil Year—New Year's Day—and follow the sun around the zodiac mentioning each in its turn, and explaining the correspondence of all the more commonly accepted holidays:

New Year's Day

In the birth of a child or in the birth of a new year, which is pictured to us even in modern times in the form of a new born babe, it is recognized that there is a mother (moon) as well as a father (sun). Therefore, whether we consider the astronomical year, which is related to the sun crossing the vernal equinox, or the civil year, which is related to the more easily determined winter solstice, the celebration is not on the day when the sun crosses the equinox or solstice, but on a subsequent day when symbolically the moon, which rules periods of gestation, has some unusual significance

The exaltation of the moon, where it exerts its finest power, is in the sign Taurus. When the sun gets into Taurus, therefore, the mother principle has its best influence over the father. And the same idea is represented when the sun enters any Taurus decanate of the zodiac. When in winter the sun crosses the solstice from Sagittarius into Capricorn, the days are shortest and the nights longest. From that point on the days, the light—and symbolically the spiritual power—must increase. But in this journey from Matter back to Spirit, the father needs the help and cooperation of the mother; the Sun needs the assistance of the Moon. Hence the festival, and the commencement of the civil year, must embrace this factor. On New Year's Day the sun must be in the decanate of Capricorn where the moon has special significance, which is the Taurus decanate

Epiphany

The birth of the sun, symbol of the savior of the world, as distinct from the commencement of the year, is observed on Christmas. The new life thus given to the world—for the sun rules life and vitality—must be imparted to all 12 houses of the horoscope if it is to confer its saving grace. The twelve disciples represented these twelve compartments of the astral body, each of which contains the thought cells relating to one essential department of life. Epiphany means appearance. And this appearance of the saving sun, after having revitalized all 12 houses of the horoscope, does not occur immediately after the sun is born but 12 days after Christmas, one day being used to symbolize each of the 12 houses of life

Ground Hog Day

Uranus is the planet ruling astrology, and its sign, Aquarius, is pictured as a man measuring the influence of the stars and pouring this information from an urn down upon the children of the earth. Prognostication, therefore, is associated with Aquarius. But as giving access likewise to inner plane information, the Gemini decanate, which is occupied by the sun on February 2, has special significance. It is pictured among the constellations by a flying horse, Pegasus.

Poets and those otherwise inspired, must drink from the fountain of Hippocrene, which flowed sparkling clear from Mount Helicon as the result of a blow from this horse's hoof

In other words, the second decanate of Aquarius, the keyword of which is Inspiration, confers not merely astrological ability, but inspirational power to give it correct interpretation. And to the ground hog on February 2 is attributed such ability. He is said to come out of his hole and make an astrological observation. If the sun can be clearly seen—that is, if he sees his shadow—he concludes there will be six weeks more of winter weather. But if the sun is not visible, and his shadow cannot be seen, he decides winter is about over, and the period of hibernation can safely end

Lincoln's Birthday

Lincoln gained lasting fame as a humanitarian. And on February 12 the sun is in the humanitarian sign, Aquarius, pictured by the Man of the sky pouring not merely knowledge, but sympathy and his blessings, from an urn upon the earth. The sun is in the last decanate of the sign, pictured by Cetus, the Whale Monster. This monster devoured the fairest youths of Greece, and Andromeda was chained to a rock for this vile creature to destroy, until she was rescued by Perseus. The keyword of the decanate is Repression

Incidentally, Charles Darwin had voiced his abhorrence of slavery some time before Lincoln expressed an opinion about it. Like Lincoln, he was well over 6 feet tall, and was always kind and sympathetic, even writing in his youth that he sought beetles already dead for his collection, as he felt it wrong to kill them. Both men were emancipators, for what Lincoln accomplished in the abolition of bodily slavery, Darwin accomplished in the abolition of mental slavery to tyrannical tradition. These forms of human bondage are probably coevil. They had, at least, flourished since before the time of recorded history. And both were given the death blow at practically the same time, by men who both were born February 12, 1809

Both men lived lives that in loftiness of ideals and moral integrity set them apart from others. Each accomplished a self-appointed task that contributed vastly to the welfare of all people. Neither is revered for military exploits nor for cunning. Each is honored for destroying the monster of slavery. Even as Perseus slew the hideous creature and released Andromeda, so Darwin slew the tyranny of orthodox belief and Lincoln slew the greedy institution of bodily slavery. Darwin loosed the shackles of one type of repression, and Lincoln, whose birthday is honored in the land of his birth, loosed them from another

Valentine's Day

On February 14, which is Valentine's Day, the sun is still in the Repression decanate of Aquarius, pictured by the Whale Monster. From this danger, Andromeda was rescued by the love of her Prince Charming, Perseus, who set her free and gained her hand in marriage. The word 'valentine' is from the Norman galantin, meaning 'lover'; and this is the Libra decanate of the sign—that is, the marriage decanate. Therefore, especially in view of the perils pictured by the constellation Cetus, what could be more appropriate than missives of love and proposals of marriage? Efforts of true love to loose the bonds of loneliness and slay the monster of possible repression are shown

Washington's Birthday

George Washington was the founder of a nation and its first ruler. That he demonstrated great wisdom and unselfishness to establish it as he did makes of him a great character. His birthday is observed on February 22, at a time when the sun has entered the first decanate of the sign Pisces. Pisces is a sign of restriction, and it was these restrictions which Washington removed. The decanate is pictured by Cepheus, the King; and Washington became the ruler of a newly independent country. The keyword of the decanate is Verity, and tradition relating to the famed cherry tree holds that even as a boy the founder of our country could not tell a lie. The decanate expresses the time worn thought that "The Truth Shall Set You Free."

