

IV.]      *The Month and the Year.*      117

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days of the Ptolemies, but never, apparently, while a native monarch reigned. On the first day was celebrated the "conception of the moon," when that orb was on the meridian at noon (while still invisible to the observer)—a refinement unknown to our kalendar; on the second day its birth, or first appearance, and so on throughout the month of thirty days. During the first month, therefore, the lunar intervals would of course correspond more or less precisely with the solar days. But whereas the two sets would grow progressively asunder, the lunar names remained affixed to the same solar days. Thus the first day of each solar month was called the conception of the moon, and the second new moon, although neither phenomenon might have taken place anywhere near the time—a method of expression necessitating, it would seem, a double form of register, and simple enough to those who held the clue, but to a stranger hopelessly misleading.