

an astrolabe, and without any effort he had become precociously familiar with the instrument and its mysteries, just as a clever child now quickly masters chess or elementary chemistry. Should we not have liked to overhear the quiet confidential interchange of talk between the two, while the instrument was being manipulated? We would have been interested in the English; so homely occasionally; so provincial perhaps sometimes, we would think, in pronunciation, and tone and style!

The application for further instruction in the astrolabe, in its theory and practical use, came, we are informed, from Louis; and the father was only too glad to gratify him. So he provided him with an astrolabe, not one of full size, as it would seem, but still not a toy; and in addition he furnished him with the tractate which we have been examining. It would be simply amusement to Louis to carry forward to any extent the studies suggested; and philosophy in sport would be sure to become science in earnest with him by and by, if his life should be spared; and Chaucer was quite willing that his son should be grounded in the best knowledge that could be had; in the true science of nature, so far as it had then been attained.

The natural affection of the father breaks out in several places in the treatise. It is observable in the first sentence of the book, 'Little Louis, my sonne,' he says, 'I perceive well by certain evidences, thine ability to learn sciences, touching numbers and proportions; and also well consider I thy busy prayer in especial to learn the treatise of the astrolabye. Then,' he continues, 'for as much as a philosopher saith; hee wrappeth him in his friend that condescendeth to the rightfull prayers of his friend, therefore I have given thee a sufficient astrolabie for our orizont, compowned after the latitude of Oxenforde; upon the which, by the mediation of the little treatise I purpose to teach thee a certain number of conclusions pertayning to this same instrument.' Again, further on, where he defines which is the right side and which is the left of the astrolabe: 'The east side of the astrolabie is cleaped the right side, and the west side is cleaped the left side; forget not this little Louis.' And similarly, the name of the lad addressed, suddenly appears in other places.

Chaucer adopts an apologetic tone for having ventured to deliver the treatise on the astrolabe to his son in the English tongue. He stood in some awe perhaps of certain members of the teaching order,