Washington had a controversy with a king; and the type of rulership he established after that falling out set a precedent, which most of the Western World followed by adopting the republican form of government

The Lamb and the Lion

It is said that if March comes in like a lion it goes out like a lamb, and if it comes in like a lamb it goes out like a lion. At the vernal equinox, about the 21st of March, the sun enters the sign of the Ram, which, until the sun moves far enough in it for more maturity, is commonly called a lamb. Among the Jews and many Eastern peoples, this marks the commencement, or birth, of a new year. The first decanate of the Ram is its own decanate, the young Ram, or Lamb. The second decanate has a subrulership of Leo, the Lion. On March 21st the sun thus enters the decanate of the Lamb, and on the last day of March enters the decanate of the Lion

About this time of year there is considerable unsettled weather, which has led to the observation that if stormy weather comes early the fine weather will come later, and if the fine weather comes early in March we may look for storms near its end. But there is a more spiritual significance also; for this teaches that those dominated by reason alone—by the head of Aries—should cultivate sympathy, while those guided exclusively by the heart—Leo—need to cultivate the use of the intellect

The first sign of the zodiac, the Ram, is the exaltation, or finest influence, of the sun; and the second sign, the Bull, is the exaltation of the moon. The sun has ever been symbolized by, and rules over, gold. The fabled Ram of the Golden Fleece, therefore, really signifies the influence represented by the sun in the sign of the Ram. And the Golden Calf—for it could not have been more than a calf when the sun was first born into the sign—signifies the influence of the sun just entering the sign of possessions

Astronomically the new year is born when the sun crosses the equator to the north and the days become longer than the nights. But the ancients considered, quite logically, that the newborn earth must have a mother (the moon) as well as a father (the sun). Anciently the sun was called Baal or Bel. Both sun and moon were held sacred in different parts of Ireland. In fact, Belfast is supposed to have been named after the old Irish sungod, Bel

As all astrologers recognize, the color orange is ruled by the sun; and while the Duke of Orange played his part, nevertheless the law of correspondences plays also a part, so that the Orangemen of Ireland represent in a modern way the ancient faction which discarded the rulership of the moon and paid homage to the sun. Ireland in greater part, however, is ruled by the sign of the Bull, in which the moon exerts its finest power. And the Druids of ancient Ireland commonly are pictured holding the crescent moon in their hands. So also, as all astrologers recognize, green is the color ruled by the moon. Consequently, the Irish who wear the green represent, in the modern way, those who before the advent of Christianity disregarded the rulership of the sun and paid homage to the moon

The Shamrock

The shamrock is not sacred because, as reputed, St. Patrick picked one to illustrate some theological point but because it represents three trines united at a single point: union of body, soul and spirit on all three planes of existence: physical, astral and spiritual

The serpent is, and ever has been, the symbol of generation and of wisdom. It tempted Adam and Eve to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And before the advent of Christianity the inhabitants of Ireland understood astrology, and commonly conversed with those on the inner planes of life, as is recorded by their Roman conquerors. Also we have records showing that their Druid priests were well conversant with the laws of generation, by which happiness could be elaborated and finer children be brought into the world. But St. Patrick, followed today by others equally fanatic in the narrowness of their orthodoxy, drove serpents—or true knowledge of Nature's laws—from Ireland, although he was never able to eradicate its symbolism, which was preserved in Ancient Masonry

St. Patrick's Day

On the 17th of March the sun is in the last decanate of the dark, watery sign Pisces, the natural sign of imprisonment, of inversive forces, and of orthodoxy. This decanate is pictured among the constellations by Cassiopeia, whose arrogant pride, according to Greek mythology, was the cause of beautiful Andromeda (the human soul) being chained to the rock (material interests) for the sensual monster Cetus to devour. In the Bible version, she is represented by Potiphar's wife, who had Joseph placed in jail because he resisted her advances

The Irish, in celebrating St. Patrick's Day, have chosen that day of the year which anciently was observed as indicating the darkness which precedes the dawn, the pangs of labor preceding the birth of the world on March 21. Thus they unwittingly celebrate their undoing and imprisonment. But the green does hold the hope of release later through the moon's rejuvenating power in the sign of the Bull

Shrove Tuesday

This festival precedes Easter and occurs just before Lent, while the sun is still in the zodiacal sign of the Man. It is a carnival (and carnival means, "Flesh, fare thee well") in which pancakes play an important part. These pancakes represent the form of the disc of the sun, and in preChristian times the Saxons offered the pancakes to the sun as a sacrifice, signifying in this manner the desire to be forgiven their trespasses and to start a period of purification preparatory to a new life at the commencement of the vernal year

Ash Wednesday

Immediately following Shrove Tuesday, this is the day on which the Saxons threw ashes on all they met, and placed ashes on their foreheads as the symbol of their repentance for sin

Aquarius, the sign of the Man, in which the sun sojourns at this time, is represented by the key phrase, I Know; and it is only when man attains knowledge of good and evil that he can repent. The baptismal urn figures in this constellation as the cleansing influence prior to a new birth. Wednesday is a Mercury day; Mercury rules intelligence and is exalted in Aquarius. Thus is it shown that moral obligations are accepted. And as referring to their fulfillment, it is the custom in many regions to take the effigy of a man, called "Jack O' Lent," and shoot it full of holes, burn it, or throw it down a chimney. Thus is symbolically indicated the fate awaiting those who, knowing right, follow the inversive path

