

thus the balance (which is conceived to designate the equality of days and nights) was placed among the stars which rose in the evening when the spring began: this would fix the origin of these signs 2500 years before our era.

It is clear, as has already been said, that Fancy, and probably Superstition, had a share in forming the collection of constellations. It is certain that, at an early period, superstitious notions were associated with the stars.⁸² Astrology is of very high antiquity in the East. The stars were supposed to influence the character and destiny of man, and to be in some way connected with superior natures and powers.

We may, I conceive, look upon the formation of the constellations, and the notions thus connected with them, as a very early attempt to find a meaning in the relations of the stars; and as an utter failure. The first effort to associate the appearances and motions of the skies by conceptions implying unity and connection, was made in a wrong direction, as may very easily be supposed. Instead of considering the appearances only with reference to space, time, number, in a manner purely rational, a number of other elements, imagination, tradition, hope, fear, awe of the supernatural, belief in destiny, were called into action. Man, still young, as a philosopher at least, had yet to learn what notions his successful guesses on these subjects must involve, and what they must exclude. At that period, nothing could be more natural or excusable than this ignorance; but it is curious to see how long and how obstinately the belief lingered (if indeed it be yet extinct) that the motions of the stars, and the dispositions and fortunes of men, may come under some common conceptions and laws, by which a connection between the one and the other may be established.

We cannot, therefore, agree with those who consider Astrology in the early ages as "only a degraded Astronomy, the abuse of a more ancient science."⁸³ It was the first step to astronomy by leading to habits and means of grouping phenomena; and, after a while, by showing that pictorial and mythological relations among the stars had no very obvious value. From that time, the inductive process went on steadily in the true road, under the guidance of ideas of space, time, and number.

Sect. 7.—The Planets.

WHILE men were becoming familiar with the fixed stars, the planets must have attracted their notice. Venus, from her brightness, and

⁸² Dupuis, vi. 546.

⁸³ *Ib.* vi. 546.