

speculations of the early astrologers; and we cannot therefore be certain that the notions which operated in men's minds when the art had its birth, agreed with the views on which it was afterwards defended, when it became a matter of controversy. But it appears probable, that, though it was at later periods supported by physical analogies, it was originally suggested by mythological belief. The Greeks spoke of the *influences* or *effluxes* (*ἀπόρροιας*) which proceeded from the stars; but the Chaldeans had probably thought rather of the powers which they exercised as *deities*. In whatever manner the sun, moon, and planets came to be identified with gods and goddesses, it is clear that the characters ascribed to these gods and goddesses regulate the virtues and powers of the stars which bear their names. This association, so manifestly visionary, was retained, amplified, and pursued, in an enthusiastic spirit, instead of being rejected for more distinct and substantial connections; and a pretended science was thus formed, which bears the obvious stamp of mysticism.

That common sense of mankind which teaches them that theoretical opinions are to be calmly tried by their consequences and their accordance with facts, appears to have counteracted the prevalence of astrology in the better times of the human mind. Eudoxus, as we are informed by Cicero,<sup>15</sup> rejected the pretensions of the Chaldeans; and Cicero himself reasons against them with arguments as sensible and intelligent as could be adduced by a writer of the present day; such as the different fortunes and characters of persons born at the same time; and the failure of the predictions, in the case of Pompey, Crassus, Cæsar, to whom the astrologers had foretold glorious old age and peaceful death. He also employs an argument which the reader would perhaps not expect from him,—the very great remoteness of the planets as compared with the distance of the moon. "What contagion can reach us," he asks, "from a distance almost infinite?"

Pliny argues on the same side, and with some of the same arguments.<sup>16</sup> "Homer," he says, "tells us that Hector and Polydamus were born the same night;—men of such different fortune. And every hour, in every part of the world, are born lords and slaves, kings and beggars."

The impression made by these arguments is marked in an anecdote told concerning Publius Nigidius Figulus, a Roman of the time of Julius Cæsar, whom Lucan mentions as a celebrated astrologer. It is

<sup>15</sup> Cio. *de Div.* ii. 42.

<sup>16</sup> *Hist. Nat.* vii. 49.