Lent

This commences Lent, a period of expiation and penance during the time the sun passes through Pisces, the sign of sorrow and imprisonment, until it is reborn in the sign of the Lamb on Easter. The sign is pictured by two fishes, and at the time of year when the food store is lowest, having been consumed during the winter and no new crops as yet having had time to grow. Therefore, it is often a time of dearth and famine for agricultural peoples. The herds are famished and too poor for food, and fish is the only available substitute. Lent also symbolizes the psychic purification and material privations that frequently must be undergone to attain spiritual illumination

Palm Sunday

This is usually the Sunday before Easter, and is said to commemorate the reception of Christ into Jerusalem preceding his death. The sun has triumphantly conquered the Vernal Cross, or is just about to do so, by passing into the sign of the Ram. Virgo, the analytical and scientific sign opposite Pisces, is pictured as holding a palm frond in her uplifted hand as a symbol of information harvested. When Pisces sets, or dies, this symbol rises in the east triumphant. It is, therefore, a day symbolizing not merely the triumph of the sun over the winter—and the human soul over the restrictions of matter—but also of the harvest of intelligence over the darkness of superstition

Maunder Thursday

On this Thursday, which is the day before Good Friday, it is the custom of those high in office to wash the feet of the poor, a practice similar to the observances of certain sects of the present day at their Love Feasts. Pisces relates to love in that Venus, the planet of love, has its exaltation, or highest influence, there. And this sign Pisces, from which the sun emerges at the commencement of the astronomical year, not only is a watery sign, but rules the feet. It is governed by Neptune, with Jupiter, the planet of Thursday, its coruler. The feet symbolize the understanding; and the ceremony thus signifies the understanding of the law of the sacrifice of personal pride for universal good. Pisces is the sign of expiation, as more fully revealed in connection with its tarot card, Major Arcanum XII

Good Friday

This is a corruption of Gottes Freytag, or God's Friday. It is dedicated to the suffering and burial of the sun god. Friday is the day of Venus. Venus not only is exalted in Pisces, but rules the marriage sign, Libra. As Good Friday immediately precedes Easter, when the sun is in Aries and the moon past the opposition, the moon has passed over the cross of Libra, on which the sun was crucified the preceding fall, and is in opposition to the sun from the marriage sign. A cross is a marriage of two lines; and in the zodiac the solstitial colure crosses the line where summer and winter are married in the form of a perfect cross. A marriage of sun and moon just preceding Easter is clearly present on Good Friday; Friday, ruled by Venus, being dedicated to affectional affairs

As indicating the relation of the cross to marriage, all over England Good Friday is ushered in by the cry of "Hot Cross Buns." These are to be found in America also, being biscuits upon the tops of which is traced a cross. Such are called "Bull Cakes" in many countries. Anciently they were offered in Egypt, bous (buns) being the sacred ox, Taurus. In Chaldea they were offered to Astarte, they were offered to Ma by the ancient Mayas of America, were used as Passover cakes by the Jews, and have been found in the ruins of Herculaneum. The circle with the cross in it is even now used by astronomers as the symbol of the earth; and the Bull, exaltation of the moon, is the first earth sign of the zodiac

Lady's Day

Falling on March 25, this is the day when Gabriel is said to have announced the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. It was an Egyptian day of festival, however, long before Christian times, and was mentioned by Athanasius before the birth of Christ was fixed by the church to have taken place on December 25. Being the fourth day after the vernal equinox, this date really symbolizes that the sun's forces have become fully polarized to the new cycle; the earth has Realized—the significance of 4—the immaculate rays of the sun from the summer zodiacal signs

Easter

Easter is a modern adaptation of the old name of the moon, which the Chaldeans called Ishtar, became Astarte to the classical nations, Eoster to the Saxons, and was finally designated by the term now used for her chief annual festival. In this festival her greatest power, as signified by her special exaltation in the beginning of Taurus, is celebrated as chief aid to the function of the sun

Easter is the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or next after the 21st of March; if the full moon happens on Sunday, Easter is celebrated one week later. At this full moon, because the sun is in Aries, where its creative energies are strongest, the moon must be in Libra, the sign ruling both marriage and eggs. Eggs, consequently, form a persistent factor in that spring festival dedicated to the redemption of the world by united man and woman, even as it is deemed to be rescued from winter through the offices of the united sun and moon. These eggs commonly are colored in various hues to signify diversity in the expected

harvest. They are hidden about and must be hunted for, even as other seeds are placed in the sunwarmed dark ground at the beginning of Taurus, where they germinate, only later to thrust green shoots through the surface into the kindly light of day

Bunnies also are a part of the ceremony; for although they do not lay eggs, as at Easter children sometimes are led to believe, they are unusually prolific, and symbolize of the power of the earth to bring forth. The Taurus decanate of Taurus, where the moon has her finest power, is pictured in the sky by *Lepus*, a rabbit, whose outstanding characteristics, in addition to rapidity of reproduction, are fleetness and timidity. The decanate thus pictured is associated with the greatest tragedy mankind has ever known. Hallowe'en, more about which will be found under that heading, commemorates the destruction of the world, the fire, the flood, and the sinking of Atlantis

