

Hit by the Eclipse.

From the Medical Journal

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The recent eclipse of the sun does not seem to have been prolific of superstitious displays in the United States, and therefore all the more welcome an amusing instance related by Dr. W. H. Morse in the *Albany Medical Annals* (July, 1900). According to Dr. Morse, it is the custom in Cuba for mothers to expose their young children, entirely naked, on the ground during the whole time of the obscuration of the sun or moon, in order to prevent their being "hit by the eclipse"—and, incidentally, by any devils that may be lurking about. If the child takes bronchitis it is "hit;" if it escapes, it is blessed. This superstition clung to a Cuban woman living in New Jersey. She accordingly exposed her two infants, aged three months and fourteen months, respectively, during the whole eclipse, with the result that the unfortunate innocents both took severe bronchitis. The husband, going for the doctor, announced, in terse Spanish, that "a mother and two daughters are three devils for a father." At the same time, a priest was summoned, and he, being a level-headed and good-natured Irishman, lost no time in saying prayers, but took the doctor's prescription to the drug store to have filled. Fortunately no harm resulted, for the babies, after a severe illness, recovered. The mother, of course, believed that they had been "hit by the eclipse," and gave all the credit for their cure, not to the doctor, but to the priest, and especially for the splendid "holy water" which he had brought, and which was the doctor's prescription for eucalyptol.
