

he means probably that the results promised by the contriver of the instrument did not in every case come out exactly on trial. Chaucer's accurate knowledge of the astronomy of his day, and of the ingenious explanations of phenomena offered by the Ptolemaic theories, are conspicuous throughout the *Canterbury Tales*; in the *Franklin's Tale*, for example, the *Man of Law's Tale*, and the *Nun's Priest's Tale*. And I cannot but think that the well-known interior of the scholar's room at the beginning of the *Miller's Tale* is a reminiscence of his own chamber at Oxenforde in his younger days. I will transcribe the passage; in it we shall meet with the astrolabe and with the expression 'conclusions' to be technically understood in the sense already explained. 'With him,' we are told, that is with a certain lodging-house keeper at Oxford, who figures in the *Miller's Story*:

With him there was dwelling a pore scoller
Had learned art, but all his fantasye
Was tuned for to lerne astrologye,
And coude a certeyn of conclusions
To deme by interrogaciouns,
If that men axed him, in certeyn houres
When that men schuld hav drought or ellys schoures;
Or if men axed him what shulde befall
Of every thing I may nought reken hem alle.

A chamber had he in that hostelerie
Alone, withoughten any compaignie,
Full fetisly ydight with harbes soote [sweet],
And he himself as sweet as is the roote
Of liquors or any cetewale [valerian]:
His almagest and bookys great and small;
His astrolabe, longing for his art [appertaining to],
His augrim stones, lying faire aparte
On schelves couched at his beddes heed,
His press y-covered with a folding red.

Chaucer probably began early to spell out the *Almagest*, the opus magnum of Claudius Ptolemy, and to make himself master of the mysteries of the augrim stones, the Arabic algorismic counters. Over and over again, he shows in his treatise on the astrolabe that he could, if he had chosen, have acted the astrologer and have cast nativities and calculated horoscopes with as great ease and plausibility as Cornelius Agrippa himself; but he draws for his son Louis a sharp line of difference between judicial and natural astrology, between astrology and astronomy, truly so called. Of the processes of the com