The sun at Hallowe'en is in the death decanate of the death sign, *Scorpio*, directly across the zodiac from this rabbit decanate of Taurus. Thus when *Ophiuchus*—the man in deathstruggle with a serpent who pictures the first decanate of *Scorpio*—sets in the west, vanquished by the great destruction, *Lepus* the hare rises in the east, and is shown fleeing, like those who were saved from destruction in Atlantis, as fast as fleet legs will carry him

The moon, which is so finely situated in this rabbit decanate of Taurus, rules the mentality of man. And it was through a proper application of their minds that those who escaped the world catastrophe were able to avoid the fate of their wicked compatriots. Thus is the rabbit at Eastertime associated with the power of the mind and the power of woman to cooperate in the rescue of the soul from destructive forces, and in its rejuvenation in a more spiritual life

Easter Monday

The next day after Easter is Easter Monday. It is then the custom in some countries for the leaders of neighboring villages to choose sides and shoot for a calf's head breakfast. The last decanate of the sign of the Ram is the *Sagittarius*, or Archer, decanate. *Sagittarius* is pictured in the sky as a huntsman. From the *Sagittarius* decanate the sun passes into the beginning of the sign of the Bull; hence, the shooting for a breakfast of calf's head. In some other regions the day is celebrated by a hunt

All Fool's Day

On April 1 the sun has just entered the Lion decanate of the sign of the Ram. The sign pictured by the Lion rules the heart, and that pictured by the Ram rules the head. People who are governed by their hearts alone, with no aid from their heads, commit foolish blunders, just as *Phaethon* did when he undertook to drive the chariot of the sun through the heavens, and let the prancing steeds run away. And it had been a sorry day on earth, indeed, had not *Jove* (*Jupiter*) glanced that way. The frightened horses went tearing toward the earth, the heat drying up the lakes and scorching the plains. Something had to be done if the world was not to be consumed by flames. *Jove* hurled a thunderbolt from where he sat high on his Olympian throne, and as a bird falls when shot on the wing so was *Phaethon* dropped into the adjacent *Po*, the constellated stream now called *Eridanus*, which pictures the decanate occupied by the sun on All Fool's Day

This is the day of *Huli* in *Hindoostan* where, as in other countries, people are sent on sleeveless errands to instill into their minds that they should use reason and not be led astray by impulse

May Day

On the 1st of May the sun reaches the harvest, or *Virgo*, decanate of the first earth sign of the zodiac pictured by the Bull. The Maypole is a phallic emblem relating to the virility and power of the sun. The May Queen represents the earth in a virgin condition (it is the virgin decanate). Thus does the May Pole dance symbolize the immaculate conception of the earth

by the paternal rays of the sun, through which the seeds that have been planted in the dark soil are fructified to bring forth an abundant harvest

In the region where fabled King Arthur is said to have reigned with the knights of his famed Round Table are still to be found cromlechs—concentric circles of stone erected in prehistoric days to portray the orbits of the planets. Thus also do the Maypole dancers portray movements. In fact, the dance as performed by the Mayas of Yucatan leaves no doubt as to what is meant in every particular. The weaving in and out of the dancers as they hold ribbon strands reaching to the central post causes these to form, one with another, sextiles and trines, squares and oppositions, and other aspects by which astrologers ancient and modern plot the harmony or discord reaching the earth from various parts of the heavens

In Ireland the dancers wear white shirts, and in the Yucatan they clothe themselves entirely in white, to symbolize the purity of conception. And to indicate the result expected, when gestation has been completed and the harvest Virgin has had time to bring forth from the dark soil of earth, it has been the custom during the night to place baskets containing fruit and flowers upon the doorsteps of neighbors

Ascension Day

This is forty days after Easter; for the sun passes into the Virgo decanate of Taurus before ascending to its heavenly home, even as the soul on earth must garner a mental harvest before it is prepared to function in higher realms. The Bull pictures the sign of fecundity, and the Virgo decanate relates to mental fecundity; for Virgo is a mental sign

Mother's Day

This is celebrated the second Sunday in May, when commonly the Sun is in the third decanate of the sign of the moon's exaltation, Taurus. The moon, of course, rules the mother principle; but the protective quality of the mother is represented by the constellation Auriga, which pictures this decanate. It shows a charioteer, master of the solar (Sunday) forces, into whose arms has jumped a mother goat, that her two kids, which are with her, may find protection

Mother's Day thus is not held in honor merely of giving birth but, even as the key word of the last decanate of Taurus is Mastership, to indicate that the function of a true master is to control the forces of Nature and use them for the benefit of those in distress. So the mother, to the extent of her ability, has exercised a similar function in providing for the safety and welfare of her young

Whit Sunday

This day is said to be observed in commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost. Air well symbolizes the Holy Ghost, even as earth symbolizes the physical world. At this time the sun passes from the most fixed of all the earth signs, and the most fertile, pictured by the Bull, into the most volatile of the mental signs, the airy sign Gemini. The descent thus observed symbolizes the application of intelligence to deriving spiritual values from the various experiences which the individual has while on earth

Father's Day

This day is observed the third Sunday in June when the sun closely approaches the summer solstice. The sun (Sunday) rules the father, and symbolically the power of the father increases until the summer solstice; for the amount of light received by the northern hemisphere is then greatest, at which time the noon position is highest in the heavens, and the father (Sun) is adjacent to the home sign, Cancer

The Mound Builders of the Mississippi Valley and the Aztecs and Mayas further south built fires on top of their mounds or pyramids at the summer solstice in honor of the virile fatherly power. And the Great Pyramid of Cheops, for the same purpose, was so constructed that on the day of the summer solstice, to anyone looking up the northern side the sun appears as if burning on its top

