

[mother] of thyn astrolabie.' It is thickest 'by the brinkes;' the inner portion on one side is sunk and made thin, so as to receive a light circular plate made to fit into it, with a piece of moveable open work over it, through which the plate below may be viewed. The sunken portion of the disc is called its 'wombe.' The plate just mentioned has a diagram upon it constructed for the latitude or 'clymate' of the particular place where the instrument is going to be used, hence it is made so as to be easily removed; the one furnished for Chaucer's little Louis, was 'compowned' or calculated for Oxford. The lines and circles forming the diagram on the removable 'clymate'-plate are numerous, with many intersections; and the appearance thus produced is curiously described in the following terms: 'From the signet (the apparent pole of the heaven) there comen crooked strikes (curved strokes or lines) like to the claws of aloppe (the legs of a spider), or els like to the werke of a womans calle (caul, or net for the hair), inkerving overthwart the almicanteras; and these same strikes and divisions ben cleaped azimutes, and they dividen the orizonts on thine astrolabie in 24 divi-sions. And these azimutes serve to knowe the costes of the firmament, and the other conclusions, as for to knowe the signet of the sunne and of every sterre.' The circle of open work which is to be placed over the plate of the 'clymate' is called the 'rete,' the net; as it consists of several thin strips or flattened wires, arranged somewhat after the fashion of the lines in a certain kind of fishing net, or 'else,' Chaucer says, 'after the webbe of a loppe' *i. e.* a spider's web. On each of the wires, forming the reet, which curve round or radiate from a quasi-pole, is set a mark which is to indicate the place of a certain conspicuous fixed star, and over these curving lines is placed towards the upper parts, a circular band which is 'devyded in twelve principall devisions that deperten the twelve signs,' hence the whole 'rete' is styled 'the Zodiacke,' and it is made moveable; it may be shifted round on a centre in accordance with observations taken in the actual heavens. To admit of this movement, a 'pinne,' after the manner of an 'exiltre' [axletree], passes through the centre of the disc. This pin is ingeniously made in such a way that its diameter could be slightly lessened or increased by lifting up or pressing down a small wedge called a 'horse,' allowing the rete to revolve, but at the same time keeping the clymate-plate below firmly in its place. By loosening the wedge, the clymate-plate