

side the desk was a celestial globe with figures, painted in various colours. In a window looking towards the south, hung an astrolabe, to whose alidade [moveable rule], a long telescope, of course without lenses, was attached.' In Herman Merivale's 'Orlando in Roncesvalles,' p. 12, we have the 'spirits of the air,' grotesquely represented as making use of material astrolabes, just as in the mediæval paintings we sometimes see angelic beings playing on violins. 'Know,' says the demon Astaroth to Malagigi,

'Know that all the circling air is dense
With spirits, each his astrolabe in hand,
Searching the hidden ways of Providence;'

Where Merivale literally translated from his authority, Pulci ;

'Sappi che tutto quest aere è denso
Di spirti, ogn'un con astrolabio in mano.'

Since personally handling the old instrument, which, with such plausibility, can be shown to have been once the property of Samuel Champlain, the first explorer of our back lakes, and the founder, as I have said, of Quebec, I have turned with a renewed interest to a treatise on the astrolabe, which I have for some time had in my library. It is contained in Thomas Speght's second edition of the whole works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 'our ancient and learned English poet,' as he is styled on the title page. The volume is a folio, almost wholly in black letter, and its imprint is that of Adam Islip, London, 1602.

Supposing that the incident narrated as occurring in 1867, in the Township of Ross, in our Canadian County of Renfrew, may have excited amongst us some curiosity on the subject of astrolabes, I proceed to give an account of the treatise of Chaucer, just referred to.

Geoffrey Chaucer, it is to be remembered, was a many-sided man. In him, as in Burke, Canning, the first Lord Lytton, and the Disraeli of to-day, fine perceptions, a powerful imagination, and rare literary faculty did not prove incompatible with the possession of strong practical good sense, and its application in departments of life of the most serious and varied kind. He was a man of business ; a man of affairs ; a trusted and most successful diplomatist, if not a statesman ; a traveller ; a linguist ; a lover of science ; a man of wide knowledge. He wrote his treatise on the astrolabe for the use of his