Fourth Of July

The sign of the zodiac ruling the home is Cancer. Our Fourth of July is observed to commemorate the establishment of a homeland. On that date the sun, appropriately enough, is in this Cancer sign. We do not celebrate the Fourth with prayer and thanksgiving, but by firing cannon, exploding firecrackers, and other pyrotechnics, both physical and vocal, calling forth expostulations from the press to try to make it more safe and sane. These are all Mars expressions, and on this day the sun has passed into the Mars decanate of Cancer

Labor Day

One of the common tenets of astrology, ancient and modern, is that the influence of Saturn tends to attract work and heavy responsibilities. When, therefore, those of the olden time wished to comment in terms of universal symbolism upon the importance of labor it is quite consistent that they selected the Saturn decanate of Virgo, the sign of labor. Following the method of universal symbolism still further, which demands that the big influences of life shall be portrayed by equally large pictures, they traced, to represent that labor is essential to all worth while accomplishment, a man of heroic proportions in the sky. Hercules, mightiest of all the laboring men, has a constellation of vast extent

Our Labor Day has not the same purpose, nor is it celebrated the same, as Labor Day in Europe. Instead, it is a day commemorating the efforts of the common people. The common people are ruled by the moon. Monday is the day of the moon. Consequently, Labor Day is observed on Monday, on the first Monday in September, when the sun has entered the Saturn decanate of the labor sign, pictured in the sky by Hercules. Hercules is not renowned for reciting verses or attending Sunday school; he is famed chiefly for his twelve great labors

The best quality and the worst quality of any sign express the same general type of energy, but express it through different avenues. It is almost, or quite impossible, to convert the type of energy or the character qualifications denoted by one sign into those denoted by another sign. But it is not a difficult matter to divert the undesirable expression of the energy or character qualifications of any sign into the more desirable expression of the energy or character qualifications of the same sign. This is the work every person should attempt to do, and it is the work which Hercules accomplished

As there are twelve different signs, representing the deepseated characteristics of the twelve different types of people, and as Hercules undertook to demonstrate how the worst quality could be diverted into the best quality for each of these types, he had twelve different labors to perform before he had finished. Thus does the observance of a day when the sun is in the section of the zodiac pictured by this great hero offer sage advice to every person as to the most important labor he can accomplish, in addition to paying a high tribute to the tremendous importance of the work of the common people in the world's affairs

Hallowe'en

On a particular night each year jack'o'lanterns, whitesheeted figures, black cats, witches on broomsticks, bats, the moon and stars take their place as an accepted part of ceremonies, the most annoying feature of which is the wholesale destruction of property. If such an unusual rite were performed by a single obscure group of people it would seem strange enough, but when we find that the natives of almost every land are doing similar things at the same time it calls for more than a superficial explanation. The moon and stars, which are a part of Hallowe'en decorations, so obviously point to astrology and the prediction of events that no argument need be advanced that this tradition, handed down through the avenue of a world-wide popular custom, is in some manner significant of the position of the heavenly bodies on the night of October 31

The sun each year on this date is in the death decanate of the death sign of the zodiac, Scorpio. This decanate, or tendegree section of the zodiac, is pictured in the sky by the constellation Ophiuchus, a man in a life and death struggle with a huge serpent. It would seem

logical to conclude, therefore, that in some manner men upon earth came to grips with a mighty force, symbolically represented by this starry serpent; that the astrologers had warned them in advance; and that death was intimately associated with the event predicted when it transpired. The greatest number of deaths ever recorded to have taken place at one time is mentioned in an ancient Mayan book written in the Yucatan long after the event

When the Spanish reached America their priests attempted to destroy every remnant of the writings of the Mayas and the Aztecs. Their histories, astrological treatise, mathematical tables and records were collected and demolished or burned. Only three Mayan books escaped the vigilant eye of Bishop Landa and persist to this day: the Persianus Codex now at the Biblioteque National, Paris; the Dresden Codex, now at the Royal Library at Dresden; and the TroCortesianus Codex, now at the Royal Academy of History, Madrid. These books gave an account, among other things, of the destruction of a continent which had been the homeland from which various centers of civilization throughout the world had been colonized. Into those colonies some of the more enlightened had carried their knowledge of the stellar religion, having been apprised by astrologers that such a catastrophe would occur when the sun, moon and stars would occupy definite relations to one another. That date, so far as the time of year is concerned, is now called October 31

Here is a quotation from the TroCortesianus:

In the year 6 Kan, on the 11 Muluc, in the month of Zac, there occurred terrific earthquakes which continued until the 13 Chuen without interruption. The country of the hills of earth—the land of Mu (some translate this Atlantis)—was sacrificed. Twice upheaved, it disappeared during the night, having been constantly shaken by fires of the underneath. Being confined, these caused the land to rise and sink several times in various places. At last the surface gave way and the ten countries were torn asunder and scattered. They sank with their 64,000,000 inhabitants 8,060 years before the writing of this book

Tradition holds that this ancient land sank because those who had gained the power to use occult forces no longer devoted them to the welfare of the people, but chiefly to gain selfish advantage. The country had become infested with witches and black magicians, a condition still commemorated by the pictures of witches on broomsticks on Hallowe'en

A continent sank some 11,000 years ago, and magicians were held responsible for the tragedy, as signified by witches riding high on broom handles. But what about the black cats, always an omen of ill luck? The sign of the zodiac in which the sun has its home is Leo, pictured by a lion. A cat also belongs to the same family of animals and signifies the same zodiacal sign, and was used to indicate the light from the sun. That is, a cat, with its ability to see in the dark, represents knowledge and wise use of the solar creative forces. It was thus the emblem of white magic. But when the cat was black it signified that knowledge and the power of the creative energies were no longer devoted to unselfish ends, but were under the dominion of the power of darkness. A black cat thus became a symbol of black magic, in particular the symbol of the curses dispensed by witches and of the ill luck they were supposed to bring

Furthermore, at the time of the sinking of the continent, the vernal equinox pointer of the Precessional Cycle had just backed from the sign of the cat, Leo, into the sign of water, Cancer. In fact, this last decanate of Cancer is pictured among the constellations by Argo, the ship in which the wiser ones made their escape from the illfated land

To ward off the ill luck which a black cat signifies, some believe in the potency of a rabbit's foot. Exactly across the zodiac from Ophiuchus, the man wrestling with the curse placed upon him by wicked magicians as indicated by the deathstruggle with a serpent, is the constellation Lepus, picturing the rabbit in full flight. It belongs to the first decanate of the sign Taurus. This rabbit in the skies is running away from the place where the struggle is

taking place, in fact, he is just as far from it as he can get, as were those wise ones who, warned by their understanding of astrology, left the ancient land before the cataclysm occurred. The foot is a symbol of understanding, and as symbolic of the power of understanding to save its possessor from a "jinx," the rabbit's foot still is in high favor

The bats on our Hallowe'en decorations, because such creatures dislike to face the light, hiding away in dark caves during the day and hunting their prey only at night, are symbols of the iniquitous forces of darkness, the elemental messengers which are sent forth by witches and magicians to carry out their nefarious work. All this is very gruesome; but it relates to the most terrible disaster that has been experienced by mankind, although other cataclysms are to be expected each precessional cycle when the vernal equinox backs from Leo into Cancer, and from Aquarius into Capricorn

The Aztecs, apparently having lost the knowledge of this large cycle, but retaining the knowledge that the year within the larger cycle could be determined from their 52year period, observed the night of the closing of this period with abject terror. This 52year period was called Xihuitmolpia, and they held, from sound astrological considerations, that the destruction of a portion of the world would occur on the closing night of one of these 52year periods. On the last night of the period, therefore, all fires were extinguished and the inhabitants moved out of the city to the tops of the surrounding hills to await anxiously either for destruction or the coming of dawn. If the sun rose in the morning it signified there would be no cataclysm for another 52 years at least, and all went back to their homes rejoicing

The tradition is that many persons were taken out of their bodies in a single night at the time the old continent was destroyed, and that some of these, especially those wicked and devoted to the black arts, were unable to make quick and proper adjustment to the next life plane and, being earthbound, remained adjacent to the earth. These shades that still walked the earth after the cataclysm of October 31 are represented by the jacko'lanterns and white sheeted figures of our day. With the same significance the Australian Bushmen paint white stripes over their ribs and limbs to represent skeletons, and spend the night dancing in the firelight

Among the people of many countries, such as the French of Paris, it is still the custom at this time to place food on the graves of the dead. Those taken violently from the body, especially those of coarse appetites, do not change their desires immediately. They yet crave the foods to which they have become accustomed. And tradition holds that when the continent sank the survivors placed food before the dead that they might draw from its aromas sufficient electromagnetic energy to assuage their craving

The following two days were largely devoted by those yet on the physical plane who possessed the proper knowledge of spiritual laws in assisting those who had died to become reconciled and readjusted to the new life where they now found themselves. Thus do we have, following Hallowe'en, All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day, given to observances commemorating the passage to the next life, and to prayers for the dead

The most outstanding feature of the Hallowe'en ceremony is, of course, the making of a terrific noise and the destruction of as much property as can be done without reprisal from the authorities. This racket is the expression of man's racial memory of the noise which accompanied the great catastrophe; and the destruction of things and the mischief wrought are pantomime representations of the destruction of a continent of old

The Mayas and other peoples had more definite knowledge than the later Aztecs of the astronomical factors which coincide with such vast upheavals as Hallowe'en celebrates. These astronomical factors are set forth, with reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and other allied things, in Brotherhood of Light Chapters 6 and 12, Course VII, *Spiritual Astrology*.

Thanksgiving Day

This day is established each year by presidential proclamation. To be normal it must take

place during the time the sun is in the Sagittarius decanate of Sagittarius, a sign denoting religion, and the decanate whose key word is Devotion. Prayer is an essential part of the Thanksgiving ceremony

Rightfully observed, it falls about four weeks before Christmas. Holidays are periods when people take short vacations from work and spend more than the usual amount of money. Falling so near Christmas, people have hardly recovered from spending Thanksgiving money before the Yuletide holidays are upon them. Therefore, merchants in the U.S. during the third term of office of Franklin Delano Roosevelt brought pressure to bear upon him to change Thanksgiving so from that time on it would fall several weeks earlier. They held, and widely proclaimed, that this would be good for business. But even though for a year or two the President did thus proclaim Thanksgiving to be several weeks earlier, the attempt to hold the festival on an inappropriate astrological day—for the sun was then in Scorpio, which is hardly a thanksgiving sign—was a failure. In some states two Thanksgivings were held, one on the day proclaimed by the President, and one on the accustomed day which was thus designated by the Governor of the state. In other states people were indifferent to a Thanksgiving Day which they felt somehow was not right. And thus in spite of the efforts of the merchants, supported by the efforts of the President, there was a drifting back to the proper astrological day

The first decanate of the sign Sagittarius is pictured in the sky by the constellation Lyra, the harp. Such a harp it was the ancient custom to play when singing songs of praise and thanksgiving to the Creator. Sagittarius is pictured among the constellations as the Huntsman; and the Turkey, which is so notable a part of the Thanksgiving ritual, is native to America and was obtained by hunting. Thanksgiving hunts still are popular

A good word for the influence of Jupiter, the planet ruling Sagittarius, is abundance; and thus the festive board on this day, more than any other, is made to groan with the richness and variety of the viands. Second in importance only to the largest of American game birds, the turkey, the rotund beaming face of the pumpkin pie looks up from its place as the countenance of Jove himself. In astrological lore it is commonly acknowledged that Jupiter people like good things to eat and an abundance of them. And thus the table on this day is explained. But what significance has the public prayer?

Jupiter, ruler of the sign where the sun is found on this day, is called the Greater Benefic, the planet whose influence brings the best in fortune. He also is the planet ruling that group of desires, called the Religious Urges, which encourage prayer. Because deliverance from poverty and privation is so frequently associated with the things he rules astrologically, it is the more fitting that his day, Thursday, and his sign, Sagittarius, should be chosen for offering thanks

Not only does the day persist, due to the astral pressure which makes such expression most easy on this day of the year, when special prayers of thanksgiving are offered, but this same vibratory relation occasioned by the position of the sun along its zodiacal path gives carrying power to such thoughts that makes them more than ordinarily effective. It is the special time of year in which our minds most readily tune in, through feelings of devotion and gratitude, on benevolent intelligences of the inner plane. Currents of astral force of astral origin set in the direction most favorable to carry human prayers for security and welfare to those on the inner plane who best are fitted to give such aid

The answer to prayer of necessity requires an agent. Material food, for instance, is not created out of nothing and deposited in our larder by the Divine Mind. If it reaches our table, some human agency has played a part. And to an extent not commonly recognized, those who have passed from physical life, yet who are tuned in on through kindred interests, through aspiration, or through the avenue of prayer to the Most High, are able to assist those yet on earth to solve their problems; and through still other agencies to gain for them the comforts for which praise is offered on Thanksgiving Day

Christmas

The very first glance at a chart picturing all 48 of the ancient constellations brings to the attention that two of the constellations, quite far apart in the sky, portray the same mythological creatures. Part horse and part man, the only difference between Centaurus, which pictures the Sagittarius decanate of Leo, where the sun may be found from August 3 to August 13, and Sagittarius, which pictures the sign where the sun may be found from November 22 to December 22, is that Centaurus is armed with a shield and spear, while Sagittarius has a cloak and uses bow and arrow.

This identity of the pictured forms at once suggests that the ancients who placed these pictures in the sky to convey information in terms of universal symbolism, desired that these two sections of the heavens be closely linked in the teaching they wished to give. It certainly is not coincidence that one larger and one smaller section of the zodiac should be represented by similar creatures; or that those chosen should indicate the human qualities carried by a horse. Rather, especially as the huntsman and the spearman face as if each were traveling toward the place of the other, it signifies that there is a movement of the same type of influence from one station in the zodiac to the other.

We are bound to infer, therefore, that the teaching signified, and the traditional story left to give more detail include, a movement, and carrying from one place to another—else why the horses' legs?—and that its comprehension requires several stations in the zodiac, the two most important being those pictured by the roving horsemen.

If we follow the simplest and most obvious method, which is always that employed by those who traced these doctrines in the sky, it will lead us to commence with Sagittarius because it pictures 30 degrees, and is therefore more important than Centaurus which pictures only 10 degrees of space. We may be sure, however, that a child or children will play a part in the story, because the smaller influence relates to the middle decanate of Leo, which has natural rule of children.

Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter, and the Sagittarius decanate of Leo, also having Jupiterian rule, are known to relate to gifts. Astrologers say that what Jupiter brings comes freely as the result of goodwill rather than through work as is the case with Saturn. Hence it is that immediately after the sun leaves the Sagittarius sign in winter is the time when gifts are given. Christmas is not on the day when the sun reaches its farthest declination south, which is the day when it crosses from the manger of the horse to the manger of the goat, because for three days it remains at this lowest, most southern point before starting to bring back new life and light into the world.

Giving it three days' grace after December 22 ensures that on Christmas Day the sun will be moving northward in declination, and that the days will have started to get longer. They will thus continue to lengthen until June 22, when the sun reaches the topmost point of the home sign, Cancer. The topmost part of a home commonly is the chimney. Therefore the sun, in coming to the home from the place where Jupiter brings his gifts, on the line dividing Sagittarius and Capricorn in winter, must touch it first at the highest spot, the chimney. And to reach it, of course, he comes through the air.

In vain you will search the Bible for any mention of Christmas tree or Santa Claus. Yet that they are linked traditionally with the Centaur picturing the middle decanate of the section of the heavens relating to children seems certain. For on that day when they are prominent, it is said a child was born—born in a stable underground as the sun yet represents. It has reached its lowest point when between the horse and goat, from which time it starts to gain new strength.

Santa Claus, like the horsemen in the sky, one of which relates to the time of winter's cold and the other to the heat of summer, portrays two seasons of the year. His garb is chiefly red; for as representing the constellated Centaur is he not next the fiery furnace, Crater, where the heat glows fiercest? Yet also, to denote the snow of winter, the trimming of the garb is spotless white. The gifts he brings at Christmas time are tokens of still greater gifts to come.

They are the promise that abundance will follow after the time of winter dearth, when the heat from the sun will have had time to ripen crops again. Still ahead, even though the days have started in their lengthening, is a period of privation and cold. Stored supplies may become exhausted, giving rise to dark despair; yet even at the entrance of this period does he give promise of better days to come

In his jovial manner and rotund figure he expresses the Jupiterian quality of Sagittarius, from which the sun has just moved at Christmas. This is a sign of religion. And even as Santa Claus brings promise of material gifts, so religion brings an equal cheer and promise of spiritual blessings after the hard dark days of earth are done. Yes, the days are darkest about Christmastime. They are like those other days when hope so fades that nothing seems worth while. Therefore is it fitting that there should be joyous news of a happy future life

Santa, however, not merely represents Jupiter's winter sign, but also a decanate of Leo, sign ruled by the sun. And anyone who has viewed the radiant rising sun on a cold and frosty morning will remember the resemblance to Santa's red circle of a face. Yet the youngsters of the land, whose special joy he is, would not recognize the rotund fellow if divested of his whiskers. They are an essential part of his makeup because at Christmas time the sun has just moved into Capricorn, and chin whiskers are the special adornment of a goat

Horses customarily draw sleighs. Therefore, Sagittarius and Centaurus well could qualify; but as still more significant of the cold bleak winter days, reindeer are now used to take their place. They are more accustomed to ice and snow. Before this sleigh—which coming from Sagittarius, the Jupiterian sign of abundance, is filled with good things to overflowing—can get to the fireplace, Crater, it must land on top of the house at Cancer. And thus really does the sun. For after touching the highest point it reaches, which is where it enters the home sign Cancer, it immediately starts descending, as if going down the chimney, until it passes into the decanate pictured by Crater. It does not tarry in this fireplace, or hottest decanate of the zodiac, however, but at once moves into the decanate pictured by Centaurus, the other horseman of the sky

The feet, it is true, are ruled by Pisces. But ask any small boy or girl—such as is ruled by the Leo section of the sky—if it is enough to hang up the mere feet of stockings on Christmas evening. If I remember rightly, there is usually a hunt for stockings that are long and ample, such as come well up on the thighs. And it is the legs thus covered by the longer hosiery that Sagittarius rules, and of which its decanate in Leo also must partake

The horseman of Leo is not the gift, but the one who brings it; for it is the sun at this time of year that ripens the grain in the field and the fruit on the trees. The gifts which the traveler from the north thus brings, while related to the children of Leo, are pictured in the next sign to it, in the harvest sign, Virgo. It is really the Virgin Mother, not Santa Claus, from whom the gifts more directly come. The lady of the sky holds a palm frond in one hand and heads of wheat in the other; while Hercules, who pictures the middle decanate of the Virgo sign, holds in his hand the branch of a tree adorned with fruit. The fruit thus shown is the fulfillment of the promise made at the time when the nights were longest, just as the sun turns back from its farthest distance away. This promise was not made by using a tree when it was filled with fruit; because such are hard to find at Christmastime. It was made by using a tree symbolic of perpetual life, by using an evergreen tree. The fruit to come, when ripened through the heat of the sun in Leo, was represented by presents on that tree. And it was spangled with stars and bedecked with lights as a token that the sun, thus moving through the firmament, was on the way to dissipate the winter's darkness

At this yuletide time of year, still further to connect the passing of the sun from Sagittarius to the Centaurus decanate of Leo, the sign of love affairs and pleasure, it is the custom to hang mistletoe with the privilege of kissing whomsoever passes under it. The mistletoe, like the Christmas tree, is of evergreen foliage, and thus symbolically promises everlasting life. But because it grows above the earth, apparently too pure and holy to touch the physical soil, it came to have a special spiritual significance. Its berry fruit, formed without polluting

contact with the loam of earth, came to be looked upon as derived from an immaculate conception

Kissing under the mistletoe, even in times not remote, was a solemn and binding ceremony. It was the token of a chaste affection and the promise of marriage. More than that, it was the promise that out of the love then expressed should develop a new and more spiritual type of life. Such a life of spiritual endeavor, as Santa Claus and Centaurus clearly teach, is dependent upon what is done for others. It is the effort to give, rather than the effort to take, which promises a spiritual harvest. After all, in the realms of the future, after we shall have passed from this mundane sphere, the physical objects men set their hearts upon will have less value than the tinsel and gilded baubles with which they decorate the Christmas tree

The Saturnalia

In olden times many of the eastern nations had a year of 360 days, one day for each degree of the zodiac. They were aware, however, that there were 365 days in the year, and to account for this they sliced five days just before January 1 from their year, and completely ignored it for business purposes. Because at that time the sun had entered Capricorn, the home of Satan (Saturn), these days were devoted to the Saturnalia, which was really a festival to the devil. At that time, in some countries, licentiousness and debauchery ran riot; as is well attested in the history of Rome

The day of Satan, also—that is, Saturday—because of the reputation of its ruler, was mostly considered a day of ill omen. Julius Caesar in B.C. 46 reformed this more ancient calendar, and Pope Gregory XIII made further improvement in A.D. 1582. Yet at present the last days of the year are considered a part of the Yuletide season

